



Province of Newfoundland

FORTY - FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND

Volume XLI

First Session

Number 21

VERBATIM REPORT
(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Wednesday

[Preliminary Transcript]

28 June 1989

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):
Order, please!

On behalf of hon. members I would like to extend a warm welcome to 40 senior citizens from St. John's, with their area leader, Bernadette Doyle, of St. John's Parks and Recreation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
I would also like to welcome to the public galleries the Chairman of the Canada - Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board, Mr. Jim String, and Mr. Bill Hickey, Director of Public Affairs. They are here today to witness the tabling of the Board's annual report.

Statements by Ministers

PREMIER WELLS:
Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, I want to make a statement to the House today concerning the events that occurred this morning in relation to the Sprung Project, but at first I want to express my apologies to the hon. the member for Humber Valley (Mr. Woodford) for not making a copy of the statement available to him until the last few minutes; it just became available to me a few minutes before.

I am aware, of course, that he is very knowledgeable about this

whole matter, as much of what occurred this morning was put in train while he was still the minister responsible.

I am announcing today that the Newfoundland Industrial Development Corporation, as represented by Mr. J. R. Chalker, Q.C., was the successful bidder at this morning's auction of the assets of Newfoundland Enviroponics Ltd. The purchase price was \$3 million.

As hon. members of this House are aware, the sale of assets was conducted by the receiver acting on behalf of the Royal Bank of Canada, who were realizing upon their security as first mortgage holder. This loan is backed by a deficiency guarantee in the amount of \$7 million given by the former government and, as such, the purchase price paid by NIDC does not represent any additional exposure or expenditure by government as the purchase price to be paid by NIDC will be used to reduce the amount government has to pay on that \$7 million guarantee. So it will reduce that by \$3 million, leaving a net to be paid of \$4 million and leaving exactly the same amount to be paid as if the price had not been paid. As a matter of fact, they could have bid \$4 million, \$5 million, \$6 million or \$7 million and still not cost government any money. I want to stress that this transaction does not in any way increase government's exposure on this project.

Government has reached an Agreement with the current operators of the Greenhouse, Cabot Produce Ltd., for the resale of the assets to Cabot. This agreement was reached in principle, with my

administration's full concurrence, by the previous administration. This agreement provides for the sale of the assets, with the exception of the land, from government to Cabot for a nominal sum. As well, it provides for an up front payment from government to Cabot of \$500,000, which represents the costs government would have had to incur to shut down the facility, had it proceeded with simply shutting it down instead of taking advantage of this possible opportunity of it being successful under other management. Government has also agreed to lease the land to Cabot for a nominal annual sum.

In return, Cabot has agreed to assume all responsibility for ongoing operations at the facility and all costs associated therewith. As well, Cabot will provide a share of any future profits to government. I warn hon. members not to hold their breath, but hope springs eternal. To ensure that there is no possibility of government being called upon to fund shutdown costs over a reasonable future time horizon, Cabot has agreed to post security satisfactory to government in the amount of \$500,000 for a period of two years. This will be available to cover any excess of shutdown costs up to that amount should future asset sale proceeds not be adequate to cover shutdown costs if Cabot terminates operations.

Government would have preferred to have tabled the full text of the agreement in the House today but we have, at the request Cabot Produce, agreed to delay making the agreement public until the directors of the company have had an opportunity to apprise their shareholders of the full details

of the arrangement. The agreement will be made public no later than the middle of July.

I believe the action taken today by Government is consistent with the stated policy of this administration which has been that we would take every reasonable step to see the greenhouse operation continue and the employment maintained, short of providing further operating subsidies. I feel we have taken the first step towards accomplishing this. Our agreement for sale of the assets to Cabot is the second step in this process and we feel that Cabot Produce Ltd. offers the best chance of achieving commercial viability of this venture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Humber Valley.

MR. WOODFORD:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I did not have a copy of the Premier's statement previous to coming into the House but, nevertheless, I did attend the auction this morning. I was well versed on Sprung over the last five or six months, believe you me. In any case, I would like to make a few comments on the statement.

First of all, I would like to say without any hesitation that I met with the Premier on a couple of occasions previous to the transition, back on May 4, on a Thursday, and some of the concerns he brought up at that time were certainly legitimate, there is no

doubt about it. We talked back and forth rather freely and came to some kind of an agreement, I suppose, really, the one that is in place now. I have not seen the latest one, but it was pretty well one that would lead to the action this morning. But it came down to the eleventh hour, and this agreement was decided on rather than having the thing bulldozed, as the Premier said, and putting the people working out there out of work.

Also, I would say without any hesitation that if anybody can make it work, the Dutch people are the people who can. If I had seen anybody else bid on it this morning and get it, I would say it was primarily speculation. The \$7 million loan guarantee was a deficiency guarantee and, as the Premier said, if anybody had to bid \$4 million, \$5 million or \$6 million, or whichever, the government would have been able to top it up, up to a maximum of \$7 million and still come out without it costing government any more expenditures than had, which was approximately \$21 million.

There will be no additional monies go into it at this point, as long as the guarantees are honoured. The big thing with this is that government now has control, something that they did not have before. As long as the Sprungs were 50/50 shareholders with NEL, you could not do anything. My hands were tied as the minister; I could only jump back and forth between the press and Sprungs and whoever else was involved. There were a lot of things I wanted to do but just could not. It was just, I guess, one of those things that was set up in the formation of the company in the first place, and it was something you just

could not do once it went into receivership. The ironic thing about this, in sitting there this morning listening to the auctioneer, was that I was one of the ones responsible for putting it into receivership. But, then, again, how could you get your hands on it? It was out of control. You just could not tell them anything, they had tunnel vision and they would not listen. Every time a problem came up, they threw a body at it instead of asking for advice in trying to solve it.

So, now you have control and it is up to the Premier and his colleagues to make sure that the agreement that is supposed to have been put in place will be put in place and that those eighty or eighty-five people who are out there are kept working. As I said before, if there is anybody who can make this work, it is the Dutch. No matter whom I talked to involved with enviropenics anywhere in the world, anywhere in North America, anywhere in Europe, the only question asked of me, in four or five months as minister, was, Mr. Woodford, why is it not working? Never, never did they say it cannot work. The only place you saw that coming from was the Opposition, which is natural, I suppose, being on the opposite side of the House. It was the Albatross around government's neck and the Opposition of the day figured it would hang onto them and choke them. Probably it worked, I do not know. It probably helped.

In any case, from every question I asked of experts all over the world, the Dutch are experts in the field of hydroponics. As soon as they came here they saw it was something that should have

worked. Why did it not work? It may be only history. None of us may be around to see the final chapter of Sprung. As far as I am concerned, on a personal basis, Sprung will work because those Dutch people are in there. They will make it work. No company is going to come in and pay \$21 million for anything, especially when it is not shown the bottom line is black. We do not expect them to. Whether it be the Dutch, who have world-class expertise, or whether it be the Onassis family, anybody with money, nobody is going to take it if it is losing.

In this case, as far as I am concerned, they will start off with a clean sheet. Whatever the final agreement is, the facility will still be there. And, as I said last week, the election is over. Forget it! Let us make sure that place works for the good and the betterment of everybody in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. GIBBONS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to inform hon. members today that Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has successfully completed a long term financing arrangement in the Canadian market. Hydro raised \$125 million through a 25 year bond issue. The bonds bear interest at 10 1/2 per cent, were sold at par and are guaranteed by the Province. The funds will be used to finance Hydro's ongoing capital works program. The issue

was sold to a syndicate of Canadian Underwriters managed by ScotiaMcLeod Inc., RDC Dominion Securities, Merrill Lynch Canada Inc., Richardson Greenshields of Canada Limited and Wood Gundy Incorporated.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank the hon. minister for providing us with a copy of this tatement. Obviously the financial guarantee of the Province is still worth something in the bond market, seeing that Hydro can raise \$125 million. But we are pleased that this could happen and we look forward to Hydro carrying out a significant capital works program in the Province this year, providing some upgrading of energy facilities and also, of course, providing much needed jobs for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Before getting into Oral Questions, I would like to welcome to the Speaker's Gallery on behalf of all members, a former Speaker of the House and member for Lewisporte, Mr. Jim Russell.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

My question is for the hon. the Premier. No doubt the Premier is aware that the former Executive Assistant to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (Mr. Gullage) has made a number of very serious allegations publicly, not privately but publicly, to the press and so on in the Province. In view of the fact that those allegations range from accusing the minister of lying about certain contractual obligations and work responsibilities, and so on, in the department, to saying that a certain application for grant funding was approved, and so on, and because of the fact that, since at least yesterday, the minister is saying that the former Executive Assistant is lying and the former Executive Assistant saying that the minister is lying - obviously this kind of thing is not doing anybody any good and adding any credibility to anybody - can the Premier tell the House whether or not he has had an opportunity to investigate this situation, the allegations that are being made publicly, and if he has, could he inform the House what the results of any such investigation might have been?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

It could hardly be called an investigation. It takes the form of a number of discussions with the minister before and after the event of Mr. Baird's resignation. The minister has kept me informed all along. I am totally satisfied

that the minister's position is completely correct. I accept what the minister has said. I point to a rather incomprehensible position taken by Mr. Baird that he is going to have a responsibility in determining government policy and announcing or declaring government policy and giving undertakings. I do not know what his concept of an Executive Assistant is, but that is not the role of an Executive Assistant and I really do not accept Mr. Baird's position in that regard.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that Mr. Baird alleges to have contributed thousands of dollars in cash and other services to the minister's re-election campaign - this is the allegation; I am not saying it is a fact, he is alleging it - and in view of the fact that Mr. Baird says he did that because there was a deal that would give him a high paying job in government and one of influence in government, does the Premier take those allegations seriously and has he had those investigated? If he has, could he tell us what the results of that investigation is?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Again, I have spoken to the minister concerned. He tells me there never was any such deal and I have no reason to doubt his word on it. He also tells me that Mr. Baird was a campaign manager for

the minister, that is quite accurate, and so contributed some significant service to the minister's election and perhaps to the overall success of the Liberal Party in the recent election.

The minister also advises me that there were no such cash contributions to the minister's campaign.

AN HON. MEMBER:

None.

PREMIER WELLS:

No. He tells me that —

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

PREMIER WELLS:

That is my recollection of it. I did not have an investigation of it, I had a general conversation on it, but if there is any reason for doubt I will certainly go back and pursue it. He did tell me that Mr. Baird contributed the use, I believe, of a photocopier or a typewriter or both, or something of that nature. I assume that that may be part of it. I do not know what he has done in the way of cash contribution. I understood there was none. I will have it pursued and I will certainly let the House know.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Baird is quoted as saying that he remembers specifically personal cheques for \$500 and \$1,000 being deposited to the campaign account. In fact,

one of those cheques was used to get the campaign started, to open up the account. More particularly, in view of the fact that Mr. Baird is making those serious allegations about a minister of the Crown, is not the Premier prepared to investigate the other side of those allegations, and clearly, one way or another, once and for all, absolve or otherwise the credibility factor, the credibility problems facing his minister right now?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

The simple answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes, I am prepared to hear the other side. I am quite anxious to. I have not had any contact from Mr. Baird. Mr. Baird knows where he can reach me at any time that he feels he has something to contribute to this, and perhaps I will endeavor to seek him out. I had no reason to accept the position that he was taking with respect to deciding input into government policies. It is just totally inconsistent with the position of an Executive Assistant to the Minister. So I discounted the whole thing. If Mr. Baird wants to talk to me I would be happy to meet with him at any time, and I will probably seek out an opportunity for Mr. Baird over the next day or so, to talk to him.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for his answer in that regard.

The Premier will also know that Mr. Baird again alleges quite publicly that the only reason why he participated in the re-election campaign for the minister was that there was a promise of payoff, job opportunity and influence, after the election was over, if the Party that the Premier leads won the government.

Now would the Premier not agree that if that allegation is true then that is a serious allegation, and one that ought to be investigated because, quite frankly, I guess it smacks of buying favour or graft or corruption or whatever you want to put on it? If that kind of allegation is true, would not the Premier, in view of the standard of conduct that he wants all ministers to live by, undertake to have that thoroughly investigated?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
I have heard the allegation for the first time now as the hon. the Leader of the Opposition speaks it.

Yes, I will undertake to have it examined to see if there is any validity to it. I can say to you that it is totally inconsistent with everything that Mr. Baird has said to me in the past and has said to me since the election took place. That is totally and completely inconsistent with everything he has said to me. He may have said it, and if he did I will certainly examine the record and speak with Mr. Baird and see what the situation is.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, the Premier as a lawyer, no doubt, I assume, would defend very vociferously the principle that all citizens are equal before the law. The Premier as a lawyer must admit that ignorance of the law is no defense. Now the Premier is aware that his Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Mr. Dicks) has admitted publicly that, knowingly or unknowingly, he has failed to live up to the provisions of The Conflict Of Interest Act, specifically Section 4, Subsection 9(a).

Now, can the Premier tell the House whether or not he is prepared to tolerate that situation, whether that fits into his standard of conduct guidelines as a Premier, or whether the Premier is prepared to ensure that the minister is treated the same as all other Newfoundlanders and Labradorians would be treated if we knowingly or unknowingly did not live up to the letter of the law?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
Yes, Mr. Speaker. Any and every member of the House of Assembly, whether he is a member of the Cabinet, the Speaker, or on the opposite side, who is in breach of the law, will have the full law applied to that member. There is no question about it. I have no quarrel with that proposition. That will be the case.

However, the presumptions that prefaced the questions by the Leader of the Opposition are not,

in fact, correct. I saw a headline in The **Sunday Express** saying the minister broke the law. That surprised me: The Minister of Justice broke the law. I looked at it, and I heard people make the allegations. I have spoken to the Minister of Justice. I have examined the full facts, and I see no evidence that the minister broke the law or that the minister did anything any different than all other members on both sides of this House have done in respect of the matter. If the minister broke the law, and if that is determined by other than the editorial board of The **Sunday Express**, or the hon. the Leader of the Opposition - with great respect to him, he is neither a judge nor a lawyer and I do not accept his judgement any more than I accept the judgement of The **Sunday Express** in that regard - but if the minister or any other member, including the Leader of the Opposition, including me, including the Speaker, including former ministers and present ministers, have broken the law, the law will be applied.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I have no particular difficulty with what the Premier is saying, but preaching about it is not going to address the simple fact of the matter that is facing the people of this Province today.

If one of us has failed to file our Conflict of Interest form properly, let it be known, let it be brought up. I am not aware of it. We are aware that the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Forestry, two ministers the Premier says he

quizzed before they went in Cabinet, failed to disclose property holdings under The Conflict Of Interest Act.

MR. SIMMS:

No, not the Minister of Forestry. He disclosed his.

MR. RIDEOUT:

The Minister of Forestry disclosed his, that is right. The Minister of Justice did not disclose all the things he should have disclosed under Section 4 of the act, as I understand it.

PREMIER WELLS:

Who said so?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Who says so? The minister has said so publicly and has said so in this House. He said he did not do it knowingly, but he said that, on reflection, he did not disclose all of what he should have disclosed.

Now, in view of the fact the minister admits he had legal advice from the Department of Justice on what he should or should not disclose, and in view of the fact that most of us in this House do not have that kind of service available to us, and in view of the fact that I accept I am not a gentleman learned in the law, can the Premier tell us how come he could tolerate a minister, particularly a minister who is learned in the law and received advice from the Department of Justice, failing to disclose properly all of those things he should have disclosed under The Conflict Of Interest Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

With great respect to the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, I believe he probably sincerely believes the claim he made that the minister failed to disclose what he should properly have disclosed. Now, if that has in fact occurred, the minister and everybody else who is in the same boat will have to meet the requirements of the law, will have to answer to the law for their failure. But, I do not accept that that is in fact what happened and I do not accept that that is in fact what has occurred. So I would like the Leader of the Opposition, if he is going to pursue this line of questioning, to tell me specifically what he is talking about. What offense has taken place? In what way has the minister offended The Conflict Of Interest Act?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, it is up to the Premier to answer the questions. I will direct them. Let me ask the Premier this: If the minister fulfilled all the requirements of The Conflict Of Interest Act, then why was it necessary, two or three or four days after it became a public issue, for the minister to file an amendment to his Conflict of Interest statement?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the minister may have

believed it was necessary at the time and took the proper step, may have believed that it was necessary to file an amendment. It does not make a determination that it was. I do not accept that it was. I mean, that has happened before. It has happened to a former Premier here who had to come in the House and say, 'I forgot to make a statement on my conflict of interest that my wife' - or somebody - 'owned or had an interest in a piece of land. I should have filed it. I overlooked it.' No great fuss or todo was made about it.

The minister, when this was suggested by a newspaper or by others, said, 'Well, if that is what was required, I am happy to make sure I comply and file an amendment immediately.' What I do not accept is that it was necessary to do it. I accept the fact that he did it. I understand that he did in fact do it. I do not accept the assertion that it was legally necessary to do it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I refer the Premier to Hansard of June 27, 1989, page number is R1034, and the Minister of Justice is responding to questions that I had raised. And the Minister of Justice said: "It was discovered" - that is, the fact that certain matters were not disclosed in his disclosure statement "by my department that it should be filed before we were sworn in."

MR. SIMMS:

By the officials, the experts.

MR. RIDEOUT:

By the experts. Most of us do not have that kind of expert advice available to us. The Premier is searching, is he?

PREMIER WELLS:

Well, tell me where it is!

MR. RIDEOUT:

"Mr. Dicks" on the bottom right hand side of R1034.

MR. SIMMS:

He just read it for you.

MR. RIDEOUT:

The second last sentence: "It was discovered by my department that it should be filed before we were sworn in."

MR. SIMMS:

By his officials.

MR. RIDEOUT:

By his officials in Justice.

Now, most of us do not have that kind of advice available to us, and we could then, I suppose, maybe even legitimately argue that it was something that we did not know, even though that is not a defence. But since it had been discovered by the minister's officials before he was sworn in, did not the Minister of Justice tell the Premier about this particular holding. And if not, why not?

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

I do not know what the member is referring to. What this says to me, and I read it: "Just several observations. It was not all of

the members. Upon assuming the office of Minister, one of my first things was to go and try and get this matter handled in the proper fashion. It was not, for reasons I will not go into. Essentially what happened was the day we were sworn in to the House, it had not been filed at that time." That is, the conflict of interest statement had not been filed. "It was discovered by my department that it should be filed," namely the conflict of interest statement should be filed, so it was filed. I do not know what the point of the question is. It says nothing about the content of it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will carry the Premier along. He is getting there. Slowly but surely he is getting there. I would like for the Premier to go to Hansard of June 27, on the next page, L1035, where the minister clearly indicates that, in the middle of the paragraph: "That is in there, and I clearly indicated to the member of the press, who examined me on that and asked me questions, that I overlooked that, that in overlooking this form, I did not realize at the time that probably to strictly comply with the act"... and so on. And the minister admits again that he was advised by officials in his department that he should make another disclosure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the question comes back again to the fact that the Premier quizzed, so he said publicly a week or ten days ago, all members of Cabinet before

their appointment to Cabinet. Now is this in conformance with the questions that the Premier would have asked those prospective ministers and in the answers that they gave to the Premier, or were the answers the problem and not the question?

PREMIER WELLS:
Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
The problem is the distortion of what the act requires. There is a suggestion here that failing to report that a company, in which the member owns shares, also owns land, is somehow failing to comply with the act. That is where the hon. the Leader of the Opposition and I disagree. I do not think that that is a failure to comply. What the minister said in the House is this. Here is what he said specifically. The Leader of the Opposition skips over it by saying, 'and so on,' but here is what he said: "That is in there, and I clearly indicated to the member of the press" - some member of the media had called the minister - "who examined me on that and asked me questions, that I overlooked that, that in looking at this form, I did not realize at the time that probably to strictly comply with the act, I should have included, in addition to disclosing my corporate holdings which I did do, I would also and should have probably included the land that was owned by the company, being at 96 West Street."

"I should probably have." Well, I say to the minister, that is not what the act says.

MR. SIMMS:

What?

PREMIER WELLS:
It is what he said. I am reading what he said. "I would also and should have probably included" -

MR. TOBIN:
You are the judge!

MR. SIMMS:
What are you saying now?

PREMIER WELLS:
I am saying that you are misreading the statute. The members of the House sitting here presently have not disclosed that. The former Minister of Justice, Mr. Ottenheimer, did not disclose that. Dr. Collins did not disclose it. It is not required. What the act requires is there, you see. Just read it. Do not distort the thing and make a mountain out of a molehill. The act is fairly simple and fairly clear.

AN HON. MEMBER:
You do not need to shout.

PREMIER WELLS:
Well, if you will be quiet I will not have to shout. It is when the members opposite keep interjecting that I have to shout in order to be heard. So just be quiet and I will tell you what the act says.

What the act says is this: "Without limitation of sub-section (3), the disclosure statement shall, whether or not a possibility of conflict within the meaning of subsection (3) exists in respect thereof, specify: (a) all land in the Province owned" - and then in brackets - "(in whole or in part or directly or indirectly through any person, company, firm or body or otherwise house, howsoever) by the member."

The land is the land owned by the member.

Now, if it is held by the Royal Trust Company in trust for the member, he must disclose it even though it is in the name of the Royal Trust Company. If it is held by John Jones on behalf of the member, he must disclose it, even though it is held by John Jones, because the land is owned by the member. Now, if the land is owned not by the member but by a company, whether the member has a 25 per cent interest in it, a 50 per cent interest in it, or 100 per cent interest in it, the land is owned by the company. That is why, for example, Dr. Collins did not disclose on his Conflict of Interest statement the fact that Terra Nova Investments, or whatever the name of it was, owned the land down on Bonaventure Avenue. That is why other members are in exactly the same boat, did not write on the Conflict of Interest statement the company in which they had shares because it does not require it. This is a total distortion and misrepresentation of what the law, in fact, says. So there is no problem with it.

The minister was caught a bit by surprise. 'If I have done something wrong, I want to correct it right away,' and he went out and he corrected it. I think that is commendable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:

I suppose now we will soon see from the hon. the Premier judgements, legal advice and references to back up what his interpretation is. It is certainly different from the interpretations received from the solicitors to the minister in the Department of Justice, the experts in the Department of Justice.

I want to ask the Premier this question, Mr. Speaker. Over the last several days we have seen certainly two, maybe three examples of problems with disclosure by ministers in his government. Can the Premier tell the House whether or not he is aware of any other potential conflict of interest matters, or real for that matter, among any of his ministers, or any possible problems with failing to disclose other items? Are there any other similar circumstances of potential conflicts of interest that the Premier might be aware of with any other minister in the government at this point in time?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

The answer to that, Mr. Speaker, is no, but I am applying the law as I know the law, not the minister's weird construction of the law. If some minister owns shares in a company that owns land and the land is not specifically referred to, I do not know whether that is so or not, but I am not aware of it, certainly.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not profess to

the be the legal interpreter of the law that the hon. gentleman is.

I have a question, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Health. Could the minister tell the House if he or any company which he controls holds any financial interest in any health care facility in the Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, they are really digging deep now, are they not?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Well, that is part of my job.

MR. DECKER:

I used to own a senior citizens' home when I was elected the first time, but it was just not convenient for me to operate the home so I sold it to Caudelle Manor, who still own and operate the home in Roddickton.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. the minister was could the minister tell the House - I will ask him again - if he or any company which he controls holds any financial interest in any health care facility in the Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

MR. DECKER:

No, Mr. Speaker. No company that I own has any financial interest in any health facility in this Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the minister indicated in his reply that he owned a nursing home in Roddickton, which he sold whenever it was, a licensed boarding home to Caudelle Manor.

Is it not a fact that a company owned by the hon. minister, Roddickton House Company Limited, which the minister owns 98 per cent of the shares in, holds a mortgage with that company for \$75,000? And because the minister owns that company that holds that financial interest in the operating manor, the minister has a financial interest in the -

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is sick.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Oh, yes! That is sick, is it? It was not very sick when it was being done to Dr. Collins just a few months ago.

MR. SIMMS:

Right on.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Does the minister own a financial interest in a health care facility in this Province? Yes or no?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I have asked that members refrain from making comments that cause any kind of reaction on either side of the House, and I have just heard comments coming from my left. I ask that it stop, please.

The Minister of Health.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, after I was invited into the Cabinet, I explained to the hon. the Premier that I did indeed at one time own a health facility, which I sold. The company that bought it from me did not have sufficient money to buy it, so my company loaned, Caudelle Manor a sum of money. I do not know if it was \$70,000, but a certain amount of money. I am not even certain if we took back a second mortgage, Mr. Speaker. I believe I did tell the Premier that I did take back a second mortgage, but I am not even certain that that is the case, because I think it was one of the other lending institutions. I am not definite on that, that could be checked with my legal advisors.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the minister says that he told the Premier. Let me ask this question first: Was the Premier aware, before the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle was appointed Minister of Health, that that particular gentleman held a significant financial interest in a licensed boarding home in this Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I reject the Leader of the Opposition's interpretation of it. I will tell the hon. House what I was aware of, as a matter of fact. He told me, because I required of every minister that they tell me whatever their

financial interests were so that I would know, and he said, "I used to own a senior citizens facility that I operated in Roddickton. I sold it." I do not know who he sold it to, although he probably told me at the time and I do not remember. "They could not raise enough money by way of a first mortgage on the property to pay the agreed purchase price." My recollection is that he told me there was a second mortgage backed to him or a company, I do not remember now if it was a company owned by him, it was one or the other. If it was the company that owned the facility in the first place it was probably backed to that company to secure the balance of the purchase price, and it had been paid on time and there was no difficulty over it. I saw no problem with it.

MR. RIDEOUT:

It was paid off.

PREMIER WELLS:

That it was being paid on time. I do not know whether the full balance is paid yet or not, but that it was being paid on time and there was no difficulty with it. But I had the impression that the full balance was not yet paid.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, this particular mortgage was registered on August 5, 1985, for \$75,000, and as of today there is still not a release, so we can only assume that there is still a balance owing and that it is continuing to be paid off. I am not a lawyer

but I assume that there might be a release registered if it was paid off. Is the Premier aware that directly, from the minister's department, each month, for each person that is in that home, comes a subsidy of \$630 for all twenty people or however many are in it? To that home, directly each month from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, through the Department of Health, for which the minister is now responsible, to the operator of that particular facility goes a direct subsidy from the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador. Does the Premier consider that that would fall inot the category of a potential conflict of interest, and that interest should have been disclosed by the minister to the Premier and by the minister in his conflict of interest statement?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

I would have to look at the conflict of interest requirements specifically to see if it was required to be disclosed. It may well be, I do not know. I cannot say off the top of my head without looking at the specifics, but it may be. If the minister did not disclose it in his conflict of interest statement, then it may be that he should have disclosed it and he ought to disclose it. From the point of view of my knowledge, I did not know specifically that monies were paid by Social Services or Health, whichever department pays it, to the operator of that home, but that does not come as any surprise to me. I would expect that that home is not any different than any of the other senior citizens facilities in the Province, most

of which have some or all of the beds that they operate supported or subsidized by the government to some degree. The simple answer is I was aware of the fact that the mortgage existed because the minister told me. But, what is he to do, tear it up? It is a second mortgage. You cannot sell it. What can you do with it? Now, whether he disclosed it or did not disclose it, I do not know, and if he failed to disclose it then he has to answer for that. I will take a look at that and see whether he should have.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the supplementary is to the Minister of Health. Could the minister tell the House whether or not he has approved any new additions to the licensed number of people who are permitted to be cared for in that particular home?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, the owner of that home, a Mr. Ellis Canning, who was the campaign manager of the Tory Party in the last election, phoned me a few days ago at home and told me that he wanted to get his licensing extended so that he could put an extra two people into the home. I did not say yes, I did not say no. I tell this House and the hon. Leader of the Opposition I did not even speak about it to the people in my department. I did not even consider it and under no way would

I consider it. The home is licensed to have twenty people and that is all the authority they have even gotten. I do know that the hon. member did in fact take an extra person in that home illegally, and my department was telling him that that person has to be removed because he was there illegally, and that is being done. I have not touched it, I have not interfered, but I did tell people in my department to treat all homes in this Province according to the law which was formulated by the Department over the years.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what the politics of the hon. gentleman is, but I suppose the minister when he was a member did not mind selling him the home. His money was good enough, I assume.

Can the minister tell the House this: Is it not a fact that for the last several weeks there had been two additional people living in that home? And is it not the job and the authority of the minister's department to ensure that the conditions of the license are abided by? For the last several weeks there have been two additional people, over and above the number it was licensed for, living in that home, and paying to live there.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of two additional people living there. As I said, I am aware of the operator trying to get permission

for the extra one which was not given. The person is there illegally. The person who phoned me said, 'Look, it is a political issue. What am I going to do with this family? You are going to be this and that,' that sort of thing. I do believe, though, that since I gave the home up, and before I became Minister of Health - on this I can be corrected - he has permission to take respite care in there, Mr. Speaker, but I am not sure if that is the case or not. But there has been no addition to that home in any shape or form whatsoever since I became minister, nor will that home be treated any differently from any other. But he is paying his installments and I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

I regretfully inform hon. members that Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

DR. GIBBONS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, The Canada - Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board is the government agency responsible for petroleum resource management and for administering the legislation and regulations governing exploration, and for production of hydrocarbons offshore Newfoundland and Labrador.

The board, which has been operational for over three years, is jointly responsible to the Government of Canada and the

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, to which it annually reports through the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources federally and through me provincially.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 1988 - 1989 annual report of the Canada - Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board as required by The Canada - Newfoundland Atlantic Accord Implementation Act.

Mr. Speaker, by The Mineral Act, we are required to table an annual report on the mineral licenses issued annually. I am pleased to table this report for the period April 1, 1988 to March 31, 1989 showing a total of 23,553 claims registered during that period.

Notices of Motion

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act." (Bill No. 12)

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have today the information required by the hon. member for Grand Falls in a question placed

on the Order Paper on June 11, 1989, Question No. 27. The question, Mr. Speaker: "Mr. Simms (Grand Falls) to ask the Honourable the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture to lay upon the Table" -

MR. SIMMS:

Table it.

MR. FLIGHT:

No, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to table it, I am going to itemize it.

- "of the House the following information:

"An itemized list of travel expenditures incurred by the Minister, his Executive Assistant or any other member of the Minister's personal or Departmental staff who may have accompanied him since May 5, 1989."

The answer, Mr. Speaker, is: Minister's travel: On May 9 I went to Stephenville to participate in National Forestry Week at a cost of \$473; on May 12 I went to Gander, the Farm Women's Organization invited me to go to Gander; on May 20, St. John's to Gander; May 26, St. John's to Gander; and on June 7, St. John's to Corner Brook to be briefed on all the things I need to be briefed on by my official in Corner Brook.

Mr. Speaker, I was accompanied on those trips by Mr. D.R. Peters, Deputy Minister. The figures are here. I will table that. I was accompanied by Mr. D.R. Peters on a second trip, by Dr. Nazir, Assistant Deputy Minister of Forestry on the third trip, and Mr. Ken Beanlands, Assistant Deputy Minister on one of the trips.

So is that answer to his satisfaction?

MR. SIMMS:

Wait until I see it.

MR. FLIGHT:

On the Order Paper, June 11, 1989, Question No. 12, says: "Mr. Simms (Grand Falls) to ask the Honourable Minister of Forestry and Agriculture to place on the Table of the House the following information:

"An itemized list of expenditures for any office equipment, personal equipment, furnishings and photographs purchased for the Minister's Office since May 5."

I would tell the hon. minister we are the exact opposite of the Premier where there were demands from all over the country for his picture. Nobody in Newfoundland seems to require one of mine. I have not had a request for a picture since I have been elected.

He wants an itemized list of expenditures, and the answer, Mr. Speaker, is this: There have been no expenditures for any office equipment, personal equipment, furniture or photographs purchased for the Minister's Office since 5 May 1989.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the hon. the member for Grand Falls are these answers satisfactory? I would, with your permission, say to him, and I am not sure this will be a fact, but that period covers from 5 May to 29 June, almost two months, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to inform the hon. the member for Grand Falls that if one extrapolates the expenses in those two months across the year - I am not saying it will be, it may not be - but if there is any

relationship to the amount of money I spent, I tell the member for Grand Falls there will be one awful difference in the expenses of my office from all the previous ministers, including him. There are expenses for two days in excess of that when he was minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order!

I would just again like to remind hon. ministers that the same rules apply to written questions on the Order Paper, as to oral questions, and we should not get into anything that is argumentative, any thing of opinion. The same rules apply.

This not being Wednesday, in the parliamentary sense, we have to call the regular Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice to introduce a bill entitled, "An Act To Remove Anomalies And Errors In The Statute Law", carried. (Bill No. 11)

On motion, Bill No. 11, read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:

Order 3.

MR. SPEAKER:

Concurrence Motion (Social Services Committee).

The hon. the member for LaPoile.

MR. RAMSAY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand here today and address the House on the concurrence motion for the Social Services Committee. The meetings, over the last two weeks, were all held here in the House.

Just to give the House an overview of what was accomplished within the Estimates Committee in examining the various departments, a lot of different things came up. Of course, there were some contentious issues with members of the Opposition as to certain areas of the budget and funds that had been allocated. There was also a lot of praise for the initiatives taken by the Ministers of the Crown in the handling of the budget over such a short period of time, and how they managed to put this together and get the wheels of government turning again after it had sat quiet and in limbo for such a long period of time.

There were some difficulties in the procedures we followed within the committee process and, as I understand, past history will show that the committee process is often a very political forum. This being the case, of course, there were a lot of political points raised, mainly by members of the Opposition. At times it was much to the chagrin of even the Opposition members of the Committee that the process took such a long and unnecessary time period to delve into areas in such detail that were of no necessity other than questions being asked possibly for the sake of asking questions. The purpose of asking questions for the sake of asking questions, Your Honour, is quite — I should not say trivial, but it

would give one the impression that the time being consumed was being consumed just for that, for its own sake.

I am hopeful changes will be made and that the hon. ministers of the Crown will see to it that in future the Committee can function in a much more diligent manner in getting down to the business of allowing new members to understand exactly what purpose is in examining the budget Estimates, criticism where criticism is due, and good, effective debate, not just diligent, incessant questioning for the purpose of asking questions and taking up time.

I do not say this entirely to be critical of the people of the other political stripe, they had a lot of good input into the process, as did members from the government side, but there were problems with the concentration on problems as opposed to concentrating on the objective, which was to stimulate good quality debate for all so that we could better learn the process and also to examine, possibly in some detail, with the minister and his staff present, just exactly what it was and what brought the officials of the various departments to come up with the programs that they had and the reasons behind their choice of specific programs over others. And at times when we are in tight budget situations we have to assume that there are reasons behind a choice being made, a choice of one particular program receiving more funding than another, the priority system being levied by this government on specific areas of development within the different government departments.

Another thing, Mr. Speaker, the Social Services Committee had to examine, of course, our objective. We flew by the seat of our pants, so to say; we had the helpful guidance of the Clerk of the House and the Clerk of Committees during our debates through this budget process, without which we possibly would have been quite naked in our approach to this matter.

With the guidance we were able to follow as tradition dictated the procedures necessary to complete our task. But I feel that something on the order of a more solid, a more legislative process - maybe 'legislative' is the incorrect word - but a more regimented process to the Committee system is needed so that things can be dealt with in a much more concise and diligent manner would be very effective for all parliamentarians.

As I mentioned earlier, politics of the budget versus the parliamentary aspects of it, sometimes members opposite choose to criticize members over here and some ministers for being more politicians than being parliamentarians. While each part of our makeup, being parliamentarians and politicians, I think having an equal role to play here in this hon. House, we were elected as politicians of our specific parties, and also as parliamentarians we are then instructed to debate the various issues which are brought before us, either in committee or here in the House, and to do this effectively politics does have a role to play, but it should be a role of our own philosophy, I think, and not necessarily one of browbeating over what side we are on, what we think should be done.

Often times there was little offer of an affective alternative by the opposition to the budget estimates as presented, and in all but one specific case, a noted exception by the hon. member of St. John's East (Ms Duff), there was concurrence by all members of the committee on passing the budget estimates as presented to the committee.

The way that I read that would be to see that we are in agreement with respect to the budget estimates as presented, with the one exception, although the majority carried, of the Department of Health, I think. The hon. member from St. John's East did object to complying with the committee at that time. The Opposition, in committee and also here in the House, what role do they take? As has been said in the past by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, their role is to offer an alternative to government. In that respect I would consider the offerings of such alternatives during committee debate to also be an affective method of offering this alternative to the House and to the people of the Province, the committee process being one of a public forum which the public can easily attend and ask questions, if desired.

The quality of debate overall that I have heard here, when I first gave my maiden speech I wanted to, from that point, improve the ability with which I debate a specific topic, because the tradition of debate itself does have a place to play here, does have a definite reason through the history of debate, the history of houses of assembly throughout the world, the history of legislatures, the quality of

debate is how we would be judged as parliamentarians, and the political aspects of this same issue of debate will appoint us to our respective parties where we are coming from in debate.

Without that quality I feel we bow down to creation of a plethora of information, an amount of questions and answers to which no one could address any particular idea or ideal of reason, where we plan to go from here, because if we just ask questions to get answers, and ask other questions to get more answers, and the question period here in the House is a good forum to keep government on its toes, it is a good forum to keep everyone looking at exactly what it is we are here for, to provide better government for the people of the Province regardless of our constituency needs, our own personal needs as members, with regards to how we are compensated or whatever, because our sole purpose when we get involved in public life is to serve the people better. And I feel that if we offer good quality debate during Committee and here in the House, with some preparation, which often is not the case, and I am possibly a bit guilty of this today because I did not spend the usual amount of time in preparing for what I had to say here today, but, then, again what are we to do? We are limited as to time with the House's constraints on when we can get prepared for the issues which are coming ahead.

I had a few things which I ran across in a book, and it is not a quote book as one of the hon. minister's tends to use, but it had some very poignant quotes which I think may assist us all in offering a better quality of representation through our

effectiveness here in Parliament to the people of the Province.

this one particular quote by Mark Twain says 'A person with a new idea is a crank until the idea succeeds.' And, Mr. Speaker, I submit that is certainly the case. Having being berated by the hon. the member for Humber Valley over constantly bringing up the issue of the greenhouse and what have you, I will not take that any further.

Another one quoted was by T. S. Eliot, and it says, 'Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?' Mr. Speaker, I feel that that particular quote should be taken very seriously by certain members opposite who participated in the Committee because we can drown ourselves in information through asking questions with no sense of a good alternative to offer. That is also the case.

As is often said by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, 'in view of the fact.' I notice he uses it quite frequently. I just pointed it out to a couple of other members as he was speaking in Question Period. In view of the fact that our Committee was at times difficult to operate and I at one time did get a little bit upset because of the inherent informality in which a Committee operates, oftentimes the Chair, and I was very honoured to have been asked to chair this particular Committee, does not retain the respect that is afforded to the Chair here in this House. And granted this is possibly a necessity with the method or the procedures that the Committee follows.

Now I feel that the way in which we reform the Committee system, which is planned for the near future, the possibility that questions asked will be put on an agenda, I think that would alleviate difficulties with these particular questions, and then a further point on the agenda set for other questions, with a strict limit of time. I know other members of Committees with their Chairmen did limit the time very strictly and this worked quite well. I tended to be very lenient in that respect, but often this leniency was abused.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. RAMSAY:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker, as Vice-Chairman of the Social Services Estimates Committee, I found that the Committee's deliberations were very, very useful. I am shocked, actually, to hear the Chairperson complain about too much information being elicited from ministers. Our job was to scrutinize the budget estimates for four critical social departments of this government, Education, Health, Social Services and Justice. In all, we spent about fourteen hours going through the estimates of the four departments. We did not actually use even all of our allotted fifteen hours, we made efficient

use of the time available, and that was particularly so in the case of our consideration of the Education estimates. Looking at the Minister of Education, as I am speaking about that, it was really because of the minister's co-operation in responding to questions that we used our time so well when we were deliberating the Education estimates.

I can say the same thing about the Department of Justice. The Justice Minister was co-operative, responsible and polite. In each case, the ministers set the tone for the deliberations. I am sorry to say I cannot say the same thing about either the Minister of Health or the Minister of Social Services. Those two ministers did their best to protract the proceedings of the Committee. They talked at length about previous governments. They tried to distract the committee's attention from the real problems of the day and an exploration of answers for the future, by repeatedly dredging up instances from the past. The Minister of Social Services preached extensively in a rather Evangelical style and we, in the Opposition, will be very, very interested in measuring his future performance against his sermonizing during our Estimates Committee meetings this year. We will see what happens next year and the year after, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the four social departments we were dealing with have overlapping responsibilities and, therefore, it was interesting for us in the Opposition to be able to take a considerable period of time, concentrated to deal with the four departments. We questioned the ministers on details of their budget estimates,

but we tried to focus as much as we could on the broad policy that underlies the numbers.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of members who were not present at our Estimates Committee meetings and for visitors, I will list quickly some of the issues that we dealt with and then I will conclude by illustrating how Opposition members' questioning and commenting on the pressing problems of child abuse and wife battering to all four ministers was constructive, yet how their responses and the numbers set out in their department's estimates represented, in our eyes, a very disappointing and inadequate response on the part of this new government.

Mr. Speaker, the first department we considered was Education. We talked about the firing of the former deputy minister and assistant deputy minister for administration and how that has contributed to a morale problem in the department and the wider education community within the Province. We talked about the importance of education at each stage of human development, pausing to reflect on the critical importance of education and development of young children, children before they enter school at age five. We were pleased to hear the minister say that he recognizes the importance of early childhood education and how he will be exploring co-operative projects in communities around the Province to provide better pre-school experiences for children, co-operative in the sense of having schools with parents and families in caring for young children.

We talked about planning and

preparation for the upcoming school board elections. This November, for the first time in four years, there will be school board elections throughout the Province. We asked about provisions to include all the citizens of the Province in this round of elections, particularly those who were excluded the last time, those who do not subscribe to any of the eight Christian denominations with constitutional powers in education. We discussed extensively the possibilities for greater sharing of school facilities among denominations in the Province and talked about specific examples. We dealt with pending consolidation of school boards, and we in the Opposition asked about provision for extra funding for boards being merged. We were disappointed to hear the minister say that this budget contains no special provision for the Deer Lake and St. Barbe Integrated Boards, which are slated to merge this summer. However, he indicated some relief through the regular operating grants.

We talked about the inequities experienced by girls and boys, and women and men in our society, and we were pleased to hear that the minister is keen to implement his philosophy that spending unequally is needed to provide equality. I was personally gratified to see the minister refer to the department's policy statement on equality of opportunity for females and males in education. That was actually one of the more pleasing moments in our deliberations, in my eyes.

We also talked quite a bit about post-secondary education in the Province and got some information about plans of the new government

for expanding post-secondary education institutions. That is just a very general summary of a range of subjects we addressed in education.

In health we dealt with a very long list, Mr. Speaker. We began talking about mental health services for children and adolescents. We in the Opposition got information from the Minister of Health and his officials about the growing demand for these services, given the sharp rise in disclosures of abuse of children, especially sexual assault of children. We also got information about the teenage suicide problem in our Province.

We discussed AIDS and got from the minister statistics about the incidents of HIV carriers and deaths related to AIDS so far in our Province. We talked about the need for more pointed and focused education efforts on the part of the Department of Health to educate our people about the danger posed by AIDS and about the need for people to practice safe sex. We asked the minister about his intention to improve the department's overall sexuality education efforts. He told us that the department is intending to hire additional reproduction nurses, planning to use them in a way the department earlier used a Public Health Nurse on the West Coast. In the Opposition, we said that that model was not entirely satisfactory, it was not well known, and there is a need for the Department of Health to conduct a much more aggressive sex education program throughout the Province.

We got statistics about the rate of deliveries in the Province, and the age of mothers delivering.

We talked quite a bit about plans of the department and health care institutions in the Province to close beds this year. Mr. Speaker, the government, when they were in Opposition, when they were campaigning for election, made much ado about the problems resulting from bed closures. The Minister of Health told us in our committee that there will be 400 beds closed this summer in the Province - 400 bed in the hospitals and institutions of our Province.

He indicated that about 200 additional nurses are required in these institutions, and that a nursing shortage is one of the main contributors to the bed closures, yet he admitted that the budget provides for the hiring of forty-five additional hospital and health care employees in all, of which thirty-three will be nurses. Mr. Speaker, we found out from the Minister of Health the distribution of the 400 bed closures and heard him say that the greatest closures will occur at the large hospitals in the major centres.

Mr. Speaker, at our first meeting on health, we were shocked to hear the minister say that there is absolutely no provision in his estimates for this year for a screening mammography program for the women of the Province. We have discussed that many times since in the full House. We talked about the need for expanding CT scanning services in the Province, and did not get any definite indication of the minister's plans. We asked about the Department of Health's position on fluoridation of municipal water supplies, and we were told that is something the new minister is just

investigating. We discussed extensively the minister's plans to discriminate against employees of health care institutions by denying them the benefit of the early retirement program.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I have to advise the hon. member that her time has elapsed.

MS VERGE:

By leave.

AN HON. MEMBER:

By leave, yes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

At any rate, Mr. Speaker, I will have another crack at this. I have two more departments to summarize, then I was going to tie it all together by illustrating the benefit of our discussion about the need to improve services responding to child abuse and wife battering. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. EFFORD:

I can understand why my hon. colleagues are relaxed. After that speech by the former Minister of Justice, we had to be relaxed and a little drowsy in our chairs.

I had the opportunity of appearing before the Estimates Committee on two occasions. The first evening we started at 7:00 o'clock and went through until 10:30. The next day we were supposed to be

there for one hour, but I think it actually lasted less than an hour.

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee, after just coming from the Cabinet of the former administration after ten years, asked some very peculiar questions at the Estimates Committee. First of all, I gave some brief opening remarks on behalf of the Department of Social Services. The member, in her opening statement, asked no less than thirty-one questions, I believe, before she drew a breath, and I did not get an opportunity to answer one question. In fact, she was asking me questions so fast it was only because I had such competent people with me, and I am such a good listener, that we managed take down most of the thirty-one questions.

When the former Minister of Justice stood she did not give me a good recommendation, she did not say very kind words about me. At least she could have said that out of the thirty-one questions she asked the Minister of Social Services had answers for most of them. But when she asked me how many cases of child abuse were reported in the Province for 1988-89, I very quickly told her 791 cases, of which 356 of the cases reported last year were sexual abuse, and she came back with the question - I still have not closed my mouth since she asked it - how many of those victims were female and how many were male? How many of the abusers were female and how many of the abusers were male? Now, I admit that I did not know the answer to that question. I actually did not know the answer to that question. But I would have thought, being a former member of Cabinet, that she would

have been more concerned about what the government of which she was a part, did not do for the number of victims of child abuse in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

But in the few short weeks we have been here, at least, number one, we have recognized the problem of child abuse in this Province and we have recognized the effect it is having on not only the victims but other family members, and we are already, Mr. Speaker, putting measures in place to work with the families of victims of abuse, and we are also putting preventive measures in place to prevent child abuse from actually happening.

But the former government did not even have the ability to recognize those problems and to put measures in place. I do not know why the former Minister of Justice would sit in her place and ask me questions as Minister of Social Services about abuses, about the people who have been convicted or about the people who have been charged, when that information should have been in the department she came from just a few short weeks ago. It is not the Minister of Social Services' responsibility to know whether the abuser is a male or a female, or how many people were charged in 1988-89, our concern is to work to support and counsel the families and the victims of child abuse. The former Minister of Justice should have known the answers to those questions. In fact, she should not have put herself in the position of asking the questions, because she knew very well what this member of the government would come back and say to her.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have to look at the fact that we, as an

administration, have only been here for a few short weeks. They had seventeen years to put together effective measures to work and support those who are victims of abuse. But there was absolutely nothing put in place by the former administration in seventeen years, and in less than seven weeks, the new administration has these measures already in place. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that not only are they in place, but they are going to get better as the weeks and the months go by.

The MHA for Humber East cannot stand up in this House of Assembly and attack this administration, or the Minister of Social Services, or the Minister of Health for not answering questions the way she would have them answered. Let me tell all members of the Opposition, you have the privilege of asking questions, we have the privilege of answering them. We do not say what you want us to say, we say what we want to say. And when questions asked are pertinent to things caused by this government, or caused by this administration, then we will take full responsibility. But we will not I say, and I will say it very clearly, we will not take responsibility for the failures of the former administration. And those were the types of questions that were coming from the Opposition during the Estimates Committees, questions on what they failed to do, Mr. Speaker.

The MHA for Humber East just said that she will be back next year to ask questions. I am not so sure she will be back next year, but I am sure we will be back next year, Mr. Speaker. And when she asks questions we will have answers, Mr. Speaker, about accomplishments

we can boast about which we will do over the next several months. And at that time we will be able to point out the downfalls of the last seventeen years. And the hard work and the long hours we have had to put in so far we will continue to put in over the next several months to bring up to standard our society and the Department of Social Services. We will deal with child abuse, the needs centered around preventive measures, the needs to follow up support programs we can put in place to help those people who are victims, and families who are victims, either the father or the mother, who have to suffer the consequences of having their child or children in that particular circumstance. Because it is not always two family members who cause child abuse. Sometimes it is both parents, but in a lot of cases it is either one parent or the other.

But we are, Mr. Speaker, working on that problem. Our time here has been very, very short, but we have recognized the problem and we are going to do something about it. But mostly, Mr. Speaker, I want the Opposition to understand that there is a long, long time between seventeen weeks and seventeen years, and they failed but we are succeeding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
I would like to be recognized

first.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) today. Sit down.

MS DUFF:
No, this is getting to be fun.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Social Services Committee, I must say I found the process interesting if not entirely enlightening, except in some instances.

I wanted to speak a few moments at the initial instance about the process. I was going to do that anyway, even if the hon. the member for LaPoile had not gotten on his soapbox this morning, arising out of comments that were made by the hon. the member for St. John's South. It appears to me that hon. members opposite suffer from a great degree of defensiveness, they do not seem to understand what the whole process of the Estimates Committee is. I wanted to learn in this exercise. I was really looking forward to this part of my role as a member of the Opposition, because the debate in the House is somewhat structured and sometimes it is a little difficult to get direct answers; I get a feeling sometimes that we are playing a little game of hide and seek, we are seeking and everybody on the opposite side is hiding.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
I am sure members opposite would have been much happier if we had taken a line of questioning that went something like this: How can the hon. member work as hard as he does, those seventeen hours a day? Or, How could this

administration have been so generous, so kind-hearted to the people of the Province of Newfoundland?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MS DUFF:

Oh fantastic! And I am very, very sorry if we disappointed you, because we had an idea that our role, at least, as members of the Opposition was to provide constructive criticism, was to probe, and was, occasionally, to criticize in order to ensure accountability.

We look at the election promises, we looked at the Throne Speech, we looked at copies of the estimates in previous years and found, in fact, that is what the hon. members were doing over here, probing and criticizing. Oh did they ever criticize! Far worse than we have criticized so far. But our genuine interest was to get answers. And I would say that if we had gotten answers, if you had not been as good as you are at the game of hide, the Social Services Estimates Committee probably would not have taken half as long.

Now, I have noted with amusement, in fact, the comments from the hon. the member for LaPoile. Because it was immediately obvious, the minute the Committee sat, that he had one deep regret, that the Estimates Committees were in fact were informal, and that the hon. member was not seated in the Chair there clothed in black robes. Because that is what he wanted. He wants parliamentary procedure, he wants to be able to

limit: 'It is your five minutes now. Next speaker, please.' And we made him very impatient. The informality of the Estimates Committee I thought - I may be wrong - is there for the purpose of being able, in an informal manner, to seek answers, to ask questions and if you do not get answers to your questions, to ask them again, and again, and again.

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible) over there the next time.

MS DUFF:

No, he was a little bit aggressive.

The officials were also there, I thought, for the purpose of answering questions of fact, but the hon. ministers, two in particular - I cannot say I want to blanket them all with this criticism - have learned from their leader; every time an official wanted to speak, he got the hand signal, you know, and he had to whisper in the minister's ear. So that took time, because the same answer had to be given twice and then filtered through the minister.

MR. EFFORD:

Be nice now. Be nice.

MS DUFF:

I have learned a lot from you, Sir, in my few days in the House.

MR. SIMMS:

But you cannot repeat it in the House.

MS DUFF:

I cannot repeat all of it, no. Now the hon. Minister of Social Services is a funny guy. I must say I found it quite entertaining to be in the Social Services debate. It is a pity in a way,

because the issues we were dealing with were very, very serious issues, and they have already been listed by my colleague, the member for Humber East.

MR. EFFORD:
(Inaudible).

MS DUFF:
We wondered, rightly, why? Having heard the statements from this side of the House when you were in Opposition we wondered, having read your program, why in fact you did not, even in the short seventeen weeks that you had available to you, reallocate some more funding to some areas, particularly in the area of child welfare. Why, when we asked you about the case loads of welfare officers in the child welfare department, which are 95 clients per welfare officer when the national average is about 22, had you not allocated more funding for more child welfare officers? We know the needs are growing: We know there are more mother-led families, we know there is increased evidence of sexual abuse, we know there is more adolescent suicides. But, I must say, the minister did answer the questions. He had one answer, 'Yes, the allocations are inadequate.' That with passion, absolute passion! 'Yes, but we have not done anything about it because we do not have the resources, and the real problem is that you guys made such a mess of it for the last seventeen years.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
That was the standard answer to every question.

So we have written down all of the

questions. We did not get answers this time, so we will ask them again next year, and the year after, and the year after, then we will be back in government and he can come over on this side and ask us some questions.

Now, there are certain good things in the estimates of the Department of Social Services, and we did tell the minister that we were quite happy with his decisions with regard to the deinstitutionalization program and the fact that Exon House had closed out. We asked, because it is not evident. If you are reading this budget, you cannot always see. Figures do not leap out at you and tell you what is being put into a given program. So we asked, in fact, if there was additional funding to provide support services in the communities for those children who have been taken out of institutions. I am happy to say that the minister said yes, there was, and that he would monitor this situation carefully, and so will we. If we find there are any deficiencies, we will be the first ones to let you know.

We also asked a question, which I thought was a very legitimate question, about the need for greater liaison between the Departments of Health, Social Services and Education, because we are dealing with a whole person and many times there are multiple problems. The minister assured us that he, in fact, would be picking up on the initiative of the previous government to create a liaison committee and that that liaison committee would be meeting. Mr. Minister, I commend you for that. It is not all bad. I think the whole process could have been more educational, more

constructive, and more productive if, in fact, we had not encountered such a degree of defensiveness and such a degree of aggression on behalf of some of the ministers.

Now, I did not find this at all with the Minister of Education. We gave him a harder time, Sir, than we gave you, and a longer time, and the minister simply sat there and answered the questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
In the one area where we did not feel we were getting correct answers, possibly because we were not phrasing them correctly, we kept at it and he kept answering. I do not think he ever once said that all the problems in education are due to the fact that 'you people had been in there for seventeen years.'

The appealing thing about the Minister of Social Services is that he always does it with a smile on his face. There is a difference between the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Health. The Minister of Health is equally aggressive, equally inclined to be political, but he does not even have the grace to smile. The Minister of Health is an unhappy puppy.

MR. SIMMS:
More unhappy after today.

MS DUFF:
If it is not our role to question and to try to get behind these rather sterile figures in the budget and to identify program areas which the people in the communities have told us are important and to make sure that

these areas are adequately funded and to ask the government, even if they have only been in for seventeen hours, to be, at least in their policy direction, accountable for what they are going to do, then I think what we need is not a parliamentary system, what we want is a dictatorship.

There is one outstanding omission in this budget which no one as yet has referred to, and I think perhaps it would be worthwhile. I am not sure which department it should be in, possibly the Department of Public Works. I would think that next year we would like to see in the budget allocation for thirty-one soapboxes for members opposite, because it obviously is not sufficient for them to have a seat in the House, they need a soapbox to stand on so they can continue to preach.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

DR. WARREN:
Mr. Speaker, just two or three comments I would like to make. I enjoyed very much the discussion on the estimates. I learned a great deal through the experience, and hopefully next year I can improve my first-class performance of this year in answering questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:
Very admirable. Very admirable.

DR. WARREN:
One of the themes, Mr. Speaker, of

the discussion was this question of equality. This has to be an educational issue for the 1990s as well as the 1980s. Certainly this government believes that there should be greater equality of educational opportunity, gender equality, and many other aspects of equality. Certainly it is our intention to ensure that greater equality is provided for the students throughout this Province irrespective of where they reside, or irrespective of the wealth of their parents, or the social economic background from which they come. We believe that.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Do not let him ask it?

MR. TOBIN:

I believe what the hon. minister is saying, Mr. Speaker. I know he is a very sincere, very genuine individual and I have a lot of respect for him. I am just wondering if, when he says that, he is prepared to commit a high school to Petit Forte and South East Bight.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to visit any schools in this Province. I have visited hundreds of schools. I have already agreed with the hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Langdon) I am going to some of the smallest schools in this Province. I would be delighted to visit the schools, and over the next few years we are going to change some things.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. WARREN:

But this question of equality, Mr.

Speaker, is a major issue. The hon. member for Humber East mentioned that you cannot have equality with just equal dollars, you have to spend unequally to have equality of educational opportunity. Those people who are most disadvantaged require higher spending. And this is one of the problems with the school tax equalization system. It is a move in the right direction. This year we put into that fund an extra \$1 million over and above what was promised or what was planned. We put \$5.5 million into it for a total of \$10 million. The first year of that plan \$2 million went in, the second year a \$2.5 million went in, the third year \$4.5 million and this year it went to \$10 million. We need another, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, \$5 million to provide equal dollars for boards throughout this Province. But even that is not enough, because we have to spend more on the disadvantaged areas of this Province to provide greater equality of educational opportunity at both the post-secondary level and the elementary and secondary levels.

On the couple of other issues that came up: The question of school board elections. They are coming this Fall. It is my hope that many more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will run for election to school boards. It is a very important role that they play in the educational system of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. WARREN:

This Fall I will actively campaign to encourage more people to run, and also, of course, more people to come out and vote. Because

school board members voluntarily contribute a great deal to the educational system of this Province, and let us never forget that, and let us respect that.

On a couple of other issues: Accountability. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in the future it is not going to be easy to get money for many government services, so we have to ensure that every dollar spent we get the best value for that dollar. In education, our population is getting older. I think we are going to compete with Health. The competition is going to get tougher with Health and Social Services. So we have to guarantee the public that they are getting good scholar for the dollar, if I might use that slogan. It is essential that we do that, and I think that we are going to have to be more accountable. This gets me into a question raised by the hon. member for Humber East, the question of sharing. I have been a long time supporter of sharing - sharing among schools within a school board, sharing among schools of the same denomination, and sharing among schools of different denominations.

I have already indicated to the people of this Province that I am going to convene a meeting with the church authorities early this Fall to put this on the agenda. I, in fact, might be a little more pro-active than my good friend for St. Mary's - The Capes. I have heard him on interdenominational sharing. I might be just a little more pro-active as a minister to get this on the agenda and to sit down with the authorities. In fact, I may even convene a forum of people this Fall to openly discuss this whole question of interdenominational sharing within

the denominational system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. WARREN:

I believe, with declining enrollments and few dollars, the time has come for us to look at some more changes in the traditional system we have had - the sharing of services, sharing of buildings, sharing of specialists and sharing of programs. Certainly we are going to have difficulty with the amount of money. You look at what we are spending on education in this Province, and people have asked me how much more is necessary? Much, much more. I estimated recently that we needed another \$180 million to bring us up to the Canadian average, to be spent on elementary and secondary education. We do need that to bring it to the Canadian average. Maybe we need more than the Canadian average, because we have been so disadvantaged for such a long period of time. We have geography, a major problem in education in this Province. We are going to need much more money in the future, but expenditures on education are investments. This is an investment in our future and I am delighted to be part of a government that put education, health and development as three of the cornerstones for the future of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. WARREN:

Educational expenditures are investments. I, of course, hope that over the next few years the federal government will get involved. What is this country all about if it is not sharing

within the federal context? We have had federal monies put into education in the past, into post-secondary, but this federal government has to put in more money so that we have equality not just within this Province but within the country, so that are people can compete. It is investment in our people, Mr. Speaker, that we are talking about, not educational expenditures.

I hope, over the next few months, that I will have many opportunities to discuss views on post-secondary education. The time has come, it seems to me, to re-think some of the structures we have in post-secondary. In St. John's we have four post-secondary institutions. I hope we can look at how they can share and work together. Maybe some restructuring is necessary. I want to do that in the future. I am excited about educational television and technology and the future of that in education. The hon. member for the Burin Peninsula has not said anything about what we are going to do in Burin with telecommunication and teleconferencing. That was an excellent announcement in this budget. We announced that we were going ahead with that. We heard quite a bit about Labrador, but we did not hear anything from the hon. members about this exciting experiment that we are conducting on the Burin Peninsula. I am delighted with it.

MR. TOBIN:

That was already announced. You are three months too late.

DR. WARREN:

We announced that we were going to do it this term. We were going to do it this Fall. We have also

done a great deal in educational television at the high school level, and I am excited about the possibility of teleconferencing and technology for the future of schools in rural Newfoundland, using the latest in technology.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of my thoughts and I hope to get many opportunities in the future to expand on these and other views. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

When I look at some of the ministers I think of Tennyson's poem, "...Ozymandias, king of kings;/Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" because in a sense they set themselves up for absolutes, and once you set yourself for absolutes it is practically impossible to maintain it, and once you fall, then, obviously, the fall is going to be big.

I enjoyed the Committee structures I was involved with, particularly with education. I think that any province, or any country, if it hopes to attain an acceptable level of economic prosperity, then the educational level of its people must be such that they can avail of the vocational and professional occupations that are created either by state or by the private sector.

Unquestionably, the educational level in this Province has risen substantially over the years; however, there is not unanimous consent as to whether we have

gotten the best value for the dollars spent on education. But we have to utilize what we have to its fullest potential. For example, at the present time, in the community college in Stephenville, the commercial driving school course being offered has a waiting list of two years. And since the trains have disappeared from the tracks in this Province, and tractor trailers have taken the bulk of that particular freight load, then I do not think we should have a facility with a two-year waiting period when many of our unemployed people would like to be able to enter that particular institution and avail of the vocational opportunity that is there.

So, my suggestion to the Minister of Education would be to look at one of the community colleges across the Island, probably, for example, the one on Bell Island, that has a 65 pupil enrolment for this year. The building is really underutilized and we might be able to install a secondary commercial driving school in the facility and make that particular community college viable. I think by doing that we would alleviate the bottleneck that has been at the Stephenville campus for a long, long time.

I was also interested in the comment made by the minister, Mr. Speaker, regarding the school board elections this Fall. One of the contentious issues has been with the Federation of Municipalities and the towns in this Province, that the school boards have not been participating in the cost to run these particular elections and the towns have had to bear the whole brunt of them. So, in a sense, then, if the school boards are going to be

availing of the roles and the facilities of the towns and getting the people involved, then they should be responsible for part of the cost.

I think, also, that the school tax authorities are in favour of that, especially the commercial part of it, because they are reaping the reward, so to speak, from the commercial establishments, and the towns figure they should play an active part in that.

Speaking of funding for school boards, I am pleased also with the amount of money that has been put in for equalization grants. I have already discussed with the minister, Mr. Speaker, the fact that some of the school boards in this Province cannot really be in agreement with the way funds are allocated at this particular time, and it might need some form of change in legislation so they will not get their funding on per student capita, but it could be with, as we suggested earlier, the age of the school, the geographic factors included, and award grants in a similar way to what we do for light and heat in these schools.

I already discussed with the minister that the school board in the area I represent, the integrated board in Fortune Bay, is really, for all intents and purposes, bankrupt. That particular board, if it were a private business, would have gone under. And, come September, even with the new monies there from equalization grants, that school board is still looking at a current account deficit of \$250,000.

I was talking with the assistant superintendent and one of the co-ordinators only yesterday, here

in the House, and they are really concerned about what is going to happen to their school board, come September. I think these school boards should really have their needs addressed, because the minister is already on record as saying, Mr. Speaker, that regardless of where we live in this Province, whether in a rural or an urban area, everybody should have equal access and equal rights to education. That is not the case with many of the small rural school boards in this Province.

I understand, too, that there is no short-term plan in which these school boards are going to be amalgamated or taken under the wing of a larger school board. So really, in a sense, this board has to be compensated now.

Also, when we look at the student aid program our students have to be administered under, and I have already discussed that also, Mr. Speaker, with the minister, and it was brought up in the Estimates Committee, 25 per cent of all the money allocated for Student Aid goes into administration. I think that is relatively high. Because if you have such a large administrative cost, there should be some way to reduce it so that money could go to the students who basically need it.

Also, along these same lines, there is no doubt that many of the students, and I guess practically all the students here in the University, are upset about the fact that there is a 10 per cent increase in tuition fees. Along with the other increases, in student identification, in the health plan, and so on, it is going to be more than 10 per cent and it is going to cause some unnecessary hardship on these

students who are attending this particular institution.

When we realize, and I am sure the minister can identify with this, and I am not being facetious when I say this, I am not being asinine in my remarks either, I am sincere, when the Economic Recovery Team has been in place and jobs have been created and the young people in this Province do have a better opportunity to avail of jobs that are available to them once they come out of the University, then probably we could ascertain the 10 per cent increase, and probably even one that is higher. But at this present time there are many post-secondary students in this Province who cannot find jobs, who are unable to find work, yet they have to go back to University in the Fall with the increase making the burden much more difficult.

It is some of those concerns that I raise as well. Also, when we were looking at the Health Estimates, I was thinking about the expansion to the hospital facilities in this Province. I come from an area in Fortune - Hermitage where there is a cottage hospital, in Harbour Breton, that was built fifty years ago, and that particular hospital is in a deplorable condition because of its aged structure. In fact, some of the pillars that keep the foundation of that particular structure in place are literally falling down, and no substantial work done has been done on that over the years. So in that particular geographical area of the Province, then, these people are looking for improved facilities, they are looking for a new institution, for acute and chronic care, that will look after the whole area of that particular

part of the coast. It is in that light that I hope these particular new programs, which are being outlined by the ministers, can really, in a sense, address the needs of the rural people in this Province.

And it is, I guess, the same basic, nagging question as well when we look at the Social Services Department. The minister has said, and I guess the fact is we all make political hay, that all of these problems were compounded over seventeen years, when this party was in government, all these things are there as a result of that. I do not think we should ever lose sight of the fact, though, that there are some serious, glaring problems in Social Services in this Province.

I was talking to a lady yesterday who, over the last year, has been living in a house the Department of Social Services pays \$290 a month for, where she has no heat apart from a rangette, where she has no hot water tank, and a sporadic water supply. To me, that is wrong and, therefore, it is those types of things which have to be addressed. That is not an isolated case, that particular situation exists in many parts of this Province.

There is no doubt about it, we have to have compassion and understanding for the people, and once we have that compassion and understanding, be able to address the needs and work at it, not from a political point of view but from a governmental point of view, where people on either side of the House have something to offer. We have already heard these particular comments being made, that no one particular individual I guess has a monopoly on the way

to do things. And I guess anytime we think we are indispensable, we should put our hands into a bucket, take up a handful of the water and the hole that is left is how indispensable we are. I think if we look at it from that perspective it clearly shows that no one particular individual, no one particular party, in any situation, has all the answers to our problems. And it is these particular problems that I will try to address over the number of years that I represent the people in my district.

In concluding, I would like to say that being on the Estimates Committees was a learning experience.

I think I overheard the Minister of Social Services say one night, 'If you think that these guys asked a lot of questions, if you think they were persistent, you should have heard me over the last number of years.' So, therefore, it is our job, it is our duty, I guess, to prod the minister.

MR. EFFORD:

But I asked sensible questions.

MR. LANGDON:

So did I ask sensible questions. And I got sensible answers, I would think, to the questions I asked.

Let us all realize, as I said earlier, that none of us have all the answers to all the problems, and the further we set ourselves up the harder we fall. Let us hope that nobody falls, that we all do our jobs equally well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I just have two or three brief comments. The hon. member raised two or three very important issues. The report of the Task Force on Educational Funding will be submitted to the department within three weeks, I gather, and hopefully after that we can release it. That report will address some of the hon. member's concerns about the new grant system. I have already indicated to him in estimates that I believe the grant system needs to be totally reviewed, revised, and that task force report, hopefully, will suggest directions for the future.

The second point he raised, Mr. Speaker, dealt with the funding of capital. As the House knows, in this budget the government increased capital spending from \$20 million to \$27 million, a \$7 million increase for each of the next three years. In this year's increase, Mr. Speaker, there is an amount of \$2.5 million for debt retirement for boards that have a very high debt ratio, over, I might suggest, \$300 per student per year. That amount will bring boards, like the board in the hon. member's district, down substantially. It will be some help to his board in the interim, until we review the whole grant system. But there is an amount of \$2.5 million to help in debt retirement for boards this coming year.

Mr. Speaker, he mentioned the student aid system and the efficiency of that system. I can assure him that the Student Aid Division within the Department of Education is working hard to make the whole system more efficient.

Computers are now being used, and I guarantee him that applications are being processed very efficiently.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is right.

DR. WARREN:

The hon. member across the way, who was Minister of Career Development in the former government, acknowledges that that is happening.

One other point: On the rural - urban discrepancy, the government this year announced a \$3.4 million fund for teacher aides. That amount of money will be distributed on a formula throughout the Province that will treat urban and rural districts alike. The hon. the member for St. Mary's - The Capes knows that in the past we have had some anomalies in that funding system. St. John's got a certain amount per student per year, much more than the rest of the Province, for the employment of teacher aides and for handicapped children. This new formula is an attempt to provide basically the same system throughout the Province so that all districts will be treated more equitably in the future. We are delighted with that announcement, and my department is getting ready to release details about the teacher aide program, the funding, the training and the employment of these teacher aides by school boards. The money is going to be given to the boards and the boards, then, will employ persons to serve in these capacities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to have a few words on the debate on the educational issue. A couple of things mentioned by the minister in his speech: One, going back to the allocation of funding for equalization this year, when he was mentioning the amount, \$5.5 million approximately, he said it was \$1 million more than was planned. Now, that is not exactly factual. When the program was introduced, and it was introduced by us three years ago, it was stated quite clearly to the boards and everyone else that in five years we would aim for full equalization. That program, to be on schedule, it was thought that with two years remaining it would be \$4.5 million a year, and that would be dead on with what the minister said. However, it had been decided, and committed, actually, during the election and beforehand in the budget preparation, to achieve full equalization this year. And the Opposition, during the last year-and-a-half, I guess, had zeroed in on equalization as one of the key issues in the Province, and it is. I have no doubt about that. What this equalization grant has done is it has given boards with the inability to raise money themselves through the school tax authorities a chance to have equal funding with boards who are in the areas that are fairly well off economically. And the money, of course, translates to a per pupil expenditure in these schools - extremely important. But it became such a popular issue that everyone jumped on it, the NTA after awhile, and then the

Liberals, and they were saying, 'But you must go for full equalization,' and their commitment was for full equalization. So we are disappointed that, unlike what we were committed to do and had budgeted to do, the government now failed to come up with full equalization.

The Premier himself, I know, at a meeting out in Lewisporte, cheered by some good Liberals, committed himself solidly to equalization. Certainly, you would think he would have delivered. But the move is certainly a positive sign to boards that they are coming out of the depth of red a lot of them were in. All of them were not in it, by the way. All school boards are not in debt, some of them are in a relatively good position financially. That might mean they are not in a good position in relation to materials, and so on, for schools, and that is maybe even worse than being in the red. But some of the boards economically, at least on paper, are in fair shape.

The capital debt restructuring that the minister mentions, which was also put in place by us, and the boards know that, is a very positive move. I am glad to see he brought that in also, because what it does is give some of the boards that are deeply mired in debt a chance to come up, a breathing space, so they can use the extra funds they are now getting to put some extra dollars into programming instead of putting the money into debt charges.

Unfortunately, and I think the minister will agree with this, I have said it several times, most of the debt out there is a result

of the boards having to borrow, a policy that was in place and we changed, by the way. It was the first thing we did in the Department of Education, some years ago. Ten per cent they had to borrow on capital construction, and that was what caused most of them to have heavy debts. Of course, in order to pay the capital debt they had to use the operational funds given them each year for that purpose, which left them very little money on which to operate their buildings. But these are all positive things which are happening.

One concern I have, however, is in relation to the share of the pie. This last year and-a-half, since things began to happen in education and we began to attract the attention of people around, including the Opposition and the NTA, and good policies like equalization and what have you came into place, the special education project, the improvement in teacher aide programs, all of which, by the way, are Tory programs, not new ones created by the Department -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Not only the Tories (inaudible).

MR. HEARN:

I am glad to see that the minister brought them in. I have no problem with that. But they were developed by us.

But one of the things that always perturbed me was that the Newfoundland Teachers' Association were never satisfied with the amount of money we put in the budget. I remember the year before last we increased our budget by \$58 million, but, yet, that did not satisfy the Newfoundland Teachers' Association

'because,' they said, 'our share of total funding in education was less than it had been in the past. There was a time when 27 per cent of the budget, or whatever, went into education.' What they failed to understand was that there were a few years when you had LIPS, one where \$140 million, I think, went to bail out school boards, which drove the educational share of the budget out of proportion with others. What they failed to say was that our school population is really going down. And, in relation to health, where our population is getting older and more money has to be spent by the Minister of Health, that share of the pie was the be-all and end-all, and the little pin which says 'equal share of the funding', or 'a fair share', I think it is, was all centered around the piece of pie.

Now I suppose my question, if I can leave one hanging, is really to two members of the Legislature, the Minister of Employment and Labour, who was here a moment ago, and the hon. gofer for Exploits, the member for Exploits (Mr. Grimes).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Now, that is not nice. Be nice.

MR. HEARN:

Actually, I told him I was going to say that for the record.

There is no doubt about it, when the budget was being prepared, certainly, if you look at the Cabinet table, it has to have the print of the heels of the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, because she had to dance on the table when she realized that the share of the pie was even smaller this year, and she is a member of Cabinet,

smaller than it was last year - slightly, but smaller. The share of the pie, not the share of the funding, not the amount of dollars, the share of the pie. Look at the budget. Education is smaller.

The member for Exploits, surely every time he went in with the morning paper and coffee, had to say to the Premier, 'Mr. Premier, you must put more money into education. You have to go for full equalization. You have to increase that share of the educational pie.' Because that is what we have always demanded, and we should settle for nothing less. So those are the disappointments. The positive things are the programs that are brought in, the special aides program in particular, the teacher aide program.

And the minister mentioned, Now we are going to treat everyone equally. The word 'discrepancy' is in the past. We will have arguments, of course, from the St. John's area, because in the past they had the first programs, when they took over the developmental centers and assumed not only the responsibilities but also the funding that went into that, and as other programs developed across the Province, students out there got fewer dollars per student and you had varying degrees of disabilities. But, you say you are going to equalize. I would suggest you will have problems there, because they are used to a certain program.

You may also have to look at exceptions. There are exceptions in the programs that are run, and I refer to the one in Labrador West where they have advanced much further than any that I am aware

of, and I have been through most. I hope the minister takes the opportunity this Fall to go down to Labrador West and see exactly what is happening. Like all of us, we have concerns about the handicapped students in our schools and how far they can advance, and it is amazing what is happening in that area. The minister has an exceptionally good division in his department dealing with the handicapped in the Province and special education, and I certainly hope he gives them a free rein to carry on with the work they are doing.

The other concern is in relation to school boards. He mentioned that during the Fall he was going to do some publicity work and get directly involved in advocating that people run directly for boards, and I commend this. I am not sure how he is going to do it. He is not allowed to advertise, so it will be personal appearances, hopefully, around the Province.

I do not think people generally realize how important it is to have good local school boards. Many of the problems that arise, crisis problems, spur-of-the-moment things, occur simply because people are not aware of what is happening right at their local doorstep, where they really have control of the issue. And that is unfortunate. If we had good, solid local school boards throughout the Province, many of the problems that exist in education would not exist, because they would be identified with the lines of communication going, and the department and government would not be asked to get involved and interfere in things which they have no control over anyway, except perhaps to mediate or

provide information. A lot of people do not realize how much power school boards have. They decide where schools are built, they decide what teachers to hire, they elect a chairman, they decide which schools to close, and that is always an issue, and they decide a number of things in relation to board amalgamation.

That is another problem the minister is going to have on his plate. We have not heard much about it yet, but as we go through the next few days or weeks, maybe we can talk about school board amalgamation, which on paper looks exceptionally good, but I think, as the minister will find out, it is not a matter of saying, You and you join up. There is a lot more to it than that. It is good. Like our amalgamation in municipalities or whatever, as the population becomes smaller, as transportation and communication methods improve, then we can make better use of our dollars. I support solidly what he says about co-operation in relation to working of schools in an area, of denominations working together and, I suggest to him, it is happening. We have seen it over the last few years, and it has to be encouraged and fostered. I think forced you would find a drawing back and a burying of heads in the sand again, because people think you are taking away the authority and control that they have. But you have some pretty good heads in the educational field, and with proper co-operation and encouragement, I think you will see good things happening in the Province, and they have to happen.

Mr. Speaker, generally, with the Education estimates, we are fairly pleased. I am assured that the

two former NTA Presidents are not pleased. I am amazed that the minister did not go a bit further. One thing he left out, by the way, was the 10 per cent on busing we had in our budget. Many of the boards out there, who are going to public tender on their busing transportation, still pay 10 per cent of the cost. It was our intention to eliminate that. I hope the minister is looking at that and will do it.

Of course, the busing issue in St. John's is always one that can cause a bit of a stir, where every other child in the Province has a free ride to school except those who are in St. John's. Quite often we say St. John's gets the best piece of pie, but in this case they are not getting any of it. That is an issue that will have to be addressed.

Hopefully, with, as I say, the two NTA Presidents there clamoring for more money for education for the right reasons, the minister will be kept on his toes and we will see greater things happening in the field of education. Because I do agree with him, that if we are going to invest dollars in the Province, there is no better place to start, and the more spent in that area today, the less we will have to spend in health and social welfare and in other areas in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health's budget, current and capital, is in excess of \$700 million, \$750-odd million, up \$50

million from last year, which shows the emphasis this new administration is putting on health.

We have endeavoured to keep the hospital beds open. This year we are only closing 405, whereas last year there were 433 closed. We are not talking about the thirty new beds which we are going to open in Burin, hopefully early Fall. The beds we did close, Mr. Speaker, were for shorter periods than the previous administration closed them for, which again shows the emphasis that this administration is putting on the importance of health.

During the Committee meetings I was exceptionally pleased with some of the hon. members who appeared before the Committee, especially the member for Menihek, who I thought was a very concerned member and who asked some very hard-hitting questions to do with his district. The member for Fortune - Hermitage had some very penetrating questions which I tried my best to fend off, Mr. Speaker, but more than once he had me on the ropes and I was unable to handle his questions. The member for Torngat also has a very deep concern for his district and asked some very penetrating questions, as did the member for Eagle River and the member for Stephenville. All those hon. members can go back and say to their people back home that they, indeed, did a great job for democracy, because they were concerned about their districts and they asked very penetrating questions. I tried my best to answer them. The ones which I could not answer, we had to go back to the department and we had to try to dig out the information, and it took considerable time to

have it done, Mr. Speaker.

However, I have to report that the members for Humber East and St. John's East were a total abysmal failure. Their questions, Mr. Speaker, were simply children's play. It was something you would expect from six or seven year olds. Their questions were totally irrelevant, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, their questions were so irrelevant I thought it might be a good opportunity for us to put a little seminar in place, whereby the member for Torngat, the member for Menihek, the member for Stephenville, and some of us on this side of the House, could teach them how to ask questions. All they were concerned about was trying to make political points. They were not concerned with the \$750-odd million dollars of the people's money that was being spent. They tried to embarrass the minister on many occasions, but I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that all their attacks fell off me like water off a duck's back. I was not the least bit scathed. I could handle them quite easily, and I will be very surprised if people in their districts would ever consider re-electing them if they saw the way they behaved in those Committee meetings. Mr. Speaker, that is not saying anything personal about the members, that is just talking about the performance they put forward in the Committee meetings.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell members of the House what we intend to do with this \$759 million, where we intend to go with health care in this Province. One of the things we introduced in this year's budget was an amount in the vicinity of

\$1 million to put in place a home care program for all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

If you were to go throughout the Province, members would find that there are indeed some home care services in various places in the Province. For example, in the Gander area there is a pilot project in home care which is doing quite well. If you were to look into the budget of my colleague, the Minister of Social Services, you would find that there is a considerable amount of money which is used to give to homemakers who go in and help our elderly or our handicapped to clean their houses, to cook their meals, and to be present with them. And the Victorian Order of Nurses is involved in some home care in Corner Brook. All throughout the Province you will find bits and pieces of home care services. You will find in certain places in this Province that it is not impossible, on a given day, for any senior citizen or handicapped person to receive up to five visits from some branch of a home care group. They could receive a visit from a Department of Health nurse, they could receive a visit from a nurse from the Victorian Order of Nurses, they could receive a visit from someone from Social Services. It is possible for any single senior citizen or handicapped person to receive four or five visitors in a day.

Yet, in the vast reaches of the Province, there are thousands of elderly and thousands of handicapped people who do not see a single home care worker. So what we have is a mishmash. We have a lack of organization. So we have in our budget \$1 million to try and pull it all together.

We plan to put in place a director for all of Newfoundland and Labrador. That director could be stationed somewhere in Central Newfoundland, just to send the message that this is for all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. TOBIN:

What about (inaudible)?

MR. DECKER:

If the hon. member will just listen now, the one director is for the whole Province, the same as the Premier is for the whole Province. Then we plan to put in place a director who would be somewhere in Central Newfoundland, I am suggesting. We could even consider putting the director up in Torngat. It does not matter where he goes.

Now, in addition to the director, there will be five or six regions throughout the Province, the Eastern Region, the Western Region, the Central Region, the Labrador Region, and what have you, and each of these regions will have a proper board in place. That board will become a single point of entry for our handicapped or for seniors or whoever needs to make use of the home care program, or the nursing care, or the nursing homes, or the Caudelle Manor up in Roddickton, or whatever they are going to need, Mr. Speaker.

The job of this particular committee, this particular group, will be to be a gateway through which our people will go. These regional committees will have the authority to say to nursing homes, or whatever, 'This person here needs to be in a nursing home and he has to be one, two, three, ten, or wherever, on your waiting list.' That group will have the

authority to say that this person should have home care service and he or she will receive visits over the days, over the weeks, over the months, as required, by someone in the home care program.

So that is the program which we are hoping to bring in. We are hoping to make order out of the mishmash that the hon. member over there, who is looking at me, was part of creating in this Province, where it is all disorganized. We are going to pull it together and make a compact home care program which the Province, I am sure, will be proud of.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:
Thank you.

MS DUFF:
What is the (inaudible) on that?

MR. DECKER:
No doubt I can anticipate an awful lot of opposition from the member for Humber East and the member for St. John's East. They are already heckling, Mr. Speaker. They are already trying to tear this system down before they have seen it put in use. It would be a serious disservice to the people of this Province if these two hon. members were allowed to disrupt this program before we have time to put it in place. I appeal to them, I appeal to their humanity to go out on the streets and get behind this program. Do not try to tear it down, get out and support it. Because, after all, as the hon. member said in one of the meetings, she wanted to depoliticize it. She should not make political points on this. Now, if she could only take her own advice and get out and support

this home care program we are putting in place, she would be doing a great service to the Province.

I say to the hon. the member for St. John's East, who is a new member, do not be led astray by the hon. the member for Humber East. Do not let her lead you astray. You be your own person and stand on your own feet. Because the member for Humber East could well lead this hon. member astray. So that is a bit of advice I am giving her: Just be careful.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a home care program. Now, in addition to that, we want to develop what I want to call 'service stations'. You know, you go into various communities around the Province and you have an Esso service station, you have an Irving service station, Gulf, Golden Eagle, whatever. The equivalent to that in the health care system is the community health centre. I want to see dotted on every part of this Province within a reasonable distance of where people live, those community health centres. That will be the primary level of health care. That will be your blood pressure taken, that will be your X-ray, that will be a prescription given out.

These health centres - I want to see them all over the Province. That is what we are trying to do for the people in Grand Bank and the people in St. Lawrence. We are not closing their hospitals. We are guaranteeing them that their hospitals will be here years after we are gone. That is what we are doing. We are guaranteeing them primary level care. And they will be dotted throughout this

peninsula, throughout this Province, Mr. Speaker.

One little problem we are having is the cost. The previous administration put money in place or started to build one in Roddickton, where I live.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the minister's time has elapsed.

MR. DECKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have been singled out for special mention by the Minister of Health. It is surprising that he takes exception to my style of questioning and that of my colleague from St. John's East. After all, we asked him about issues such as mental health services for children; we asked him about bed closures; we asked him about the nursing shortage; we asked him about the plans of the government to introduce a screening mammography program for women; we asked about the work of the Alcohol and Drug Dependency Commission; we asked about home care, the subject he was just addressing. We asked about the discriminatory treatment of hospital employees who are being cut off from the early retirement program for public employees. What dreadful questions! What terrible Opposition members!

Mr. Speaker, as I recall, at our first meeting with the Minister of Health, several members of the Committee - the member for Eagle River stands out in my memory -

began their remarks to the committee and preceded their questioning of the minister with glowing tributes to his character -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

- puffing up his ego, telling him they have every confidence in the world that he is going to do phenomenally well as Minister of Health.

Now, Mr. Speaker, being a more reticent person, I had restrained my enthusiasm for this new minister and I held back my assessment of his character. But, towards the end of that session, I thought I would have to try to keep pace with my colleagues, and I hasten to add that even some of my friends on this side of the House indulged in that kind of commentary. So I managed to congratulate the minister on his appointment and said that I was interested in his response; that the pattern that had been established was reciprocating flattery.

Finally, the minister had his chance to respond to my congratulations and, much to my surprise, he told me he wishes that I were on his side of the House, because I am a real Liberal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

So I had to tell him that his Leader did his best to see that I was on no side of the House. But his Leader's best was not quite good enough, so here I am back again. And I will be back again next year and I will be asking

more hard questions of the Minister of Health in the Estimates Committee meetings next year. And next year I will have the benefit of the Hansard record of the minister's answers this year, and I will be able to ask him about his progress in living up to his grandiose designs and plans for the Department of Health.

Mr. Speaker, to return to what I was saying earlier this afternoon in listing the many important issues the Committee addressed, I will get into the Departments of Social Services and Justice. But I would think any objective listener of this afternoon's full House proceedings, hearing the Minister of Education and the member for St. John's East, the member for Fortune - Hermitage, and I think, perhaps, myself, would have to agree with what has been said about the high calibre of discussion at our Committee meetings, - or at least the attempts to have good quality discussion. There certainly was, in my view, an excellent exchange in the House today about education, and I give the Minister of Education full credit for contributing to that discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I digress because I have just been handed Saturday's issue of **The Western Star**, which is a paper in Corner Brook. Now, the Minister of Health talked about what my constituents might think of me and my performance in the Estimates Committee hearings. Now, Mr. Speaker, one of my constituents, who is a columnist with **The Western Star** says in Saturday's issue of **The Western Star** 'Do not play politics with our health, Mr. Decker.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:
Very observant.

MS VERGE:
It goes on to make some comments about Mr. Decker's performance as Minister of Health -

MR. SIMMS:
Let us hear about that?

MS VERGE:
- in dismissing the calls for a Province-wide screening mammography program, an initiative that had been mounted by the Rideout Government following the recommendation of Health and Welfare Canada last December, just six months ago.

Mr. Speaker, this is a column called **In View** by Lynn Barter. And writing in the Saturday issue of **The Western Star** she says: "Decker says the screening program, which is targeted at women aged fifty and up, and younger women deemed to be at a high risk, will be put in place 'within a year or two'. Why the delay? Government is playing paper games with policies crucial to ensuring the good health of more than half of our population. The Province has budgeted a surplus of \$5 million this year. Why not take some of that available money and spend it where it is needed and wanted? Health, Education, and Economic Recovery are listed as the government's priorities during its term of office. I think it is time the government put its money where its mouth is and provide Newfoundland women with modern and efficient mammography. At a recent forum on cancer and diet sponsored by the local unit of the Canadian Cancer Society, oncologist, Dr. Paddy Ganugly noted the highest incidents of cancer in women is

breast cancer, but that a large percentage of those women may be cured if they are diagnosed early. Statistics indicate that 160 cases of breast cancer will be detected in the next year. If just one life is saved by having a screening program or modern hospital equipment in place, would that not cover the cost to the government? Do not play politics with women's lives."

That is what one of my constituents thinks about the deliberations in this sitting of the House of Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will return to Social Services and Justice. When we were dealing with the Estimates of those departments, as actually the Minister of Social Services has indicated in part, we discussed the financial support case load of the department.

We in Opposition asked the minister questions about the nature of the social assistance clientele. We asked for some demographic statistics and, contrary to the impression the minister tried to give to the House, in asking for statistics I indicated I did not expect the minister to have them in his head or at hand, but I requested that he and his staff get them over the next day or two and give them to the Committee, quite a standard approach for House Estimates Committees. So we talked about the problems of financial dependence on the Social Services Department of people in our Province, we discussed root causes of this financial dependence, we asked about possible multi-disciplinary, multi-government department co-operative efforts to get at the root causes and to empower people

and enable them to become economically self-sufficient.

We talked about the rising incidents of reports of child abuse, and got some information about just how sharp that rise has been and an indication of the types of abuse. We discussed the department's role in licensing and setting standards for programming for child care or day care. We were disappointed to learn that there are no exciting initiatives there, contrary to what people had been led to believe. And, as mentioned by the member for St. John's East, we talked about the need to integrate more fully into community life people with disabilities.

In the case of the Department of Justice our discussion was more focused, and we in Opposition took the minister to task for the shortcomings in the budget estimates for legal aid and for services to victims of crime. Mr. Speaker, that leads into my discussion of the failure of the new government, in this budget, to make any real effort to improve services and support to victims of personal injury crime who are children and women, children who have been sexually abused, children who have been beaten and neglected in other ways, and women who have been battered physically and emotionally in the home.

Mr. Speaker, the former government, the short-lived Rideout government, had proposed several initiatives to improve these services, including a program of court workers for victims of crime; we were proposing ten additional court workers to be stationed in major court centres throughout the Province to -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

I wish to advise the hon. member that her time has elapsed.

MS VERGE:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By leave.

MS VERGE:
So, the great plans and ideas, unfortunately, were not picked up on by the new government, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EFFORD:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I cannot let the opportunity go by again without answering the few questions put forward by the former Minister of Justice. She put forward some statistical questions in the Estimates Committee about social assistance and social assistance recipients, and she asked about the number of people and if they were they male or female. I will get to that in a few minutes. But the member must have some sort of memory lapse, because she cannot remember the fact that it was just a few short weeks ago that she came from the Cabinet of and administration which caused the number of social assistance recipients to go from a mere 2,000 or 3,000 to 35,000 in seventeen years in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, people who are today totally dependent on social assistance. The minister knows the number of people, because it was she and her government who caused these people to be on social assistance, no

jobs, no income, only total demoralization; living on about \$8000 to \$10,000 a year, below the poverty line, and having the choice of either eating or freezing to death, or being warm and starving to death. That is the opportunity this former minister, when in the Cabinet, gave to the people of this Province. Then she has the audacity to sit in the Estimates Committee and ask me how many females are on social assistance, and how many males are on social assistance, and how many single parents are on social assistance? The only thing I could say was, There are too many people on social assistance, but there will not be as many in the future.

She should be totally ashamed of herself to get in an Estimates Committee or in the House of Assembly and ask us question on something she and her government caused. Let me tell the member, there 19,661 people on social assistance today, disabled and some able-bodied, and 13,500 employed on the employment opportunities program. Combine that and you have in excess of 33,000 people dependent on social assistance. Out of that you have 6,700 people on social assistance who are single parents. More than 90 percent of those people are female, less than 10 percent are male; nevertheless they are single parents dependent on social assistance with no jobs, no training programs, and nothing to look forward to in the future, caused by the former administration to which this Province had to be subjected for seventeen years. Thank God the people woke up and elected a Liberal government, because it will not happen in the future, Mr. Speaker.

A change is coming about. I had the opportunity just last evening to attend the graduation, which the Minister of Health is so proud of, home care, where 16 people graduated after a mere five week training program and the 16 people, who were on social assistance, went to work this morning. That is accomplishment!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

That is accomplishment!

I had a case come before me of a lady who had an opportunity to go into a training program and the former administration said, No, we will not help you. We will not pay you, we will not help you with your tuition fees, and she remained on social assistance. She came to my office this morning, we approved her going into a training program, and she will come off social assistance. That is initiative!

Mr. Speaker, we do not look down at people because we are in a certain position, we look up to people. All people are equal and all people should have equal opportunity to avail of education and training programs and become part of the work force. We will not cause 35,000 people to be on social assistance, we will deplete that number over the next year, and we will do it with the respect of the people who need it most. And we will not, at the end of our twenty or twenty-five year term, sit in Opposition and ask people if they did anything about it, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

There is a difference, Mr. Speaker, between doing something, and sitting down and complaining. I can see now that for seventeen years the former administration did not have a single idea of how to tackle the problem, but sat down and complained about it. They did not do anything about it, the problem grew and grew, and now they cannot stand the fact that somebody is doing something about it. Instead of standing up over there and congratulating the Minister of Health and the Minister of Social Services for the excellent job they are doing, they are complaining because we are doing something. Can you not stand prosperity?

You came from prosperity. Your former Premier, who was in here for a number of years, complained: 'Can Newfoundland stand prosperity?' Newfoundland is now beginning to see what prosperity is about. They have some confidence put back in their bodies again, in their minds again, that you demoralized and took away. Now, things are changing. Things are changing for the betterment of the Province. A real change has taken place. And that is what this is all about, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Let me say to the hon. member that child abuse is being dealt with in this Province.

MS VERGE:

How?

MR. EFFORD:

It is a very, very serious issue. It is being dealt with: Number

one, we already know where the cases need to be addressed. The case load in this Province was never addressed by the former Minister of Social Services, where there was a need to put social workers or child abuse workers. There was nothing there to tell me if the Stephenville office or the Harbour Grace office or the Labrador office had too heavy a case load, if they were understaffed, if they were overworked, or if it was sufficient to handle it. There was nothing there. We have now delved into it and found out where the case load is heavy. If it is in social work, or in child abuse, a financial office or whatever, we know exactly what each person is doing. We found out, for example, as I told the hon. member the other night in the Estimates Committee, there are areas in Newfoundland where there are child abuse workers with a case load of 98 - a 98 case load for one child abuse worker. The average, as you said earlier, is 25. We have found the problem. We have found where the problems are and we are going to put child abuse workers into that area to alleviate the problem.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Now, not only are we going to put child abuse workers in place, we are going to put preventive measures in place. We have already started to put preventive measures in place so that we can work with families where it has been reported to us it is possible child abuse could take place. So if we recognize that there is a problem within a family, we are going to put people there to alleviate, to stop, and to make

sure that we can do whatever we can to prevent child abuse, because an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and you should have known that before today.

What happens after we recognize the problem of some victim? We will work with them. What the former administration did not have in place was a support program for afterwards. What happens to the family or the victim afterwards? You have got to have supportive measures to counsel, to go into the homes, to deal with the people, and to support them in their trauma after it all takes place. That is being done by this administration. I was not done by the former administration. You should be ashamed to even talk about it. You should hide your face in shame. You should not even bring it up. You were the former Minister of Justice. You knew how many cases were on hand. You did not have to ask me if we have eight hundred-plus cases this year. That is on your files, unless you were there as Minister of Justice and did not know. Then you should be more ashamed for not knowing how many cases were on file. Not only did you not do anything about it, you did not even know that the problem existed. For the ten years you were in Cabinet, you allowed that to happen.

Now you expect us to solve the problems and completely turn the whole Province around in a few short weeks. What I am saying to the former Minister of Justice and the Former Minister of Education is, first of all, before you can solve a problem, you must recognize that there is a problem there. We recognize there is a major problem there. Then you

must put some things in place to do something about it. We have started to do that. In a few short weeks we have started.

I will repeat once again, we will work to the best of our ability to work with those people who need the services of the Department of Social Services, because we have respect for people, we care about people, and we are going to make sure that the people of this Province come first, come before cucumbers, come before foolish projects, and we will ensure that people eat well and people are trained well, and people will become a part of the work force. That is what this government is all about, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

Before I recognize the hon. member, I just want to make a point to the hon. minister. I did not want to stop him while he was in high flight, but now that he is sitting down and probably in a bit of a reflective mood, I just want to ask the hon. member if in future he would please use the word 'honourable' when referring to members opposite rather than using the second person plural, or the second person singular of 'you, you, you, you.' The hon. member should take note of that, that we should use honourable whenever we can.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Shame! Shame!

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MS DUFF:
Mr. Speaker, I think we have just witnessed from the hon. the Minister of Health and the hon. the Minister of Social Services a perfect example of what we have been talking about when we have said they have been political and defensive in response to any questions we have asked.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
But because I hate to see a grown man cry, and I would like to put the smile back on the face of the hon. the Minister of Social Services, I will now turn to him and say, Sir, given the seventeen weeks that you have had to operate, you are doing a wonderful job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
The hon. the Minister of Health indicated that the member for Humber East and myself are a disgrace to our constituents and would never get re-elected again, because he was a little upset by some of the questions we asked. I must say I am flattered, I am honoured, because unfortunately, due to a conflict of schedule, I only had one half hour to question the hon. minister. Now, I had very penetrating questions and I know the minister did not like that, and we did not really manage to penetrate his political defence systems, but I think we have made some dents and we have put some questions on the record, and records on the record which you will be able to refer to next year.

The minister also referred to the fact that as a new member I should not be led astray by the hon. the member for Humber East.

I would like to tell him that in preparing for the Estimates Committees, I took great pains to read a number of significant studies in his department, to identify issues by talking to hospital administrators and nurses and others, and that the questions we identified were ones that are very significant. But in terms of the style of questioning, I had never had the opportunity or the privilege of hearing the hon. the member for Humber East, I simply had the privilege of reading excerpts from previous Social Services committees, and I took my cue from the hon. the Minister of Health and the hon. the Minister of Social Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
The hon. members should take the credit. Much has been made about the seventeen weeks and the seventeen years, but I would also like to point out to the Minister of Social Services that I have heard him say many times that he has the best staff available, the best officials, and I would like to ask him how many he has hired, or were they not in fact put in place by the former administration?

MR. EFFORD:
They had no direction.

MS DUFF:
They had lots of direction.

I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Health, and again he is making points about the fact that you need to identify the

problem before you can do something about it. He does not seem to hesitate in pointing out what all the problems are. In fact the minister will be aware that there have been many significant studies recognizing those problems which have been done, including the most recent one in the Department of Health, which is the Advisory Committee on the Nursing Task Force. I would be the first to acknowledge the fact that the question of bed closures is not a simple question of nursing staff, as the minister in his days in Opposition was wont to claim again, again, and again, but it is a complex issue dealing with many things related to the health care sector and the whole nursing profession.

Now, the previous government had the insight to actually recognize that and to take the pains, over almost the period of a year, to interview people in the nursing profession across the Province and to come up with a very wide-ranging study with some very solid recommendations on correcting some of the problems in the nursing work force, which will, in turn, have a bearing on the problems in the bed closure system. And as the minister knows, I am sure, it is not unrelated to the chronic care problem in the Province. The study initiated by the Conservative Government on chronic care and nursing home beds has also pointed out actions that the government needs to take. So you can understand that, having realized the problem had been identified. And the members, when they were in Opposition, were screaming very loudly about having something done about this. And the something that needed to be done is not something that needs

further study, it is right there in those studies, and I expected a little more action in terms of this compassionate and sympathetic and enlightened and aggressive new real change government that we have, that they would actually take the results of those studies, the words of the experts and do something about it. If we were a little frustrated it is because when we asked what the minister was going to do about the bed closures he said he had funded forty-five new positions, or one per hospital and not even all of them for nurses. When we asked him if he was going to make a really meaningful dent in the problem of chronic care hospitals, we find out that we are closing down beds in the Miller Center. And the Health Sciences, which has the most acute patients in this Province, patients who need cardiac surgery, patients who need neurosurgery, these patients cannot now get out of their beds in the Health Sciences and go to the Miller Center. So you will have to have an acute emergency, you will have to go and be hit by a car to get into a hospital in St. John's this Summer.

I adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker, if we could stop the clock for a moment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:
It is agreed to stop the clock.

MR. BAKER:
I was wondering if I could make a request of the Opposition, that we move ahead to the motion on this particular Estimates Committee.

In light of the fact, Mr. Speaker, as has been admitted by Opposition members, that their questions were answered satisfactorily in this particular Committee, that ministers were very forthcoming in answers to their questions, I wonder if we could, in view of expediency, put the motion now? I would ask the Opposition House Leader to respond.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that I agree with the comments of the President of the Council. I have a feeling my colleagues on this side of the House do not feel satisfied with many of the answers that they received. However, we are aware of the fact, being knowledgeable parliamentarians, that the Budget Debate is still on the Order Paper; we will get back to that in the next day or two. We will be debating some other finance bills, which are usually fairly broad-ranging in scope, and so my colleagues will have an opportunity to further pressure ministers on that side to see if they can get some answers, and will do that, I can assure you. But in view of the fact that the hour is late, and we have a couple of hours Concurrency debate on this Committee's report, I think we would be prepared to put the vote on this one now and move on to the next order of business tomorrow.

On motion, Concurrency Motion

(Social Services Committee),
carried.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House
Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are several items
outstanding on the Budget.
Tomorrow I intend to move to
Committee of the Whole to examine
the Estimates of the departments
that have not yet been examined in
the ordinary process of things
with Committees.

I wonder, in light of the fact
that there are a number of bills
related to the Budget that have to
go through, and so on, if hon.
members and the House would be
agreeable to, if necessary
tomorrow, have a night sitting? I
wonder if members opposite would
think about that and either let me
know now or tomorrow, it really
does not matter, if it would be
possible to have a night sitting
to speed up matters having to do
with the Budget.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Grand
Falls.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to
see the Government House Leader
down on his knees, it really is.
He is not quite as adept at
getting the Opposition to
co-operate as his predecessor, the
former Government House Leader
was, but he is coming along very
nicely.

We have had a chance to discuss,

as a matter of fact, this
possibility. Because of the fact
that we are making a lot of
progress on government business
and we want to be co-operative,
and I think we have shown that
since we have been here -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Well, do you not think we have
shown that we are co-operative?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

I rest my case, therefore, Mr.
Speaker, in putting that argument
forth. But I will say this to the
Government House Leader, we are
quite prepared to work as long and
as hard as we have to. I suspect
it will be necessary to work
tomorrow night, it may be
necessary to work Friday night, it
maybe necessary to work Saturday,
Sunday and into next week and the
week after.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

And if it is necessary, then I can
assure the hon. Government House
Leader that we will be prepared to
cooperate. However, since his
request is specific for tomorrow
only, and in the spirit of
co-operation that we have shown up
until now, which, I remind him, is
only going to be in existence for
this session only, we are quite
prepared to work tomorrow night if
it becomes necessary to get on
with more government business.

I would only ask the Government
House Leader to tell us what else
he intends to do tomorrow night,

other than the Estimates of the Executive Council. Will he be getting into the legislation then or the Budget Debate? What exactly would his plans be?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

There are a number of things which have to be done. I think we will get into some legislation and perhaps get back to the Budget Debate on Friday morning, but I think primarily legislation tomorrow night.

MR. SIMMS:

Legislation tomorrow evening.

MR. BAKER:

Yes, tomorrow evening if needs be, depending on how things go.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House at its rising do adjourn until tomorrow, Thursday, at 2:00 p.m. and that this House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 2:00 p.m.

Index

Answers to Questions

tabled

June 28, 1989

*Tabled by Hon. Minister
of Forestry & Agriculture
28 June, 1989.*

ORDER PAPER NO. 11/89

QUESTION NO. 12

Question:

Mr. Simms (Grand Falls) to ask the Honourable the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture to lay upon the Table of the House the following information:

An itemized list of expenditures for any office equipment, personal equipment, furnishings and photographs purchased for the Minister's Office since May 5, 1989.

Answer:

There have been no expenditures for any office equipment, personal equipment, furnishings and photographs purchased for the Minister's Office since May 5, 1989.

ORDER PAPER 11/89

QUESTION NO. 27

*Tabled by Hon. Minister
of Forestry & Agriculture,
28 June, 1989*

Question:

Mr. Simms (Grand Falls) to ask the Honourable the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture the lay upon the Table of the House the following information:

An itemized list of travel expenditures incurred by the Minister, his Executive Assistant or any other member of the Minister's personal or Departmental staff who may have accompanied him since May 5, 1989.

Answer:

Minister's Travel

*May 9, 1989	St. John's - Stephenville	\$473.00
May 12, 1989	St. John's - Gander	\$259.20
May 20 - 22/89	St. John's - Gander	\$212.00
May 26 - 28/89	St. John's - Gander	\$281.00
**June 7 - 8/89	St. John's - Corner Brook	\$585.80

*Accompanied by Mr. R. D. Peters, Deputy Minister
May 9, 1989 St. John's to Stephenville \$410.00

**Accompanied by Mr. R.D. Peters, Deputy Minister
June 7-8, 1989 St. John's to Deer Lake \$497.40

Dr. M. Nazir, Assistant Deputy Minister (Forestry)
June 7-8, 1989 St. John's to Deer Lake \$625.46

Mr. K. Beanlands, Assistant Deputy Minister (Administration
& Support Services)
June 7-8, 1989 St. John's to Deer Lake \$573.20