



Province of Newfoundland

FORTY - FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND

---

Volume XLI

Second Session

Number 23

---

***VERBATIM REPORT***  
*(Hansard)*

*Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush*

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):  
Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:  
I wonder if before Statements By Ministers I might be permitted to offer condolences and ask that condolences be sent on behalf of the Members of the House of Assembly to Angus Bennett and I believe Trevor, who is the son of nurse Myra Bennett. There was a fairly good article in the local paper the weekend that described her background. She was known, and we have all heard of her I suppose, as Newfoundland's Florence Nightingale. She passed away on Thursday past at the age of 100, as I understand it. I did not know her personally, but I often heard of her - she came to Newfoundland from London, England, in 1890, and she was for many years the only source of medical aid in the Daniel's Harbour area on the Northern Peninsula.

One of the people whom she delivered said that she delivered all the babies and she pulled all the teeth up in that particular area for many, many years. She also had a membership in the Order of the British Empire, which was afforded her in 1936. She also had a membership in the Order of Canada in 1974. So it might be appropriate and I am sure the Member opposite would like to support it.

MR. FUREY:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FUREY:  
Mr. Speaker, we on this side would like to align ourselves with the hon. Member's fine comments about an outstanding Newfoundlander. Everything the Opposition House Leader says is correct. This lady was an outstanding Newfoundlander and Labradorian. She gave selflessly for many, many years along the Northern Peninsula when services, particularly medical services, were not available through some very difficult periods. And we on our side would like to align ourselves and ask that the House send condolences, particularly to Mr. Angus Bennett who survives the late Mrs. Bennett and the family, particularly Trevor Bennett who is a former Member of the House of Assembly who represented the District of St. Barbe for a number of years in this Assembly.

We thank the hon. the Opposition House Leader for bringing this to the House's attention, and we certainly concur, Your Honour.

### Oral Questions

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

MS VERGE:  
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. It is about his Budget, which the Provincial School Trustees Association called, 'the most regressive Budget for education in living memory.'

Mr. Speaker, the Minister's Budget

eliminated funding for all the hospital schools in the Province, outside St. John's. Last Tuesday, the Department of Education gave layoff notices to the teachers at the Central Newfoundland Hospital in Grand Falls, Western Memorial Regional Hospital in Corner Brook, and the Curtis Hospital in St. Anthony. My question for the Minister is will he confirm that this budget cut was a budget measure designed to reduce spending and not an education decision, designed to improve the quality of education for children who are hospitalized?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. SIMMS:

The question was for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, in the process of preparing for the Budget, we examined the operation of hospital schools, as we reviewed many other issues. We did it as a regular part of the budgetary process, but we also did it because there were requests for new services of this type in other hospitals throughout the Province. We found there were hospital schools in four hospitals. After the review, we concluded that because of the very short length of stay in three of the hospitals, and because of the requests for extending that service to many other hospitals in the Province, we would terminate the three and retain the Janeway Hospital School because of the long-term nature of many of the patients there.

Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of developing alternate instruction for students who must stay for long periods in these

three and other hospitals throughout the Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Education had consulted people at Western Memorial Regional Hospital, he would have learned that during 1989 one of the two teachers employed by his department there taught children hospitalized for five days and more, and additionally taught some 200 children hospitalized for shorter stays.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Education is why did he and his officials not consult his Department teachers employed at the hospitals in Grand Falls, Corner Brook and St. Anthony? Why did they not consult the Newfoundland Teachers' Association? Why did they not consult the administrators of the three hospitals affected, in arriving at that budget decision?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, we did have a lot of data concerning that. In fact, one of the first things I saw when I arrived in the Ministry last year was a proposal from former years that these schools be terminated. So we had a lot of data to terminate them. We did review all the schools, and we found out that many of them were very short term.

Now, let me tell the hon. Member the good news. The good news is we have alternative program for students who stay for long periods

of time. We have a home tutoring program for children who are unable to attend school for extended periods. We have up to, I think, \$150 a month to help students who stay at home for long periods and who need instruction, and who are able to take advantage of instruction. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we are going to work with school boards to ensure that no student is disadvantaged as a result of this.

Let me tell the hon. Member that I have talked with, and heard from students - I have heard from students, I have not talked with them - I have talked with persons involved in the hospital schools and I have heard from students who are in these schools, and after a conversation of this nature, one person in the media said, Well, after hearing both sides of it, this is a very reasonable position this Government is taking.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that the Minister and his staff should consult the teachers in the hospital schools, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association and the administrators of the hospitals affected.

Will the Minister now confirm that the Department of Education analysis of the Home Tutor Program has concluded that that program is seriously flawed and it is quite inappropriate to address the needs of children in hospitals? Will the Minister confirm that the pay scale is ridiculously low? Will the Minister confirm that the Department has, in the past, had great difficulty engaging teachers

for the Home Tutor Program? Will the Minister confirm that this is an ad hoc approach? And, will the Minister confirm that the Department does not even entertain applications for home tutors until children have been out of school for two weeks, and typically, once an application is received, the administrative machinery takes another week to process an application?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I have not heard about the serious flaws, but I am not surprised. Since I became Minister, I have found a number of programs of the former Administration seriously flawed. I am not surprised that it is seriously flawed. I can assure you that we will examine the Program and we are going to make sure that no student is seriously disadvantaged as a result of this action.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the hon. the Minister of Finance. In his Budget, this year, the allocation of money for school boards for transportation has not increased over last year to any degree, and the boards are concerned there will be a serious shortfall. Will the Minister assure us that if there is a shortfall, the boards will not be the ones left picking it up?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, I am not too sure what he said. He asked if the school boards were running out of transportation money would we supplement them, or would we put money back into the Budget, or increase the amount of money in the Budget?

Mr. Speaker, the transportation budget for school boards is fixed now, as I understand it, or it will be when we pass it through the House, and they will have to live within that budget. What we have to realize, Mr. Speaker, is that this Province does not have money to slash around on every possible thing; we have to be careful with our money. If we can find better ways of doing things, then we will have to find better ways of doing things. It is by no means clear that the way school transportation has been handled in the past is the best way, so I think we are hoping that boards will look at their transportation budgets and come up with an appropriate way of handling the transportation needs in their districts.

The thing is, all the problems in education or any other thing are not necessarily solved by slashing out more money. All that does is prevent money from going where it is needed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the Estimates discussions a few nights ago, the Minister of

Education stated that one of the things they would be looking at would be making the transportation system more efficient, perhaps by getting larger firms which would be more efficient and, consequently, the overall tenders would be smaller, thus saving money in the transportation sector. Would the Minister of Finance tell us if this is one of the things they are looking at?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I must be very frank with the hon. Member and tell him that we are reviewing a lot of things in education this year. We want to ensure that we are getting the best possible return for every dollar we are spending in this Province. I can assure the hon. Member that we are looking at transportation, we are looking at the overlapping of services. I had a person in my office this morning who indicated that in his part of the Province there were buses going in opposite directions carrying students, and perhaps the whole thing could be co-ordinated; no intention, of course, to put people out of business in this Province. What we want is the most efficient use of the limited dollars we have for education in this Province, to provide the best possible education for every student.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can easily understand why the Minister of Education got up to defend the Minister of Finance

after his answer to the first question.

I will ask the Minister of Education, following his comments the other night about larger operators, is it factual that the Department of Finance, in conjunction with the Department of Education, are looking at encouraging large firms like Day and Ross, from outside the Province, to come in and take over the school bus transport operations, thus depriving a number of small operators across this Province of the livelihood they have been making over the years?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

The answer is no, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to consolidate the whole school bus system to provide the best system possible at the cheapest cost. That is our intention and we are looking at a variety of options for doing that this year, as we are looking at interdenominational sharing, we are looking at a number of other issues to ensure that we get the best value for the limited dollars we have.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Premier. Several months ago, the Government announced its decision to build a campus in Central Newfoundland, as he is aware, to

accommodate first and second year university programs which are presently being offered in some parts of the area, and submissions on locations were requested several months ago. In addition to that, of course, a small Cabinet Committee heard verbal presentations weeks ago now, the Budget was presented, a lot of people were expecting an announcement, and no announcement. Then it was announced that the decision had been delayed, in fact, to the end of April. My question to the Premier is, since today is the end of April, can we expect an announcement today, or will there be another delay? If so, why the delay? What is the reason? What is the new target date, or is it to be an indefinite delay?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a kind of a concession, that on this issue the Government is not as efficient as it hoped it would be. We had hoped, I think in the statement in February -

MR. MATTHEWS:

You are not very efficient yourself.

DR. WARREN:

When the Premier read the statement last year, the Premier indicated that February, I think, was the deadline. We found, in February, that we had so much data, so many excellent proposals we needed more time. Perhaps I was incorrect in suggesting we might be ready in a month or so - I think I said a month or so.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That was in February.

DR. WARREN:

In February, yes. Well, it is taking a little longer. There is no rush on this, Mr. Speaker. We want to make the right decision, and we are going to make the right decision. I will not indicate when that decision will be announced, but we hope it is in the not too distant future.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations. The Minister will recall in the examination of her Estimates I questioned her on labour legislation and when we might expect to see some of that long-awaited legislation. I questioned the Minister on pay equity in the public service, and when we might expect to see a bill on that. Quoting from the Minister's remarks she said, 'It could be three or even four years before we see that legislation.' Now, I want to ask the Minister why that would take so long and if the labour movement generally is aware of that time frame?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The gentleman across the way, my hon. critic, knows that was a comment made in jest by a number of us to him at the end of the meeting. I said the plans were

not underway immediately. We certainly hope to be addressing the matter with more speed than the past Government, however, it was not in the works for this particular session of the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

Just to correct the Minister, that was not said at the end of the meeting, it is on the record as being part of the meeting. But, anyway, I will not pursue that, Mr. Speaker.

We are given to understand that all the details for pay equity have been worked out and negotiated and agreed upon. This was all done, I believe, at the Treasury Board level, even before the present Administration took office. Would the Minister explain, then, at what stage of development the legislation is? Of course, if the Minister cannot answer it, then maybe the President of Treasury Board would. Would the Minister explain what stage of development that particular bill happens to be in?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am not sure I understand the question. It seems to me that there are two or three things getting mixed up here. In his preamble, the Member mentioned the general legislation in terms of labour relations in the Province. In terms of pay equity, as the Member knows, this was started quite sometime ago, before we took

office. In the last year, the meetings that involve both Treasury Board officials and union representatives, Government and Union have been working very steadily on the pay equity in part of the public service. It is very, very complex, and involves a complete examination of all the classifications and all this kind of thing. It is a slow process, and it was recognized from day one that it would be a slow process. The work is being done by both Government officials and the Union reps.

Everybody involved with that process, from everything I can gather and from the frequent newsletters these people put out, little communiques they put out, everything is progressing extremely well and as soon as they have finished their examination of all the classification levels and so on, then pay equity will be introduced into the public service.

We have in the Budget this year, I believe somewhere between \$600 million and \$700 million - \$600 million to account for pay equity. What I am saying to the hon. Member is this, that the process that is in place, it is being worked on by both management and union, both are satisfied with the progress which has been made and, as soon as they have everything put together, then it will be done.

MR. DOYLE:  
Legislation will be introduced?

MR. BAKER:  
We cannot come and legislate and do this on our own without the proper consultative process; I am sure the Member would not suggest we do so. And as soon as that process is finished, if

legislation is necessary it will be introduced.

MS VERGE:  
You do not know yet?

MR. BAKER:  
Well, maybe the Member for Humber East would like to make all the decisions herself and not let the union and management people work this thing out. They are working it out, Mr. Speaker, and we will have pay equity in the public service in the very near future.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:  
Just so I correctly understand and I will not misunderstand the hon. President of Treasury Board, is he saying that legislation will definitely be introduced in due course, after all consultation has taken place between the union and Treasury Board? Is he saying legislation will definitely be introduced? Have I misunderstood him? I thought he was saying that quite possibly it might be introduced, but maybe it will not be.

MR. SIMMS:  
If it is necessary, he said.

MR. DOYLE:  
If it is necessary, you said. Well, it was promised by the Premier in this brochure. He said pay equity legislation would be introduced in the public service, so I am asking him if it will or if it will not be?

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

MR. BAKER:



Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What I am wondering about here is if there is some little game being played. I will say to the Member again that pay equity will be introduced in the public service of this Province. When the details are worked out and the complete examination of the classification system is done, pay equity will be introduced. I do not want to close any doors or talk about definite paths until the consultative process is over; I do not want to usurp the work of that Committee. I do not know if the Member is talking about pay equity only in the public service, whether he is talking about the rest of the Province, or whatever. In the public service it will be introduced, there is no doubt about it.

MR. DOYLE:  
Will there be legislation?

MR. BAKER:  
It will be introduced as soon as the work of that Committee is finished. And if it requires legislation, the appropriate legislation will be put to the House.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Fisheries. I am wondering if he is able to inform the House if he has looked into reports of the last three or four days, coming from Nova Scotia, that there is a deal in the works that ties the Burgeo operation, the Burgeo plant, to a sale of the Canso plant? Has the Minister investigated this particular

report coming from Nova Scotia, and can he inform the House of what the details of his investigation might be?

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

MR. W. CARTER:  
Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have, and we cannot find any foundation for that rumour. My officials talked to Mr. Murray Collican, who is Vice-President, I guess, of NatSea, and he could shed no light on it, so I assume it was only a rumour.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Minister for his answer. I just asked the question because there was some concern expressed publicly by the Union Local Chairman in Burgeo over the last number of days.

I wonder if the Minister of Fisheries, on a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, could inform the House what is happening to the NatSea proposal for the shrimp operation at the Southside plant? Is that still in the works, and can we expect things to fall into place there over the next few months?

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

MR. W. CARTER:  
Mr. Speaker, I have no reason to think otherwise. They did tell us some time ago what their plans were. They have not said anything since then to indicate there has been a change, so I am assuming that everything is going along as

planned.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a further supplementary to the Minister. I heard a report over the last couple of days which tells me that NatSea is tying up the Cape Verde, or has tied it up in the last two weeks, that most of the crew members have been let go and National Seal is transferring that particular vessel to Nova Scotia. I am wondering if the Minister knows that, or is aware of it, because that sort of flies in the face of what we have heard about St. John's being a trawler port, an unloading facility for the fish caught north to be unloaded here and then trucked to Arnold's Cove. I am wondering if the Minister is aware of that, because that is not only going to be bad news for St. John's, it could also be bad news for Arnold's Cove. Is the Minister aware of this? If so, could he inform the House again of what his findings have been?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that, but I give an undertaking now that I will have it looked into and if I have something to report back, I shall do so tomorrow.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the absence of the Minister responsible for Wildlife, I would like to direct my question to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I think during the past weekend the Minister responsible for Wildlife indicated there would be a Sunday hunt for big game this year. Would the Premier advise if his Cabinet has decided there will be a Sunday hunt this year?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

I heard what the Minister said at the time, and he said nothing at all like what the hon. Member just represented. My recollection is that he said the Government had received a number of representations to consider two or three possible alternatives, one of which is they could possibly consider Sunday hunting, another of which was no, they could prohibit hunting on one day a week, Sunday, another was a possible combination of it, and that in due course the whole matter would be considered. For the hon. Member to now represent it as a statement that the Minister said there would be Sunday hunting is totally inappropriate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In view of the fact that thousands of big game hunters in the Province during the next few days, if this Government will follow the practice of previous years, will be advised as to whether they were successful for a fall hunt or not, and whereas many hunters are concerned about whether there will be Sunday hunting allowed, and whereas last year's guide had in Sunday hunting as being allowed and, I understand, this year's guide does not have that quotation in there, would the Premier advise whether there will be a Sunday hunt or not?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I can only go from my observation. I would have to check back to the record. But my recollection is that we have not had Sunday hunting in this Province for at least fifty years. I do not think it is necessary to make a sudden decision now, before May. In due course the Government will consider all aspects of it and will make a decision on it. I understood that was what the Minister said the other day.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, we just wanted to try and correct the Premier. In fact, there was Sunday hunting in the Province a couple years ago, but it was not by law; after the court ruling or appeal, you will recall. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, it has nothing to do

with my question.

I asked the Premier a question earlier which he deferred to the Minister of Education. I would like to ask him another one, and I hope he will take the time to answer it himself.

Back on December 18, nearly five months ago, the Premier at that time, in announcing a decision of Abitibi-Price to close down its number 6 paper machine, will recall, in fact, part of his statement talked about the company's view that changes they were making at that time would result in a more competitive and efficient enterprise. He also said, 'As a further demonstration of this commitment, the company has advised' - advised him, I presume - 'that it was actively considering the development of a new hydro power project to increase the generating capacity at Grand Falls. Since that occurred five months ago, can the Premier tell us where that matter stands now? Will the project get off the ground this year?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the matter is under active consideration at this moment. Company officials have met with the Minister of Energy, they have met with Minister of Development. It is expected they should be in a position to make a final determination on the issue within about thirty days. That is the best I can say at the moment.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber

East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs. I would like the Minister to tell the House when he will release to the House and to the Public of the Province the interim and final reports of the Arts Policy Committee, chaired by Dr. Patrick O'Flaherty. I understand the Committee gave him the final report a month ago today, on March 31.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have received the final report, and there was an interim report prior to that from Dr. O'Flaherty's Committee. Both reports are under active consideration now by my officials and myself. We will then proceed with recommendations to the Government. In due course, Mr. Speaker, we will be releasing the reports to the public and to the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to explain how he can justify withholding these critical reports from the House and the public for more than a month. Also, I would like to ask him when his Department will proceed with filling the vacant position of Director of Cultural Affairs, how the Government will recruit applicants for the position, and how the Government will select a

person to fill this vital position?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, we delayed the appointment of a Director of Cultural Affairs at the request of Dr. O'Flaherty and his Committee. They asked us to do that because they wanted to have input into the criteria and the mandate of that particular person. So, at his request, the Committee's request, we delayed the appointment. But now that we have the report, it is final, we have the opportunity to examine their recommendations, and when we are ready as a Government to make a decision and proceed with the appointment of that particular person as well as implement, I would hope, some of the recommendations within the report, we will proceed with both the appointment and, I would think, implementation of many of the recommendations.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations. The Minister is aware that the Supreme Court of Newfoundland recently ruled that both the union and the non-union shop may operate simultaneously. That is a practice, as the Minister is aware, that is known as double-breasting. That ruling, I believe, is to be challenged in the Supreme Court of Canada by the Trade Union Movement and, of course, it could be many years

before that particular case gets to the Supreme Court of Canada. I would like to know from the Minister, what happens in the interim? What does the Minister see as the resolution of the problem, let the case go to the Supreme Court of Canada which could take a number of years? Could she indicate what a possible solution might be for the interim?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The matter is being actively pursued by my Department at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

Well, that is fine, Mr. Speaker, but it does not answer the question. The Minister indicated in the Evening Telegram, I believe it was in March, that she had met with the Building Trades Council at that time and said that a progress report on legislation on double-breasting would be forthcoming. Of course, we know legislation has been promised on it. Then she said there would be hearings on the matter, and then she indicated, at the Estimates Committee, there would be no hearings. Would the Minister clear up the matter for the Trade Union Movement? Will there be legislation or not? Will there be hearings or not? And if there is to be legislation, when is it coming?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of

Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Mr. Speaker, I have some difficulty with this little game that keeps being played by my particular critic. He keeps changing his vocabulary all the time and then trying to trip me up with it here in the House. He talks about inquiries, then he talks about hearings, and I really do not know what he is talking about. To me, they are different things. The last time he was shouting at me because I was going to have an inquiry or something, and now, today, it is that I am not going to have hearings. I do not know really what he is up to. If he wonders if I am going to consult with the affected groups, of course I am.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Question Period has expired.

On behalf of hon. Members I would like to welcome thirty grade VI students from Pius X Junior High School here in St. John's accompanied by their teacher, Ms Margaret Best.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Presenting Reports by  
Standing and Special Committees

DR. GIBBONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

DR. GIBBONS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the annual report of Mineral Licences and Mining Leases issued for the period April 1st, 1989 to March 31st, 1990. These licences and leases were issued by the Department of Mines and Energy under the Mineral Act, 1976. I note, Mr. Speaker, that during the past fiscal year, 16,641 new claims were staked and 292 new licences were issued, in total there were 59,820 claims in good standing as of March 31st past.

### Notices of Motion

DR. KITCHEN:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. KITCHEN:  
Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Retail Sales Tax Act, 1978, with respect to Offshore Petroleum Development".

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act Respecting A Reduction In The Newfoundland Offshore Area Corporate Income Tax".

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider Certain Resolutions for the granting of Supplementary Supply to Her Majesty.

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

DR. GIBBONS:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Canada Newfoundland Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Act.

MR. BAKER:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act to Repeal The Parliamentary Commissioner Ombudsman Act."

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Shame! Shame!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:  
You better tell the Minister of Justice.

0 0 0

MR. SIMMS:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:  
Just on a point of something, a point of order, I guess.

I wonder if the Clerks could tell us at the Table or maybe the Government House Leader remembers - it should have been under

Reports of Standing and Special Committees. When we extended the working time of the Committee on the Rules and Procedures, Standing Orders, did we not extend that Committee's work until the end of April? Do you recall? Because if so today is the end of April and I do not believe we have a report ready. So we would require some kind of a reference or extension. The Clerk is quickly looking. Maybe she can check it and go on with other matters and come back to it.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Well we should deal with it, if it is necessary.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Just to speak to the point of order. It is not a point of order, it is a point of clarification and we will leave it at that. We could check it out.

### Petitions

MR. WARREN:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:  
Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I have a number of petitions that I will continue to present until this Government reacts in a positive manner to the request of those petitions. Mr. Speaker, this petition to the hon. House of Assembly is signed by the residents in Nain, 'We are concerned that the Government of

Newfoundland and Labrador has reduced the Labrador air subsidy and has therefore unacceptably increased the burden of transportation cost on the residents of this Province who live in Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity this past weekend to visit Labrador - a number of communities in Labrador. I would say, Mr. Speaker, in all fairness to the Government that was elected just over a year ago, that one of the biggest blunders that has ever been made by a Government is this callous attitude of cutting out the Labrador air subsidy program and reducing by \$100,000 the Budget for sports and cultural groups. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, and I can see the nodding and the interest of some of my colleagues opposite that they are also concerned about why this Government has, all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, decided to pick on the people in Labrador.

Now, Mr. Speaker, today I received a letter, I will table the letter, a copy of a letter and it was addressed to the hon. Minister responsible for Recreation and Youth and I will table the letter, I will read it, but I will table it because I am sure it will be three weeks time by the time the Minister responsible will have a chance to see his mail.

'Dear Mr. Gullage:

I was very much taken aback by the cuts to the Labrador Subsidy for Sports Teams and the 20 per cent subsidy for travellers going from Labrador to the Island. It will serve to downgrade the calibre of athletics in this part of the Province. The teams from Labrador have proven to be competitive in

provincial tournaments or provincial meets. The opportunity to move on to provincial or nationals have always been a motivating factor. However we will not be able to afford to attend such meets or tournaments now that travelling funding is cut. It costs teams from Labrador the air fare plus the ground transportation." I think this is one thing the Government opposite does not realize, that besides the air fare, there is still the ground transportation that the rest of the people in the Province have to pay for, so this is an extra burden. "Teams from the Island are spared the high cost of air travel. To get from Makkovik to Goose Bay, it costs \$140 return per passenger and then, from Goose Bay to St. John's, it is \$590.

In the interest of maintaining a competitive level of sports in Labrador, I strongly urge you to work towards reinstating the travel subsidies."

Mr. Speaker, I have tabled that letter.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this Government opposite has two Members from Labrador, and I heard one peep on one short newscast from the hon. the Member for Eagle River that he was disgusted with the cuts this Government has made, one little peep, and he has not said one word since. He said that the day it was announced but since then, he has not said one word.

**MR. PARSONS:**

He was told not to say anything.

**MR. WARREN:**

He has been told that if he wanted to get into Cabinet he could not rock the boat. And the Minister, the hon. the Member for Naskaupi,

is so interested, Mr. Speaker, that Sunday night, two weeks ago, the Liberal Association in Naskaupi had a meeting to look for a new candidate. Now that shows the level of respect the people have for the Member for Naskaupi. It is because he is not doing anything, Mr. Speaker.

Before I close - I have only one minute - I want to say one more thing, and I am concerned about this: There is a travel package for Government employees in Labrador that they have been voting on for the last number of days. Tomorrow night, they will have finished voting on this travel package, a good travel package; but I hope this Government will not use that travel package as a scapegoat for a program that has been in place for the last twenty-two years. That is what the Minister responsible for Treasury Board is aiming at. He is planning to use this travel package as a way of getting out of the air subsidy program. In closing, I say to the Minister, remember, there are more people in Labrador than those who work for Government.

I refer this petition, Mr. Speaker, as I will many other petitions, to the Department to which it relates, and hopefully, the Government will come to its senses, will wake up and remember that Labrador is part of this great Province of ours and if you do not do something about it, Labrador will not be a part of this Province very much longer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:**

Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The hon. the Member for Menihek.



MR. A. SNOW:

Mr. Speaker, I am rather disappointed that some of the Members on the other side of the House would not speak to such an important issue to the people of Labrador, especially people on the other side who have private members there with a particular knowledge of Labrador and a particular knowledge of this program and how important it was to the residents of all of Labrador, not just the people in Torngat Mountains District or, indeed, the people in Makkovik, specifically, where the hon. the Member for Torngat received a petition and very capably presented it to this hon. House.

It disappoints me, as I suggested, that other people on the other side of the House would not speak to this petition. In fact, it shows to me that they lack a true understanding of what is occurring in Labrador and thus they cannot deliver the services to Labrador. That is a very big disappointment not just to me, but to all the residents.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What about the hon. Member for Eagle River.

MR. A. SNOW:

I am sure the hon. the Member for Eagle River will be able to speak up in months to come about particular issues in Western Labrador and other Members, Members in Cabinet after a period of time will be permitted to speak up and articulate their personal views of some of the problems of residents of all of Labrador. And in this particular case I just want to address the problems associated with the travel subsidy program that had been initiated twenty-four years ago by a

previous Liberal Administration, not this regressive conservative Administration that we have here today. They were an Administration who had recognized the needs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. A. SNOW:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for your protection. It is unfortunate that the people in Cabinet do not understand the problems associated with this particular program that had been delivered because if they did understand they would have indeed come in with a subsidy program that would be more beneficial to the people of Western Labrador. In this particular Budget they took \$3 million per year extra from the people of Western Labrador through their payroll tax; \$3 million per year and cut out a \$600,000 amount from their Budget, an expenditure that goes to residents of all of Labrador for a program to enable people to have more feeling of togetherness, if you want to call it that, to be able to travel to and from the Island portion of the Province in sporting, cultural events, and also for other reasons that people would want to travel to this Island portion of the Province.

It is unfortunate that they also do not recognize that indeed the people in the Island portion of this Province derive a great terrific benefit from the people travelling from the Labrador portion of the Province to be able to participate in particular events here on the Island. The

local Carol Players in Western Labrador travelled for years to the Island portion of this Province and presented drama at Drama Festivals. Some of them have even left their residences in Western Labrador and come out to live on the Island in places like Holyrood and Avondale, and brought great success and pride to their communities. So you can see there is a benefit.

If you disregard the people of Labrador and their concerns and their needs as to why there should be a subsidy in place, if you do not have any concern for their needs, as is evidenced by the reaction in your Budget where you slashed and gutted these particular programs, have concern for the people in your own Districts here on the Island portion of the Province who can derive a fantastic benefit by having people from Labrador come out and participate in cultural events, athletic events and that type of thing. Indeed I am sure you have had representation from different communities on the Island portion of the Province, because the people out there recognize it. It is unfortunate that it has not been articulated well enough to you in your Cabinet discussions in that you would see fit to cut this particular program by \$500,000 or \$600,000. To suggest it was done for budgetary reasons is ludicrous in the fact that you have a \$10 million surplus, and you gut and slash a program that only put \$600,000 back into the peoples pockets of Labrador, and driving them to other provinces.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. gentleman's time is up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
By leave! By leave!

MR. A. SNOW:  
If I could just have one more minute, Mr. Speaker, to clue up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:  
By leave.

MR. A. SNOW:  
I would suggest that the Special Cabinet Committee that has been struck by the Premier comprised of five Members of Cabinet would hurry along and finish up their meetings, make recommendations and come in and suggest to this House, and indeed the people of Labrador and the whole Province, of a better subsidy program to be put in place for the years to come here in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. GULLAGE:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. GULLAGE:  
Mr. Speaker, just a few comments. Because the letter the Member spoke about alludes to the fact that we do not have a program in place for recreation and culture, well, in fact, that program is still in place. I do not know why he would make the comment that we are no longer providing subsidies with that part of the program. I think the hon. Member will know,

as was just said, we have a group of Cabinet Ministers, a Committee struck, to look after this whole area of travel subsidies in Labrador. I think we should await the outcome, but we should not imply in the meantime that recreation, sports, fitness, culture, and that whole area has been eliminated, because I stated in this House that in the interim, while the Committee was working, we would leave the program in place.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You cancelled it already.

MR. GULLAGE:

It is in place, and it is not cancelled. It is not cancelled. It is still in place.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

I will present another petition on the same issue, Mr. Speaker, and this is from the community of Rigolet. It has the same concerns, Mr. Speaker, and the same concerns are what the Minister just said. Those concerns are that there have been events cancelled because of the Minister's statement. Over 200 people could not go to Nain for a sports meet because of the Minister's announcement a month ago. I say to the Minister if he is going to come into this House he had better go and tell everybody, every sports group throughout this Province, and he has the means to do it, go into the communities and announce that this program will continue. Because, Mr. Speaker, the five member Committee that the Premier

has announced is nothing but a farce, nothing but a downright farce. You do not need five Cabinet Ministers to decide -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I just require that the Member give us some information related to the petition. The Member for Torngat Mountains says it is the same thing. The Chair would better be able to decide how the debate is progressing if the Chair heard the particular prayer of the petition. Would the hon. gentleman address the prayer of the petition? It may not be a point of order but the Chair would just like to hear the prayer of the petition.

MR. WARREN:

It is identical to the last one, Mr. Speaker. " We are concerned that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has reduced the Labrador air subsidy and has thereby unacceptably increased the burden of transportation costs on the residents of the Province who live in Labrador." It is the same prayer of the petition and I say again that the Committee that the Premier set up is nothing but a downright farce. It is nothing but a delaying tactic. Mr. Speaker, you do not need five Cabinet Ministers to decide whether a program that has been in place for twenty-two years can work or not. It has worked for twenty-two years to the satisfaction of the people in Labrador. All that is wrong, Mr. Speaker, is the Premier, because of his one-man show, is afraid to say to the people in Labrador, we will not cut out the Labrador Air Subsidy Program. I say again what I said earlier, it all boils down

to what the Minister responsible for Treasury Board is up to. He believes that by satisfying the people who work with Government in Labrador he will satisfy the other people in Labrador, and I say to the Minister, no way, Sir. The people who need it the most are the ones that will be hurt the most.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue with my petitions day after day, after day. Three more arrived today and I will present them until this Government comes out with an answer. Whether or not it is up to the time the House closes I will continue to present my petitions. I have them here on health care. I am surprised, Mr. Speaker, that my hon. colleague has petitions that he will not present in this House. I believe it is incumbent on every Member who receives a petition from the people they represent to present that petition in this House of Assembly. That is the least thing we can do. I believe the hon. Member for Eagle River should present the petitions he has received and if not, one of those days, I am going to come in with copies of those petitions and I will ask Your Honour if I can present them, because the people want their petitions to be heard in this hon. House.

Mr. Speaker, I say to my hon. colleagues opposite, do not waste any more time in deciding what needs to be done. The Premier was in the Government when the decision was made in the first place to institute the Program, so surely, goodness, let us leave the program in place so that at least there can be some relationship between the people of Labrador and the people of the Province. I say, Mr. Speaker, that in four or

five years, if this Government keeps on the path it is now on, the path it has set for the people of Labrador, there is a very short distance to the Quebec/Labrador border, and I am afraid that is where they will turn. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, as it appears nobody from the other side is going to get up to respond unless they are pried up, perhaps I can say a few words which might provoke somebody on the other side into getting up.

I speak in support of the petition so ably presented by my colleague and friend, the Member for Torngat Mountains, who, as I have said on previous occasions, has shown his intensity time and time again. He represents the people of Labrador without a doubt, without question. He pursues matters, nothing gets in his way, and he is not afraid to raise matters in this Legislature on behalf of his constituents. He is frequently supported by his colleague, the Member for Menihek, the other Member for Labrador. Both of them do more on this side of the House to improve and to fight for improvements for the people of Labrador than the entire Government caucus - the entire Government caucus - which also has two Members on the Government side.

MS VERGE:

From Labrador.

MR. SIMMS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to

address this topic briefly, this topic of the cutback in the Labrador Travel Subsidy Programs. I say programs because we are referring to two programs here, as I understand it; both have been affected. One was the 20 per cent rebate program, which individuals could apply for, which was cut out or eliminated completely. Last year, as I understand it, approximately 6,000 individuals from Labrador applied for that 20 per cent rebate - 6,000 people from Labrador, Mr. Speaker, applied last year for that rebate, that 20 per cent rebate.

MR. BAKER:

You fellows lowered it.

MR. SIMMS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, we may have lowered it, but this crowd eliminated it.

MS VERGE:

They like people when they are down.

MR. SIMMS:

The President of Treasury Board keeps shouting out we lowered it, we lowered it. You would not know but it was some kind of silly little game he is playing. The fact of the matter is, this Government has eliminated it, that is the point, and 6,000 people applied for that 20 per cent rebate, Mr. Speaker, 6,000 Labradorians, I presume, people who live in Labrador. Now, that is a significant number of people when you consider that the people of Labrador are isolated. That is just in this one travel program I am talking about now. The people of Labrador are isolated. The Member for Eagle River agrees 100 per cent; he agrees with everything the Member for Torngat Mountains is saying; he agrees

with everything the Member for Menihek is saying; and he agrees with everything I am saying. The only problem is, he is not allowed to get up and say it any more, Mr. Speaker. That is the big problem. And that is very unfortunate. I always had a lot of respect for him. I thought he had the intestinal fortitude and the courage to be able to stand in his place and speak out on behalf of his constituents. Obviously, they have gagged him - the Government have gagged him.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is just one program. The other program, of course, is the sports travel subsidy, I guess for sports groups and cultural groups. That one, which used to provide a 75 per cent subsidy to students participating in these activities, has been cut down to a 50 per cent subsidy, and adults have been cut from 50 per cent down to 25 per cent. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, that particular program cutback amounts to about \$100,000. As I remember the announcement by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, it was a \$100,000 cutback, and I think there were 7,000 people or 8,000 people included in all the groups that participated in those programs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for a lousy \$100,000 they cause all that pain, grief and sorrow, and inflict all that kind of pain, grief and sorrow on the people of Labrador who are isolated and who have a feeling of isolation, and it is just being magnified because of decisions that are very insensitive, such as these kinds of decisions, Mr. Speaker. So I say in conclusion, the Government, as I understand it, and the Premier, found the heat. The

Premier was finding the heat, because we were raising it day after day in the House, the Member for Torngat Mountains and the Member for Menihek in particular, and they finally said, well, we have to get rid of this heat somehow, so we will do what we have been doing for the last year, we will send it off to a committee to study.

But what did he do, Mr. Speaker? What did he do? You talk about a program here that cost in total somewhere around a half a million dollars, 400,000 and 100,000, \$500,000 are cut and what did he do Mr. Speaker? The Premier set up a special Cabinet Task Force - I hope it has more success than the one headed by the Minister of Forestry, by the way - which is made up of almost one-third of the Cabinet, five Members of the Cabinet, to address this big question of a \$400,000 or a \$500,000 cutback. What takes so long? That was weeks ago, before Easter. What takes so long? Can they not sit down and look at it and say, well, boys and girls, or men and women, ladies and gentlemen, we have to find this? We cannot do this, it is not fair to the people of Labrador. We cannot isolate them any further, we have to bite the bullet, we have to give them that, we will have to reinstitute that Labrador travel program. Let us report back to the Premier so he can make a statement in the House and let us get out of this. They do not seem to have sense enough to deal with those kinds of questions, they do not seem to have sense enough to deal with priorities and this, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you in conclusion, is an absolute priority and we call on the Government to hurry up, get its act together, get the Cabinet back

together. If a third of them are dealing with it, there must be somebody intelligent enough on that Cabinet Committee of five Ministers. I am not sure who is on it. The Minister of Finance, certainly, would not have any input into it at all, the Minister of Recreation may have.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. Gentleman's time is up.

MR. SIMMS:  
Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I hope they wake up and hurry up and respond to these concerns.

#### Orders of the Day

MR. BAKER:  
Motion 5, Mr. Speaker.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance to introduce a Bill, "An Act To Amend The Mineral Holdings Impost Act." (Bill No. 27), carried.

On motion, Bill No. 27 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:  
Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we could do numbers seven to ten as a unit to save all the procedural time, and then do twelve to seventeen. I was thinking about separating the two groups.

MR. SIMMS:  
You want to do them all?

MR. BAKER:  
Except No. 11.

MR. SIMMS:  
Numbers seven to seventeen.

MR. BAKER:

Seven to seventeen, with the exception of number eleven.

MR. SPEAKER:

On motion, various Ministers introduced various Bills, as agreed to by the two House Leaders.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice to introduce the following Bills entitled: "An Act To Revise The Law Respecting The Provincial Court," (Bill No. 13); "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Savings Plans Act," (Bill No. 29); "An Act To Amend The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act," (Bill No. 35); "An Act Respecting Enduring Powers Of Attorney," (Bill No. 40); "An Act To Amend The Small Claims Act," (Bill No. 41), carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Works, Services And Transportation to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Dangerous Goods Transportation Act And The Summary Proceedings Act," carried. (Bill No. 37)

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Newfoundland And Labrador Hydro Act, 1975," carried. (Bill No. 31)

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Municipal And Provincial Affairs to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act Respecting The Creation Of Regional Service Boards Throughout The Province," carried. (Bill No. 38)

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Social Services to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Young Persons Offences Act," carried. (Bill No. 36)

Motion, the hon. the Minister of

Employment And Labour Relations to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act, 1977," carried. (Bill No. 32)

On motion, Bill Nos. 13, 29, 35, 37 and 31, 38, 36, 32, 40 and 41 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:

Order 3, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Concurrence Motion, Social Services.

The hon. the Member for La Poile.

MR. RAMSAY:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, with the Chairman of our Committee being absent -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Just before the hon. Member proceeds, I am wondering whether the House has agreed on the times that will be given in these.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a comment. First of all, I will make another comment, since you have given me the opportunity. It was our understanding, of course, and from reading Hansard, that the first Concurrence Report to be called today would be the first one, which is what the Government House Leader said, which would have been the Resource Estimates Committee. Unfortunately, I had a call from the House Leader just prior to the House opening, which indicated he had changed his mind again, which is not unusual, but we are quite

prepared to debate this one.

With respect to the speaking order, I think we have agreed to follow the practices and traditions of the past in Concurrence Debate. The Government House Leader, I am sure, will respond to it. I believe it is fifteen minutes for the Chairman, fifteen minutes for the Vice-Chairman, and then ten minutes for anybody who wishes to stand and debate, and there is no restriction on the number of times you can stand or anything like that; it goes on for three hours. That is the practice, I believe, and that is what I understand.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. BAKER:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a very sensible way to proceed with this particular debate. I know there are a lot of Members on this side who are very anxious to get involved, and I am sure Members on the other side are as well. This allows more Members of the hon. House to participate in the Concurrence Debates. I think it is an excellent procedure that we have been following over the last number of years, and it should continue. So fifteen minutes for the introduction and response, and then, although Members do not have to use their ten minutes, a maximum of ten minutes for speeches beyond that.

**MR. SPEAKER:**

The hon. the Member for LaPoile.

**MR. RAMSAY:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now that we have clarified the

timing and the procedure we will follow, I was saying that the Chairman of our Committee is unable to be with us today and I will, on his behalf, just give a brief report on some of the things we covered as a Committee, and some of the deliberations that were undertaken by the Committee. I might note that the deliberations were quite extensive. The Committee ran often quite beyond the time required to examine the detailed Estimates and certain policy areas, I guess, the Government has planned. Being a new Government, in power for the first year, you have certain things which Members of the Opposition, having been former Ministers of the Crown, were very interested in, having quite a good knowledge, I might add, of a lot of the matters which the expenditure estimates addressed.

Our Committee undertook an examination of four specific departments of Government under the Social Services Estimates: the Department of Social Services, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health, and the Department of Education.

Now, I might note that the Government has seen fit to increase the Budgets of all four of these Departments of Government by quite substantial numbers. You might note that the Department of Social Services received approximately a \$17 million increase, the Department of Justice received an \$8 million increase this year, the Department of Health was increased by a whopping \$74 million, and the Department of Education was increased by \$43 million. The commitment of this Government to the Social Services sector in a



time of economic uncertainty, and a time of fiscal restraint, provides a view as to where the priorities lie, the priorities of a Liberal Government. The priorities certainly are stated effectively with the Department of Social Services, a strong Liberal policy that we will help those who are unable to help themselves. Not to imply in any way that the former Government did not do this, it is just a matter of the method and the way in which we will do it.

The certain elements under our examination of the Department of Social Services which I would like to note, was the creation of fifty new front line positions.

The hon. Minister is quite pleased to be able to put some advertisements in the paper. Social workers in the Province, of course, are required, the need being quite high, in consideration of some of the social problems that are inherent in the social fabric of the Province. A few other points for the Department of Social Services which I would like to mention: There is a \$1 million contribution for the HUB in consideration of the, I suppose, way that provinces in general have dragged their heels in addressing the needs of individuals who have physical or even mental handicaps. This is one effort in this way. Now this only, of course, addresses the concerns of disabled people in the St. John's area but there is a certain element of that community that effects change throughout the Island and as a community hopefully this kind of contribution will help them to grow.

I want to also mention the increases that were made for

foster parent's allowances and grants by the hon. Minister and his Department. I think this is certainly not the end- all but it is a very definite step in the right direction in addressing the needs that have gone to a point, I suppose, of not being fully addressed when improvements can be made in support of Her Majesty's Government who are certainly interested in seeing this kind of new policy implementation.

Under the Department of Justice discussions went quite a bit more extensive than last year's budget estimates. I guess the Vice-Chairperson who in the past was fresh out of her chair as Minister of Justice really understood a lot of the Department at that time and exactly what the initiatives were. She was a little more intense on her questioning of the Minister this year and in so doing brought to light a few different aspects of the Department that I would like to note.

One was the Legal Aid difficulties with having, as she noted, the lawyers, the legal community in the Province, to address the Legal Aid question, a point which brought considerable discussion from both sides. The Minister so eloquently putting forth his arguments for some of the questions that were put and also a general view, I guess, of the legal system in the Province.

The question of the difference in fees for prosecutors versus the defence attorneys in Legal Aid matters was brought up, there being a substantial deficiency in the amount paid. Another thing I might note was the full-time representation that is now required due to a court judgement

by lawyers throughout the Province, as Legal Aid counsel - to be available by phone on weekends. There has been a system set up to fix this difficulty that the court did address, that Legal Aid lawyers in one area or another, do have to be available for consultation by anyone who is charged throughout the week and also now on weekends.

That matter, along with the increase in police personnel, to assist with the difficulties caused by the overloading of the police system, given the increase in sexual abuse cases that have strained the system to a breaking point, I would suggest. So these are some of the things that were discussed in the Justice Estimates and the Minister handled himself quite capably, I must add, and came with the smallest number of officials actually. Not to imply, I guess, that the number of officials has anything to do with the quality of a Department but he came well armed and I do not think his officials really had much of a chance as the hon. Minister was overflowing with words and knowledge at the time. It was an interesting evening, I might add. We finished up a little late, not to complain, but to say that things did not go on with stones unturned.

The Department of Education was also extensively examined and the Minister is also extremely interested in his Department. He has an extreme personal interest in education in general and the philosophy that we hope to follow here in the future as far as the way we will approach the future of education in the Province.

Some things mentioned were the sharing of facilities by

denominational groups. Something which, I must add, it was pointed out that the actual monetary value of say getting rid of the denominational school system which sometimes we hear calls for, may not be as much as a financial saving as might otherwise be implied. But over all the Minister in his initiatives on the white paper on post-secondary education were quite well received. I might note there was some representation made that the location of the Western Community College Headquarters in Stephenville was quite a good initiative to decentralize even more by a Member who was visiting the Committee at the time. And the Member for Stephenville actually made that point, that the decentralization outside the two larger centres is a very worthy effort and congratulated the Minister and his Cabinet on taking that initiative.

And as well the identity of the Marine Institute as a separate entity was noted and I might add that this was addressed very ably by the Minister in his response that the University will be used as a resource type thing to combine the University with the Marine Institute, without keeping its own identity would be detrimental. But to attach the Marine Institute to the University along the granting of degrees, and also to allow for a certain factor which will allow us to gain research monies and that in the future was very important.

Also in the Department of Health, if I might clue up. Improvements in Labrador were noted and were quite well received. I know the hon. Minister has made a firm commitment to Labrador, and the Labrador Coast, and as well the

improvements in cancer treatment research has hit home to me quite recently within my own family, some form of cancer struck a member of my family and I suppose it only takes a certain element of yourself being involved to realize the improvements and you then understand a little better I think.

Also noted were the opening of hospital beds and the hiring of new nurses or the rehiring I suppose of permanent nursing positions, permanent nurses to positions throughout the Province. These were good initiatives which were implemented by the Department. And I might add in total we are looking at about \$143 million increase in total in the social services sector under Budget Estimates. So the commitment has been made there.

The other area of commitment which our Government has made is to the area of economic development and I feel with the economic development as one Member so ably put it to pay the bills, hopefully to foster new economic development in the area, in the Province in general and specific areas of the Province, specifically, we should be able to increase the tax base that we can then utilize to improve our social services sector more.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all members of the Committee, the hon. Vice-Chairperson and other Members, Ms Duff, the Member for St. John's East - she was quite well prepared, I might add; also the Member for Stephenville (Mr. K. Aylward) was there occasionally and the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn), I recall having his input as a former Minister of Education.

With that, I will defer to the hon. Member opposite who will have, I suppose, the Opposition comment on the Budget Estimates which, I might add, were passed without amendment. There was a bit of sweat at one point but the hon. the Member for St. George's, (Mr. Short) who also was quite an avid participant in the proceedings, one who was not too happy, at times, with the procedure we followed, but who had quite some input into it, after all. He held his own with the rest of us.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Held his cool.

MR. RAMSAY:

Held his cool. It was an enjoyable time with the Committee and I defer now to the hon. Members opposite for their comment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member for LaPoile for his report of the Government's version of the Social Estimates Committee deliberations this year. I regret that our Chairperson, the Member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy) is not here today to participate in this concurrence debate. I must say, as Vice-Chairperson, I worked well with this Chairperson. There were some logistical difficulties, mainly caused by the Meech Lake Rescission Debate going on before the Easter break, where scheduling was difficult for a while, but we

did manage to co-operate in carrying out all the hearings and, as the Member for LaPoile reported, our Committee examined in considerable detail the estimates of four of the largest-spending Departments of the Provincial Government, in the order in which we dealt with them, the Estimates of the Departments of Social Services, Health, Education and Justice.

I must pay tribute to my colleague on the Committee, the Member for St. John's East (Ms Duff). Both she and I have a lively interest in all four of the Departments whose Estimates we dealt with, and perhaps, at times, some of the Ministers on the hot seat thought of us as double trouble. Our questions were wide-ranging. We dealt with philosophy and policy, as well as the specifics of the Estimates. At times, some of the Government Members tried to limit our discussions and force us to stick to particular numbers in the Budget. We pointed out that the House Estimates Committees, since they have been operating, some ten or eleven years now, have established the practice of looking at philosophy and policy, for how else can the House evaluate the adequacy of Budget provisions unless we look at particular provisions in a broad context?

We found that the first two Ministers we questioned were quite political in their approach. They are the Ministers responsible for Social Services and Health. They routinely, in their answers, referred to what had gone on for the previous seventeen years. Both those Ministers are quite backward-looking and I was relieved to hear the Minister of Social Services, in the full House

the other day, concede that it is time, at last, for him to look to the future. I welcome that pledge on his part.

As I mentioned, both of these Ministers tended to be quite political in their approach. I think the most extreme example of this occurred when I questioned the Minister of Health about the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases in the Province and he tried to correlate the incidence with which party was in power provincially, explaining that the rate of gonorrhoea has gone down since the Liberals took office.

Mr. Speaker, both those Ministers gave as an excuse for every deficiency and every shortcoming of their estimates - federal funding. Both those Ministers used the refrain of federal cuts. Mr. Speaker, I am not an apologist for the Federal Government. I deal with issues as they arise on their merit. I am here to represent the people of Humber East and to further the economy and the society of Newfoundland and Labrador. And I am not going to hesitate to criticize the current Federal Government which is PC or any other Federal Government. It seems to be a fact of life that there is tension between provincial and federal governments of whatever stripe. When I was a Member of the PC Peckford Cabinet, we had to go head to head with Federal Governments lead by Prime Minister Trudeau and on occasion the Federal Governments lead by Prime Minister Clark and Prime Minister Mulroney. In the case of the restructuring of the deep-sea fishing industry in the early 1980s for example, we spared no effort to ensure that plans which the Federal Government, the

deep-sea companies and their major creditor, the Bank of Nova Scotia, wanted to abandon were in fact kept open.

Mr. Speaker, to be fair however, it is necessary to point out the numbers on page 'ii' of the Estimates showing that the total revenue from the Federal Government to the Provincial Government will be growing by \$42 million this year over last year. In trying to deal with the Federal Government's deficit the Federal Government has frozen established programs of financing designed for the Province to operate post-secondary education institutions and programs and health care institutions and services. That is regrettable.

In the case of other provinces, Mr. Speaker, specifically the wealthy provinces of Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, the Federal Government has frozen payments under the Canada Assistance Plan. Thankfully that has not been done to our Province, and we will continue to experience growth in Federal Government cost-sharing under the CAP. As well the Federal Government will continue to increase payments to our Provincial Government in the nature of equalization grants and that is quite fitting.

So overall in the coming Budget year, in this Budget year, we will expect to get \$42 million more from the Federal Government than we received last year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in our examination of the Estimates of the four social Departments, we detected major problems with the provisions for the Departments of Education and Justice.

In the case of Education, Mr. Speaker, this Administration does not seem to have given due importance to children's education. This Administration on taking office last May recombined the Ministerial and Departmental responsibility for children's education and adult education. Prior to five years ago the Minister of Education and the Department of Education, had responsibility for the full range of educational services and programs, education for young children to senior citizens. At that point, about five years ago, the Peckford Administration split the responsibility, leaving the mandate for children's education with the Department of Education and assigning responsibility for post-secondary education and adult education to what was called the Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies. This Administration reverted to the earlier arrangement. Many people felt that would not disrupt the balance of Government funding for the two sectors of education. However, people are now quite worried because a pattern has emerged in the first year of the Well's Administration.

Right off the bat the Minister situated himself physically in the former office of the Minister of Career Development. He chose as his Deputy Minister, the former Deputy of Career Development, a person with an excellent background in university education but with no prior involvement in the administration of children's education. The Administration for reasons impossible for me to fathom fired two exemplary members of the executive of the former Department of Education with distinguished records in administration of children's

education, depriving the Department of their leadership ability. The result has been a bad blow to the morale of the public servants of that Department. People working for the Department prior had wonderful spirit. There was a great camaraderie among the public servants of the Department of Education. It is very upsetting for me as a former Minister to see so many of those very special people upset and demoralized now, and I would urge the Minister of Education, who I hope can hear what I am saying through the speaker system, to take steps immediately to address the interest of the staff of his Department and try to repair the damage that has been done to their morale and spirit.

Getting to the numbers of the Budget, Mr. Speaker, there is grossly inadequate provision for school board operations, so much so that the Provincial Association of School Trustees, which is the provincial umbrella group for the thirty-one school boards, have said that this is "the most regressive budget for education in living memory." The reason for that criticism of the school boards is that the Government will be giving school boards less purchasing power for their overhead requirements than they had last year. The change in the Department of Education operating grants for school boards this year over last year is 0.7 per cent, and that is not even including the school tax equalization component which has been frozen at \$10 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that would be shocking for any Minister of Education, but this Minister of Education is one of the two

Members of the Task Force on Education Financing appointed by the previous Administration. This Minister, along with Cec Roebottom constituted the Task Force on education financing. And, Mr. Speaker, when this Minister of Education was working as a member of the task force just prior to last year's election, he was calling for major increases in the Department of Education operating grants to school boards.

The final report submitted just after the election, Mr. Speaker, presumably incorporating the thinking and the beliefs and the recommendations of the present Minister of Education called for major increases in Government grants and increases not to be phased in over time as the Minister now tries to suggest, Mr. Speaker, but increases to be implemented right away in last year's budget in the 1989-90 budget.

And what is the difference between the recommendations of that report and what this Minister has actually done, Mr. Speaker? A difference of about \$5 million on school tax equalization, a difference of about \$1.5 million on student transportation, a difference of about \$2 million a year on debt servicing, plus \$15 million which the task force report recommended be added.

Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Education studied exhaustively school taxation when he worked at the University. Some of his colleagues when they were campaigning for election last year promised definitely that if they were elected they would abolish school taxation. What do we have now, Mr. Speaker? Two school taxes. We have the old school tax

for children's education and now we have the Minister of Finance's infamous payroll tax for post-secondary education. What is really ludicrous, Mr. Speaker, is that the new payroll tax is going to be imposed on the St. John's School Tax Authority, the largest in the Province, so some of the collections of the St. John's School Tax Authority for children's education are now going to be diverted to the Department of Finance supposedly to be paid for post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker.

My time is running out. There is a lot more I could say. I will note quickly that there is inadequate funding for student assistants or teacher aides who are required for integration of students with handicaps and learning disabilities into regular schools and classes, over a \$1 million shortfall, Mr. Speaker, and the answer is another impulse, another rash, ad hoc, makeshift arrangement of Social Services Community Development funding along with the permanent Department of Education funding. The Social Services budget in question has been slashed by \$4.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, school busing, as my colleague the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes said in Question Period today, the amount is frozen, there is no proper provision for rising school transportation costs. And while the Minister talks about studying duplication, he is dillydallying and he is not giving school boards any assurance that the legitimate requirements for transporting students from home to school and back will be met this year. Mr. Speaker, school boards have been given a squeeze.

As I mentioned, Justice, similarly, is seriously underfunded. One of the two greatest deficiencies is legal aid. Legal aid has had funding problems for quite a while, but it has now reached crisis proportions. Few lawyers in the Province are willing any longer to accept legal aid work because the scale of fees is so low; it is only half what Government pays prosecutors.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

MS VERGE:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I might just have half a minute, I will round it out. The other area of Justice that is underfunded is victim services.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

MS VERGE:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will get back to this later, in the Concurrence Debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:  
I really was not waiting for applause, but it is nice to get it. I was waiting for the Speaker to recognize me. Thank you, gentlemen.

I have to make a couple of comments about the speaker, the Vice-Chairman of social policy on the Estimates Committee. How many years was she Minister of Education?

MR. MURPHY:

I do not know how many years, but (inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

How many years? Just imagine! nobody can recall when or how long she was Minister of Education. That is a good start. But she stands here in the House of Assembly this afternoon and tells us or tells the hon. House of Assembly that morale in the Department of Education is now at an all-time low, and that when she was Minister it was at an all-time high. Talk about a dreamer. We have to admire you. I mean, we cannot even remember when you were Minister of Education, or how long you were Minister of Education, let alone what you accomplished. But this Minister of Education, I have to say before I get on to the Department of Social Services, as far as this Province is concerned, is the only Minister of Education since Confederation. Even old anti-confederate himself will agree with that, because now we are seeing some positive things in the Department of Education.

But let us get to the Department of Social Services. I sat in Estimates Committees and I listened to a number of people, almost to the point where I pitied them really, trying to find some questions to ask the officials of the Department of Social Services.

MR. SIMMS:

They danced around (inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

No, I do not do that.

The only one I can really commend for the job that was done is the Member for St. John's East. I must say that when she did ask questions, they were questions relating to the issues of the day. And each time she asked a question, she congratulated the Minister and his staff for the excellent job they were doing.

But the Member for Humber East, being Vice-Chairman of the Committee, made a lot of statements. She started off with saying she was going to ask a question. Ten minutes later, I would ask her to get to the question; she was still making a comment on something that happened back seven or eight years ago. I guess she was so used to me being in Opposition and relating the inadequacies of the Department of Social Services, that she thought she would play the same field. But no really good questions came out. She tried to get across the point that the fifty new positions we are getting this year, adding to the Department, were not fifty new positions. For about one or two hours in the Estimates Committee that is the point she was trying to make, that we were just filling temporary positions. And we repeated over, and over, and over, and over that we are not filling temporary positions existing in the Department, they are fifty new positions, full-time, permanent positions created for the child abuse unit. We took up almost two hours of the Estimates Committee trying to get that message across. There are a lot of good things happening in the Department of Social Services; we are making a lot of changes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:



Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:  
Thank you.

First of all, we have to look at the problems and the source of the problems. It is not very difficult to go back over the last number of years and look at what was not happening. It is very difficult to find what was happening positively in the Department of Social Services, but it is not difficult to find what was not happening. You can go through every program within the Department, and there are eight major programs, and very few of the programs have shown any significant change over the last two decades. Let us go back to the Child Welfare Act. Do you realize, Mr. Speaker, that 1974 was the last time there were changes made to the Child Welfare Act, and this is now 1990? It is almost fifteen years since any real changes were made to the Day Care and Homemakers Act.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
How many?

MR. EFFORD:  
Almost fifteen years. That is the type of progress we had from the Progressive Conservatives in doing things that were essential to the needs of the day. The only thing they could come into the Estimates Committee and criticize was whether the fifty new workers were going to fill temporary positions or if they were new positions which had been created. That is it exactly. That is all.

All they have to do is read the book. All they had to do is listen to the reading of the Budget. Some of the things which were not talked about in the

Estimates Committee, some things I would have expected they would have asked questions on, were things like subsidized adoption. That is one thing we are very pleased about in the Department of Social Services. Legislation will be introduced in this sitting having to do with subsidized adoption. We have a lot of children in the Province, children with special needs out in foster homes, children who have some form of disability, developmentally delayed or a physical disability, or behavioural problems, and it is very difficult to encourage people to adopt those children. In fact, a lot of people in the Province are not even aware that these children are out there available for adoption. When you apply for adoption of a child, most emphasis is placed on infants, especially infants to three years of age. You cannot stop that. You have to do what you can to provide those children for the people and to provide information services, but we have approximately 700 to 800 children in the Province who are being moved around from foster home to foster home year after year, with really no ties, really no family connection.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:  
Yes, in special needs.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
What are the actual ages?

MR. EFFORD:  
Ages ten and up, ten to sixteen.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
And they are not (inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:  
Oh, no. But if so wished, we can

do it. What we are going to do, Mr. Speaker, is make available, and nobody is obligated to take it or forced to take it, but the money we use to put children into foster homes, for example, if we spend \$300 or \$400, depending on the child's needs, to put a child into a foster home, a parent adopting that child can have that money if they so wish to provide for the special needs of that child, if the child needs special transportation, special clothing, special footwear, or a special service because of their disability, whether physical, developmentally delayed, or just behavioural problems.

MR. SIMMS:

Is that on top of (inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

Well, this would have to do with adoptive parents. Adoptive parents do not receive any money in the normal adoption process. When the court awards you a child, then that child is the same as your own natural child. This is for adopting children with special needs. What we are trying to do is accomplish two things: First of all, we want to make people aware that there are a lot of children, a lot of good children, in those particular homes to be adopted. We do not want to say we are going to pay you to adopt them. What we are saying is if you need the money, the monies are there; we are spending it on foster homes anyway.

MR. SIMMS:

That program has been in place for a number of years, you say?

MR. EFFORD:

No, we are just introducing it now. This is a new thing.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It is new?

MR. EFFORD:

We are talking at least 700 to 800. I cannot give you the exact number, but there are quite a large number of children. Today we are talking about children ten years and over. There is still a significant number of children, from infants to six, seven and eight year-olds, and we will probably reduce the age to seven or eight year-olds when we see how this works. This is just to see how it works.

The other serious problem in adoption services, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that if you were to apply for adoption of a child - when we talk about a child, an infant to a three year old - you have at least a minimum of a seven year waiting period before you can adopt. Now that is a serious thing to deal with alone, any parent or parents who want to adopt a child and who have to wait seven years. Let us say, for argument's sake, parents averaging thirty-five to forty years old have to wait seven years. They are forty-five, forty-six, forty-seven years old before they get a child, and it could possibly be longer than that. That is the minimum length of time they would have to wait.

MR. SIMMS:

Why does it take seven years?

MR. EFFORD:

Because of the shortage of children.

MR. SIMMS:

Oh, I see. It is not the process.

MR. EFFORD:

No, it is not the process. One of the main problems I have to deal

with, and probably the Minister of Justice at some time would like to speak on this, because I have a concern about it, is that the courts will award and will insist on the Department of Social Services keeping children together with a parent or parents wherever possible. I have some concerns about that, because there are a lot of cases where a lot of people who, through no fault of their own, have one or two children, in most cases it is one child, and they really cannot give that individual the proper care and the proper services. That is the reason we end up with a lot of children in foster homes, being moved around all over the place, because of the parents inability to look after those children.

But Social Services, according to the courts, must do everything in its power, but it has to be under extreme circumstances only. It is a lot more difficult to take a child from a parent now than it was five or six or ten years ago. Because more and more today the courts are encouraging, even in cases of abuse in a lot of cases, the courts will, after so much family counselling and abuse counselling, whatever counselling service is needed, encouraging you to try and keep the families together.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. EFFORD:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I must say I was quite interested in what the Minister of Social Services had to say during the latter part of his comments. I was not too interested in his first couple of minutes, he was, as usual, a bit political and partisan. He likes to be like that, and he likes to get his colleagues reved up, shall we say, he tries to get them reved up a bit.

I must say I have to confess it is the first time I listened to the Minister with any degree of intensity, because it is the first time I have heard him talk about a topic that is of extreme importance, and the first time I ever heard him address anything in a serious way, without being partisan. I say this to him sincerely. One of the reasons we do not hear from the Minister, I suppose, is that there are not too many questions asked of him.

MR. EFFORD:  
You do not have any questions.

MR. SIMMS:  
Well, one of the reasons for it is probably because of the Minister's reputation. His reputation far precedes him, and his reputation is one of being partisan and nasty and stuff like that. So why bother to ask questions of a Minister who is going to treat questions in that manner? I say to him, if the Minister intends to act a little more sensible in the future in answering questions, he might very well get some. But the very first time we ask one and he gets on with his normal nonsense and partisanship, then he can rest assured that will be his last again.

But, I must say, I listened with some interest to what he had to say about the adoption subsidy program. I find that very interesting. I commend the Minister, if it is a new initiative, on undertaking such an initiative, because I agree with him. I have had some involvement with the handicapped, developmentally delayed, but physically handicapped people in particular, in my own family, as a matter of fact, so I understand how difficult it would be for parents or prospective parents to want to make the commitment to take on a handicapped person, a developmentally delayed or physically delayed person, because it is a very big challenge for parents to be able to deal with that.

I am not even sure if subsidy is the right word for the Minister to be using in the program.

MR. EFFORD:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, it might not be the right word. I mean, I know what he is saying. If a parent or if a family is prepared to adopt somebody in that category, the Department is prepared to provide some assistance that would be required above and beyond the responsibility a family would have with a normal child, and I think that is a good idea.

Mr. Speaker, I only have ten minutes, and there are two or three matters I want to raise for the Minister's attention. Then I want to make a few remarks about the debate on Meech Lake, believe it or not. Since it is a budgetary discussion and it is wide-ranging, certainly what might

happen with respect to the end result of Meech Lake and the country would have an effect on our Budget, so I do not think there is any question of relevancy or anything like that. But I do want to have a few comments at the end about that.

First of all, I would like to make a few comments on two or three topics related to two or three Government Departments which are covered under this particular grouping, Social Services Estimates Committee. One is to the Minister of Justice. I asked the question in the House some time ago about the new courthouse in Grand Falls. Every week I am usually out in the Grand Falls District and I see the house that Len built, as they call it out there, and I wonder -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
That was the hospital.

MR. SIMMS:  
Oh, that was the hospital. Sorry!

But I have people now asking me, who think the reason the official - well, the same thing could apply to the hospital, for that matter, as we have had a fine, magnificent expansion out there. But there has been no effort or indication, that I am aware of, of an official opening of that beautiful facility. I think it should be officially opened to give the public and the press a chance to do something on that. Perhaps the regional Minister, the Minister of Forestry, might be planning that kind of a thing.

The same thing applies to the new courthouse out there. It is a beautiful facility and I think the Government should get on with the official opening of that

facility. I do not want to be too forward here and ask for an invitation, but perhaps the Ministers involved, and the regional Minister, might keep it under consideration. I can assure you, whether they invite me or not, I shall be there, so they might as well make it official and formal.

I wonder if the Minister of Justice, when he speaks in this Concurrence Debate, might be able to address the question and tell me when he plans to have the official opening ceremony?

MS VERGE:

And are we going to be invited? Those of us who (inaudible) the courthouse.

MR. SIMMS:

Now, you see, I did not ask that question, somebody else did. The Minister might address that.

He might also address the question that was raised last fall about security for these courthouses. I noticed he had a comment to make publicly in the local press out in Grand Falls last week about the security issue, but I gather it is no different now than it was before, since talking to some of the judges and courtroom people out there, and that in reality there is no firm, fixed security in that facility. I think there should be. That was the point I was making.

The Minister of Health, when he stands in the debate, perhaps he could tell me when he understands agreement will be reached to have the official opening of the brand new expansion, the fine expansion of the hospital in Grand Falls.

MS VERGE:

And why did they put in a classroom and then cut the funding for it?

MR. SIMMS:

That was my next question, and it goes to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education. I had representations when I was in Grand Falls over the weekend from others at the hospital, at the health care level in the hospital, nurses, for example, who spoke to me on Saturday about this cutback of the funding from the Department of Education. It is education funding, as I understand it. But these people involved in the health care sector in the hospital, in Grand Falls, were very, very concerned about this particular decision taken by the Government to eliminate the funding for that teaching position. Now, the program at the hospital in Grand Falls, as the Minister of Health might be aware, actually is a program that has been in place for sixteen years. It is not something which just came into place a year or two ago and they found it was not working. It has been in place for sixteen years, and some of the students, some of the children who were hospitalized and were students of the teacher out there, were actually students who have been in the hospital for upwards of a month. So, I mean, they are fairly long-term patients. I just think the decision is really a wrong decision, it is a bad decision. I hope the Minister of Forestry might be able to impress upon his colleagues around the Cabinet table the necessity of reconsidering this particular matter, because I think it is a regressive step and a regressive decision, certainly one that is going to be very, very unfavorably received, I can assure him.

I had calls today from people out in the hospital area, there are petitions being developed and generated now, and I think the Minister of Forestry and the Member for Exploits can expect to receive phone calls and letters and all the rest of it, because that is what they want to do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am running out of time, but I do want to make a couple of comments on the Meech Lake Debate.

First of all, I have to say, as a Newfoundlander, I am very, very upset with the way the whole debate over Meech Lake has progressed, particularly over the last month and-a-half, and I have to say I believe some of the reason for it is because of the decision by this Legislature to rescind the original approval of the Meech Lake Agreement. I think that was a provocative move that did not help the situation at all, and I expressed my views at the time the debate was ongoing. It was not necessary. In our view, it was not needed at that time, and I think that has provoked this whole debate. And, unfortunately, the debate, itself is degenerating to an all-time low and we are seeing in this country today, perhaps more dissention than we have ever, ever seen in the past. I think I can say that, except for what happened fifty years ago, I do not know, but certainly, in the last couple of decades, since I have been following politics, I have never seen the dissention that you see and hear about now in our country.

I also want to say publicly that I am not very happy at all with some of the public comments made by Federal Government politicians who are political cousins of ours. I

am not happy with comments by the Lucien Bouchards of the world, I am not happy with comments of the Joe Clarks of the world, I am not happy with comments made by Robert Bourrassa, I am not happy with comments made by our own Premier, by the way, in response, on occasion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

Well, I am telling you, now, this is how I feel about it. I am not happy with a lot of the comments.

MR. EFFORD:

You are not happy at all.

MR. SIMMS:

I am not happy at all, exactly right. The Minister of Social Services has put his finger on it. I am not happy at all with the way the debate is going on this whole Meech Lake issue. But my most bitter feelings, Mr. Speaker, I have to say, are towards columnists on the mainland like the Charles Lynches of the world and the Marjorie Nichols of the world.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has expired.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, could I have a couple of minutes, perhaps, to continue on this trend?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave.

MR. SIMMS:

What I want to say about the comments of these columnists is this, that somehow, they are bitter towards the Premier of

Newfoundland and Labrador. It is obvious they are bitter towards the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, if you read and listen to their comments.

Unfortunately, we, as a people in Newfoundland and Labrador, are tarred with the same brush. That is the unfortunate come-back or fallout from what they have said. So their comments towards the Premier, which have been very nasty by the way, are, in my view, also being directed towards the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and that is what I find unfortunate.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
That is what I do not like. I find that sad, and I say to these columnists from the mainland, who, very rarely, if ever, in all of their years have ever commented on any effects or any aspect of Newfoundland life; you have hardly ever heard them say anything about Newfoundland, good or bad, in the past. I would suggest to them that they keep their noses out of Newfoundland's business, Newfoundland's personal business. If they want to debate or write columns on the Meech Lake Accord, let them confine their comments to the topics and the issues that are being debated. If they want to attack the Premier, I do not care about that either. But, whatever they do, do not attack the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, butt out of our business, leave our people alone, and do not think that we are very happy at all with what they had to say. It did not help the debate one iota. Especially what Charles Lynch had to say - did not help the debate one iota. I think their comments,

quite frankly, were despicable and I find that I have to take advantage of this opportunity to make that kind of a comment, because I sincerely believe that what they did was wrong and they should stay out of it. They are not helping the debate in any way, shape or form. We will get back to it a little later on, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

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

MR. EFFORD:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment first, about the Member for Grand Falls. I had expected him to talk about another problem, but I was quite surprised when he got up to tell me that I may get some questions tomorrow in Question Period. I can assure the hon. the Member for Grand Falls that I will change my attitude or my way of doing things no less if he asked me a question tomorrow or he did last week or when was it? last month when I was asked the last question. I will not be political, Mr. Speaker, no more than I was in the past.

MR. SIMMS:  
That was your own question.

MR. EFFORD:  
No more than I was in the past.

MS VERGE:  
You cannot help yourself.

MR. EFFORD:  
In fact, after sitting through today's Question Period I am really getting to the point where

I think I am going to try to see if I can get some sort of a little business on the go - myself and the Minister of Education, where we might give him some information and write some questions for him, probably a little side business. Because it is really desperate today to see the Members reaching and looking at each other, who is getting up next? What are we going to ask now? There is still lots of time left. It is too bad, you know, we have ten or fifteen people on the opposite side, and with all the questions that you could be asking - you really do not have it together. But probably we will do something to help him out. Probably some of the Members on this side might get up and ask a few questions just to show them how it is done, probably the Member for Bonavista North or Bonavista South, I should say, might get up tomorrow and ask a question.

MR. DECKER:

I would not mind asking you a question.

MR. EFFORD:

Yes, even the Minister of Health may even ask me a question.

MS VERGE:

By leave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of other things I want to talk about concerning the Department of Social Services and what is happening there. And again we just talked about the subsidized adoption issue the last time I spoke a few short minutes ago and that question did not arise in the Estimates Committees. Another program being changed and worked upon in the Department of Social Services is the mandatory

registration of social workers. When I was appointed Minister of Social Services last year one of the first things the Newfoundland Association of Social Workers came to me and asked was, would I try to bring in the mandatory registration of social workers? I was surprised because I thought this would have been one of the first things the former Minister would have dealt with in the Department of Social Services.

They informed me that for seventeen years, and this is not going back seventeen years and blaming it on the Administration, because this is what the Newfoundland Association of Social Workers told me that they had been trying for seventeen years to try to convince the former Administration to bring in this mandatory registration. And I was quite surprised that it was not done.

So anyway we went ahead and I looked at it and the officials of my Department briefed me on that particular issue and we learned that there was not even any draft papers, there was nothing in the Department to indicate that the former Minister had even considered it. So we set about and first of all got the paper through and we are now introducing it in this sitting of the House of Assembly - for legislation to be brought in under mandatory registration - and we feel very strongly that everybody is going to agree with that. Because the one thing we have to recognize across the Province are the demands for professional people in the Department of Social Services. Over the last year, one year, two years everybody in the Province is well aware of the difficult cases that are out there



in child abuse in particular. It is astounding to know and to realize that there is in excess now of 7,500 cases of child protection being worked with in the Department of Social Services across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In fact we are going closer now to 8,000 cases and the number of cases that are being uncovered are increasing monthly. And if you are going to deal with those sorts of cases and it is not only child sexual abuse it is physical abuse, mental abuse, neglect, and there are many different explanations for child abuse, but if you are going to deal with those sort of cases and you are going to put the family counselling services in place, try to introduce some prevention methods afterwards and follow up you have to have professional people. It is very important when you place people into a program like that that you have people not only academically trained in university level whether it be a B.S.W. or an M.S.W. but you also must put some training in place once you hire those people on in the particular child abuse unit or the Department of Social Services because each social worker, every person I have spoken to over the past ten or eleven months will tell you, there is nothing that can replace the street training, the actual on the job street training and the training of the people dealing directly with a particular case. And we are addressing that, Mr. Speaker, right now in the Department of Social Services. I know there has been a lot of doubts expressed by not only people in the Opposition, but people in the general public, and some of the news media have been expressing and asking, and it is a

natural concern: are we going to be able to fill those fifty positions with people with B.S.Ws or M.S.Ws? And I must say, Mr. Speaker, as of now, today, although the closing date is May 7 for the competition - if the closing date was today we would be able to put in excess of thirty-five people with B.S.Ws into those fifty positions, and we still have a couple of weeks to go before May 7, so we expect by that time, that is another week -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:  
Pardon?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:  
No, no, these are thirty-five positions outside that are not presently working with the Department. For example, we have forty people graduating this year from the School of Social Work at Memorial University. I do not think it is a fact that there were not people in the Province available to go to work before but I think it had a lot to do with the sort of negative P R that was coming out of the Department of Social Services. The case loads, for example, 107 cases per worker for child abuse. Who would want to get involved in something like that? Not the fact that it was hard work, but the fact is that it was frustrating and confusing for a person working with children who were physically, mentally or sexually abused and to know that you had so many cases that you could not reasonably service any of them.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

I am going to Labrador tonight at 6:00 by the way. I am going to Goose Bay on a child abuse conference. And then in June I am going down to Labrador for a full week, and we are going to Davis Inlet and we are going to Nain. I can assure the Member for Labrador that this Minister of Social Services is paying very close attention not only to what is happening in Newfoundland, but in Labrador also because we are all part of the one community.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

Pardon?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

I just told you I am going in about an hours time. At 6:00 I am flying into Goose Bay.

But anyhow, Mr. Speaker, getting back to the issue of mandatory registration of social workers. I was quite surprised that in Estimates Committee, in the two or three days we had an Estimates Committee, never once did they ask a question about the mandatory registration of social workers. Never asked the question: do we have enough graduate social workers, do we have enough qualified people to work within the Department of Social Services? And they sit here and they wonder why, when I stand up, I have to say I feel sorry for them, because they do not have their act together, they do not understand what is happening.

And we have at least one former Minister of Social Services over there, you would think at least he would. He does not even hear. You can say this is the interest he has. You would think at least he would have some idea of what the Department is all about. But then I am told by some of the officials in the Department that most of the time the office was vacant. It was vacated by the Minister. In fact it was vacated more times than the Chair was filled. I cannot get his attention down there at all today, you know. He is not listening.

But seriously we hope that this new legislation that is being introduced in the House now, the mandatory registration of social workers will solve the problem that we are having across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador with not enough qualified people to adequately serve the type of cases that we are dealing with. And today more and more, Mr. Speaker, and as we go into the future, that is going to be a bigger demand on the Department of Social Services to provide those services by trained people, and to bring in and to give the people we already have in the Department a chance. We have already met with the school of social work to ensure that those people there now who are interested in furthering their education, completing their B.S.W. or their M.S.W. will get a leave of absence to do it. I am talking about providing distance education - providing courses through correspondence through the Grenfell College in Corner Brook.

Hopefully they will put some services in place, then they will be able to take advantage of the courses out there, because it is difficult for people living in

Northern Newfoundland, Western Newfoundland to come to St. John's. It is expensive, providing the financial costs, leaving their families, finding accommodations and so on. So we are going to work very closely with the school of social work and they have agreed that they will provide the opportunities for people working in District offices around Newfoundland and Labrador to get their courses available so that they can get their B.S.W. and that they will not lose any positions even though some of them are concerned now.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. EFFORD:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. PARSONS:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been listening to the Minister of Social Services for the last fifteen minutes. I was out for a cup of coffee in the interim. I agree with some of the things he has been saying with the exception of, in his last couple of minutes, he said that the previous Minister had left his office so often that his chair was not even kept warm. Now, I have to disagree with him on that count, Mr. Speaker. The other thing I wanted to say was today I had the pleasure of being at a luncheon where the Hon. Mary Collins spoke, and believe you me, taking away the political side of it, it was rewarding to me that I went to the luncheon and I am sure it was educational for everyone who attended, including yours

truly. There was a lot more said in those few minutes than I have heard in this House in many the hour. I am not being derogatory in that sense but I think there are a lot of things out there that should be said.

Again, I just brought it up because the hon. Lady is the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and in most areas of concern that we have today as far as our social programs are concerned, the abuses and whatever that goes along with those social programs, I think you can relate it to women who have strived so hard in the last number of years to bring their message across to politicians and to people in general.

What is happening out there is not desirable and certainly cannot be accepted. We have seen, over the last number of months, the Hughes Enquiry which certainly placed great emphasis on, and I think woke up a lot of people to what was happening out there. Personally speaking some of the things that have been said were to me sort of a dream, something that you would read about in perhaps a comic book. I never thought that in many instances those things were happening. I appreciate the fact, and I think everyone else in Newfoundland and Labrador will appreciate the fact, that the Minister responsible for Social Services is cognizant of what is happening and he is trying his best to perhaps do some of the things that need to be done so that this can never happen again in the society we live in.

I also have to say to the Minister of Social Services that the 4 per cent increase for social service recipients is not much really. I

had a call today from a constituent of mine who is on social assistance. They are a family that do not go out very much. Their environment is such, I suppose, that they are mostly at home. The story related to me was here they are with a son home, and a child not their own, living in the house with them, and they on social services and I certainly appreciated the fact that they were finding it very hard to survive. I know that I have approached the Minister of Social Services on a couple of occasions and found him very receptive in dealing with the issues that I brought to his attention.

But what I am saying to him is when we consider, and I know that he considers it as well as I, when he considers a 4 per cent raise when a person is only getting, I suppose, \$6000 a year through no fault of their own in many cases. We have people who perhaps abuse the system, abuse our social programs, but I think it is very, very minor, a very meager number. When you take into consideration 4 per cent on \$6000 is \$240. I read in the media a few days ago where some of our high paid people, a chairman of a Crown Corporation, where they get a 10 per cent increase on \$100,000 a year it is almost twice as much as the social service recipient is receiving on an annual basis.

You might ask, 'Well why did you not change it when you were over here.' Well, I do not know, really I do not know. I do not think there has been enough emphasis placed on it and I think that down the road some place we are going to have to say to ourselves, they are really not getting enough money to survive. I mean how can you raise children

to be better citizens in an environment where you are hungry?

What is it? We have to address it. As human beings we have to address it, we have to address it. I know that people over here and people on this side receive calls from their constituents telling of occasions where, through no fault of their own, they go hungry, I mean those conditions are there. They are evident. You can go along and see it yourself. I will say to the Minister, that perhaps in his deliberations as it pertains to his Department, perhaps in next year's Budget there could be a sizeable increase. I know that it is pretty hard because we have restraints, we have monetary restraints, but when I see Chairman of Crown Corporations, who are actually getting perhaps \$100,000 or in excess of \$100,000 and they get 10 per cent increase, I do not think that is right. I really think that is unfair. It is socially wrong, morally wrong, and I think we have to change. I really do, I think we have to change.

Now I also want to say to the Minister of Social Services; I suppose you could say that the Minister had a trying year. We had one girl, Christina, who came here and the Minister of Social Services, I suppose, every time I turned on the television or every time I listened to the news, the Minister of Social Services was center stage in defining or clarifying the Government's position as it pertained to Christina. I suppose I know there was not much he could do about it, but it cost his Department a lot of time, and the Minister a lot of time as well, and it cost the Province, I suppose, X number of

dollars. But the thing was finally cleared up.

Then he ran into the immigration bit. But he is not saying much about that these days. I think that the immigration thing, again we are looking at a social problem, we are looking at a moral problem, -

MR. EFFORD:

I will give you an explanation.

MR. PARSONS:

Yes, I know you can give me the explanation. Because I know the explanation that you speak of, or part of it. Our friends in Ottawa again came to your assistance. Our friends in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker -

MR. EFFORD:

They did not come (inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

Mr. Speaker, if those young whippersnappers over there would be quiet, hon. young whippersnappers, if they would be quiet, I would say to the Minister, yes I know that the Minister did make good representation to Ottawa. He did. He is perhaps the only Minister over there who has made good representation to Ottawa.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

He is doing his best. I hope that better things will be forthcoming from the Minister in the near future. But the immigration bit was the big issue in Newfoundland. There was money being spent that we just could ill afford but through our friends again in the Federal Government, everything has been straightened

out and again with the hard work of the Minister. But again we have to thank the people in Ottawa for their condolence and their respect as it pertained to the problems that we were having in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go from there and perhaps speak for a few minutes on the education aspect of it.

Mr. Speaker, for a number of years, fourteen years to be precise, I was a member of the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's. During that era there was a lot of emphasis, there was a great lot of emphasis again being placed on post-secondary education and rightly so, but, Mr. Speaker, at that particular time there was not enough emphasis placed on Kindergarten to Grade VIII, and I think that is where we lost it. In my own constituency, Flatrock, Pouch Cove and Torbay, we find, and it is alarming really, to me at least, that the school in Flatrock is now down to a number that is just not viable, and I believe we caused that by miscalculating the needs of the people and miscalculating the needs of the students.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

There are two or three private conversations going on in the House and I am having difficulty hearing the hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern. I would request that if Members want to carry on private conversations, they should go outside the House - it is on my right and my left.

The hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern. I am sorry to interrupt you.

MR. PARSONS:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it is on both sides of the House because of my size. I am small in stature and it seems they want to overrule me. But I do not mind. I can partake of it or be part of it, so it does not matter.

Going back to the educational bit again, I have mentioned several times in the House -

MR. EFFORD:

Your time is up.

MR. PARSONS:

No, my time is not up!

Mr. Speaker, it certainly hits home to me, because I have attended meetings during this past few months where there were parents who felt so disturbed, who felt they had no room to expand their ideas, because they were up against a stone wall. The numbers prevented a school being built, and it is frustrating. It is frustrating when you see that a child of yours or a child of your neighbour's or, in my case, my grandchildren, who do not have the facilities necessary for that child to get an education. Now everyone would love to have his own school in his own community.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has elapsed.

MR. PARSONS:

I will finish up, okay? Mr. Speaker, my point is that I think we have to place more emphasis on Kindergarten to Grade VIII than we have been, not only this Government but the previous Government. I think emphasis has

to be placed on, again, Kindergarten to Grade VIII. I hope the Government thinks about it, and I hope something realistic will be done about it. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I cannot believe what I heard from the Member for St. John's East Extern. He finally admitted about his friends in Ottawa. All last week and the week before and the week before that you could not get a word out of him. Why are they not getting the message through to their Tory friends, their buddies in Ottawa?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

Exactly. What happened? What about the centres that were closed up because of the cutback in funding, and the cutback in day care? Now, all of a sudden, in the Estimates Committee, when we are debating the Concurrence Debate, it is my friends in Ottawa. Why did not my friends in Ottawa come through with the day care strategy program they cancelled two years ago, when all over Canada there is not enough money, especially in have-not Provinces like the Atlantic Provinces. Can you imagine the Member for St. John's East Extern standing there this afternoon and saying that we, now, today, should be providing a guaranteed income? That is what you are really saying. How can any province, especially a Province the size of Newfoundland and Labrador, provide

a guaranteed income for 20,000 people on social assistance? That should be the responsibility of your friends in Ottawa. You should be telling that to your friends in Ottawa. We have been telling them that for years. What do they do? They cutback, they take away, they do not provide extra. They have capped already the Canada Assistance Plan in other provinces to a five per cent increase this year. They have capped the money for Young Offenders. That is capped.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) capped that.

MR. EFFORD:

Yes, they have. And once they start this in other provinces, you are guaranteed, if they survive another year, to see the same thing happening in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI as well. So I would advise the Member for St. John's East Extern and the new leader, the number one leader of the Party, to get his message through to his friends in Ottawa, that it is time to realize that there are other provinces in Canada besides Quebec and Ontario. You should get that message through. It is surprising, the information that came out last week. Prior to the last election, Mulroney proposed a new day care strategy program; just after the election they introduced it.

MR. SIMMS:

Who scuttled that?

MR. EFFORD:

Your Government in Ottawa, your friends scuttled it. Just last week in the Globe and Mail, and in the local newspapers, we get another promise: before the next election, we are going to

introduce a new day care strategy program. That was put out by Perrin Beatty, the Minister of Health and Welfare. Promises before elections are cancelled immediately after. How often do your friends in Ottawa think they can fool the people? Do you know what people did with it? Ninety-nine per cent of the people just took it as another Tory promise. Can you imagine a federal party that is about 15 per cent in the polls promising a day care strategy program? Surely you do not think they are going to be there after the next election? There will not be enough Tories in Ottawa to find a dot on the marking board up there. I do not say they will even keep the Tory common room open after the next election. There will not be enough Members up there to do it. The NDP will, guaranteed! What does it take to have an Opposition in Ottawa, three or four? Anyway, the Opposition in Ottawa will be very minimal the next time. There will be no trouble finding your friends, because they will not be caught up in Government after the next election. There will be more consulting firms across Canada after the next election than there ever was before in the history of Canada. I suspect more consulting firms will come out of the Opposition after the next election than there has been since 1949. If the Member for St. John's East Extern is either bit serious at all about the money that social assistance recipients should be receiving, he should be going to his friends in Ottawa who are taking the billions and billions of dollars and spending them on their large corporations and insist that they implement some sort of a guaranteed income. There is no province, especially a Province like Newfoundland and

Labrador, which can ever provide enough money to provide the decent, essential income a family of one, two, three or four needs. No Social Service Minister, no Provincial Government, can even hope to address that situation.

MR. PARSONS:  
(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:  
No doubt. Is the Member for St. John's East satisfied to give up his pension and his salary and give half? Are you satisfied? Let us make a deal that all Members on the Opposition will give half their salaries to social service recipients. Ah, now he is leaving the House of Assembly. When it comes down to giving it out of his pocket, he is leaving. This Minister of Social Services is doing something to help the people, and it is not only financial help they need. They need a lot of help, a lot of help they did not receive from the former Administration. It is like the Member for Torngat Mountains constantly asking me when I am going to do something about the problems in Labrador. We are totally aware of what is happening in Labrador. Where were the problems when he was the Minister of Northern and Labrador Affairs? Is that not correct? Where was his Administration over the past ten years when it came to problems in Davis Inlet and in Nain, Labrador, and all the unemployment and the social problems across the Coast of Labrador?

In Davis Inlet alone it is absolutely devastating to even try to imagine the problems with alcoholism, social problems, housing problems, lack of health care and everything down there,

and social services, in that little community. That did not happen in the last ten months, since we took over the Administration, that problem has been ongoing for years and years. What did you do when you were in the Government? Absolutely nothing. There is no evidence of anything whatsoever. In fact, it was only last week I met with officials from the Alcoholic and Drug Commission, people from the Department of Health, people from the Departments of Education and Justice to do something to, to put together a steering committee to address the problems in communities like Davis Inlet and Nain. You have to look at it. It is no good to go down there with a few hundred thousand dollars and say this is going to solve the problems. First of all, you have to get at the roots and the cause of the problems.

I have looked and searched throughout the Department to see if there were any studies put together by the former Administration, if there was at least an internal document to address the problem, but there is nothing. Absolutely nothing! If the Member for Torngat Mountains can point me in a direction where I can go into one of the Departments and find out where there is something which was put together by the former Administration on the cause, the root of the problems in Davis Inlet, I will be glad to listen. But we have not found anything yet. If they had it, they have hidden it away in a closet. And he will stand up day after day, calling the news media, calling the press, saying in the House of Assembly, When are you going to do something with Labrador? We have already started, but we are not



going to do it in such a way that it is only going to be band-aid treatment, solve only one or two of the problems down there today. You have to do something for the long-term.

MR. GILBERT:

Seventeen years of inactivity.

MR. EFFORD:

Seventeen years is exactly right, as my colleague says, of inactivity in Labrador, and now he is crying to the top of his lungs, blaming it on the Minister of Environment, blaming it on the Member for Eagle River.

MR. WARREN:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

That is what you are saying, why are the Members on this side not taking some action? Action is being taken. The only thing the Member for Torngat Mountains is afraid of is that we are going to do something positive. That is the feeling I get, that they are all afraid something positive will be done.

It is like the Minister of Education. Something good is happening in the Department of Education: programs are being addressed, new schools are being built, inequality in distributing funds across the Province is being addressed. There are all sorts of good things. The former Minister of Education should be up congratulating the Minister of Education on what is taking place. The Member for Humber East knows full well that what she said today about morale in the Department of Education being low is unfair, is wrong. That is wrong, as wrong as anybody as could possibly say. Because

everywhere you go and talk to people, at least they have confidence that something is happening, something positive. It is the same with what is happening in Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the point made by the Member for St. John's East Extern, I want to address that because it is an important issue and not to be taken very lightly, and it has to do with the amount of money people on social assistance are receiving. But it is not only a financial problem. It goes deeper than that. When you go out around the Province and you talk to people in the communities, you talk to social workers and you talk to the people themselves, the problem is financial but it is also the problem people have in dealing with the day-to-day basic life skills, how to manage within the environment in which they live: how to get out in the morning, how to prepare themselves, how to dress, how to motivate themselves into going out and trying to live within the environment in which they are living, or to go out and present themselves and try to look for some sort of employment in the community in which they live. They do not have that ability.

If you are going to address the social problem in this Province you have to look at the cause, the root of the problem. And the root cause is they are a socially disabled, not physically, not mentally, not blindness, they are socially disabled, that is their problem. You have to be able to address that. You have to start where the problem is located, where the problems are identified, to address the needs of those people. They need some basic

education. When I talk about basic education, education in how to live from a day to day in the environment in which they are living. Because there is never going to be enough money so that everybody is going to make \$25,000 or \$30,000 or \$40,000. There are always going to be social problems and a variation of differences in incomes, but what you have to do is try to educate people in how to live in their particular environment, with their particular income, or with as much as any Government, be it federal or provincial, can give them.

Now, what has happened over the years, again pointing across at former Ministers? The former Administration, what did they do to address that problem? Absolutely nothing. They put a community development program in place for one reason only, to get people off social assistance and on UI so we could save money provincially. That was the total mandate of that particular program; no training, no education programs in community development, no training in basic life skills, no motivation, no assessment of their basic esteem.

Get them into the work force. In fact, very seldom did they even cost-share. They did not even put any emphasis on the private sector. Mostly, it was just community development in non-profit organizations. Get them out sticking up a few headstones, cleaning a bit of garbage out of ditches, down on the beaches cleaning up, that was all. That is the sort of motivation people on social assistance got. How can you expect them to get out of the system? There was no motivation there. What happened was you put

them to work on community development. You gave them \$200 a week, cut off their rent, took away their drug card, and while they were waiting for their first cheque, they had to pay all their groceries bills and everything themselves. Now they worked for ten weeks maximum, in most cases, some of them worked twenty, but most of them worked ten weeks, then, when they finished out their program, what happened? They were laid-off. Now they had a three to four or five week waiting period for UI benefits, for a big \$124 a week. How do they survive in in the meantime with absolutely no income at all? Do you think you are going to encourage people to get away from that sort of a system by doing that? That is fifteen years of aggressive Toryism. That is what that is. No wonder my poor old father, when he was alive and I was just a little boy growing up, said, John, if you ever remember one thing in your life, remember Tory times are hard times.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I never forgot that, and that is living proof. But what this Government introduced this year showed some concern for people, and they were totally in shock. They could not imagine that the Government of today would show some compassion and some concern for the people of the Province. Mr. Speaker, what is frightening is that the same attitude is still coming out. There is nothing constructive coming from the Opposition, nothing that would put forth some ideas. You would think, since they did not implement any new ideas over the past ten or fifteen

years, they would at least have one or two ideas, they would have a little twinkling of light, they would be able to pass something over to this side. But no, absolutely nothing. In fact, the Member for Labrador can offer no good suggestions for Labrador. The only thing he can do is criticize, and hope and pray that nobody is doing anything good down there.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. EFFORD:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MS DUFF:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was a little late getting back into the House today because I was at a very important meeting in my District with the hon. Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Mary Collins. The women of my District have been very concerned and very articulate about the funding cuts. I think this House is well aware that my hon. colleague from Humber East and myself have been fairly vocal as well about that, so I felt it was important for me to be with the women of my District at that meeting.

I must say, it was an extremely productive meeting. I think the

women were very pleased to know that they were meeting -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Is the money coming?

MS DUFF:  
I think you will find very shortly that there will be some very good news for the women.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:  
Because we have a Madam Minister who obviously understands the issues and the concerns. And sometimes when you are dealing with Ottawa, as I am quite sure people in Newfoundland sometimes feel when they are dealing with Confederation Building, because they are rather removed, they feel their message is not getting through. But this Minister did show that not only was she very aware of the issues and understood where the women were coming from, but that she is in their corner, and I think she will be a very good advocate for the point of view these women have been trying to put across.

I was also very pleased to know that she had arranged a meeting with the hon. Government House Leader, who also is responsible for women's issues provincially. I am sure that between them they will be able to solve any of the outstanding issues.

Now, when I came back in the House this afternoon, I must say I was a little bit disappointed to find - maybe I am naive and new - I would say the cavalier attitude in which Government obviously treats this exercise which we are going through today, the Concurrence Debates on the Budget Estimates.

When I left the caucus meeting this morning, we were informed through our House Leader that in fact we would be dealing with the Resource Departments, and that is fine; the resource people on our side, who have dealt with those Estimates, were ready to have a sensible Concurrence Debate on those issues. I come back to find that arbitrarily, cavalierly the Government House Leader decided to switch to Social Policy, which I find problematical, because I am one Member who likes to come to the House prepared to speak sensibly on things that are important, and I do consider the Budget Estimates on Social Policy to be very important. It certainly puts us at a disadvantage in being able, perhaps, to prepare and focus in our short ten minutes on issues that should be addressed. But I do not want to waste time at the moment on that, because we will have more time, I know, in the Budget debate.

In the process of the Budget Estimates and in our particular Estimates Committee, we have had some very lengthy sessions, we have had long opportunities to delve into into the Estimates, and I think we have tried to do our best to get behind the plain figures in the Budget. I have commend the Ministers for their willingness to sit through some very long sessions.

There were a couple of disappointments, and I think one of them was the tendency of Government Ministers, right throughout the piece, to constantly hark back to the terrible federal Budget cuts and to try to use the Federal Government as a scapegoat for all the deficiencies of the Budget. I

think in fairness and equity and everything else, you have to say that that is deceitful, that you did not receive any cut in funding from the Federal Government. In fact, the Government is getting \$43 million more this year from federal sources. What did happen was a two-year freeze on the established program funding, which gave the Government of Newfoundland less money than it had anticipated, but certainly no less, in fact more, than it had last year. And I regret that. I do not agree with those budget cuts, and I am sorry there is not lots more money to do everything, but I think it is deceitful to call it a cut and give the impression that you had much less money than you had last year, when, in fact, you have more.

Now, it also was extremely difficult throughout this process to get straight answers about the impact of the payroll tax, and perhaps this is because the Minister of Finance himself was working through it and kind of reacting to what he was hearing and working out a way to make it work. But it was certainly clear throughout the process that concerns had been expressed to us, as Opposition Members on the Estimates Committee, by hospital administrators and by school board people, that they were very concerned about the impact of that payroll tax on their operations.

Now, I was very pleased that the Minister of Finance finally indicated that there would be no adverse impact on health and education by that tax, although I am still not at all clear on how he is going to do that, and whether or not, in fact, that leaves his revenue side estimates of return from that tax

realistic. For that, I guess, we will have to wait.

Now, I am a realist when it comes to budgets. I do not expect miracles, and I realise that Government sometimes has a difficult time meeting the tremendous needs in this Province with the financial resources available. I do not believe in hammering people for things they possibly cannot do, with the best will in the world. As the Health critic, I suppose I would have to say that Health was one of the winners in this Budget. That pleases me, because it meant that the Minister was, to some extent, at least, able to address some of the pressing concerns in Health, particularly with the opening of some of the chronic care beds, and the allocation of new nursing positions, and some other areas.

The Minister indicated before the Budget was brought down that this, in fact, was a perfect Budget. Well, I think the Minister knows that that is a little bit of hyperbole, because even the Health budget is not perfect. But I do commend the Minister for obvious influence he has in Cabinet, in being able to address some health issues, particularly as many of them were not addressed in last year's Budget.

One of the things I still find bothersome in the whole social policy area is the fact that there is such an obvious need for greater integration of services, or coordination between Health, Welfare and Education, because so many of the clients who require services in all three Departments -

MR. EFFORD:

We are all working together.

MS DUFF:

I understand you are attempting to work together. We asked you that question.

MR. EFFORD:

(Inaudible) seventeen years.

MS DUFF:

I am not sure that that is true either, but I still think you will have to admit that there is a really greater need for some improvement in that area.

I would just touch on a couple of specifics in the area of Health, because I do not think I will have all that much time to get into some of the other areas. It was disappointing to find that the Minister of Education had eliminated the funding for the hospital schools, other than the Janeway. The Minister indicated at the time that he was going to find some better mechanism of dealing with the serious problem of an interruption in education for children who, for no reason or fault of their own, have to be hospitalized, particularly for extended periods of time. We still do not have any indication of how this is going to happen, but I hope the Minister is not relying strictly on the home tutor program, which has some serious problems already because of the fact that it is inadequately funded.

I also would have to express my disappointment with the Minister's response to questions raised on behalf of the personal care operators, where you have a group of people who do provide a very valuable service in the whole spectrum of health care in this Province to people, particularly elderly and handicapped people with special needs, and they are

private operators. But it is probably the best bargain we have in the health care system, and they are heavily licenced and heavily monitored. I think generally it has to be admitted that they provide an extremely good service for these people. And they have been in trouble, they have been in financial trouble and they feel they cannot, without compromising the level of care they currently offer, operate on the existing level of subsidy. I think, over a two year period this whole question was being studied, and Touche Ross had finally come in with an independent study, initiated by Government, indicating that the funding level should be raised to \$31, but that did not happen and neither was the \$800,000 given this year to help some of the operators out of some very serious financial problems, added to the base rate.

But the most disappointing aspect of it was that in answer to my question in the Estimates Committee, the Minister came back and attempted to discredit the president, or the former president of that association, by saying that in fact the gentleman was the President of the P.C. District Association in Roddickton, which is undoubtedly true. He is also a personal care operator, and I would certainly hope that the rivalry or animosity that may exist between political parties in various areas would not have affected the Minister's decision. I hope this situation is still under review and at some point in the near future the Government may see fit to give a better deal to the home care operators, to encourage other people to get into this business and take some of the burden off the existing health

care system.

It was disappointing also to know that we are still not moving very far in the area of setting up a mammography screening program in the Province, even though in the area of mammography services there have been some improvements, and I think we are ready, from a point of view of personnel and facilities, or equipment, to deal with that.

The other area, if I have time I would like to touch on, is the whole question of capital funding for equipment and facilities for hospitals. Again I have to say I do realize that the Minister is not a miracle worker and he has to make certain priorities -

MR. SIMMS:  
Which Minister?

MS DUFF:  
The Minister of Health. He has tried hard to get a fair deal for health, but we still have a situation where hospital boards are having to spend an inordinate amount of time going out to the public, to public philanthropy with a begging bowl, to get equipment that is in fact essential. I, personally, do not think it is right that for essential pieces of equipment, which in this day and age are not luxuries, they are necessities, hospital boards have to rely on the generosity of the different communities to get that money. Not that I am opposed to philanthropy and generosity, but there is a built-in inequity there, because it is obvious that some communities have a far greater ability to raise funding from that source than others.

And there is another problem, and

that is where basic essential services have to be funded through philanthropy, other groups, such as groups in the Arts and voluntary groups, cannot, in fact, raise that money, it is taking from other groups who have traditionally relied on that avenue of funding.

I think my time is almost up. Is it?

MR. SIMMS:

Did you get a notice?

MS DUFF:

Yes, a three minute notice and it is up. Perhaps I should let the next speaker speak. I believe my time is up, and we will continue with this discussion under the Budget Debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thought I should spend just a couple of minutes pointing out a few things concerning this process. We are going through an interesting process. Members on both sides of the House have been through it before, examining the Estimates of Departments and so on. The whole Budget process is a very interesting one. In every Budget, if there are to be changes and if there is to be progress, there are going to be some things which are good and some things which are bad. That always happens. If a Government were to choose to leave things exactly as they are and not touch anything, then there still would be some good things and some bad things about it; we would have groups saying there should have been a

change in this area and there was not and so on. In every Budget there are things which are good and things which are bad, and this Budget, of course, is no exception. The only thing about it, Mr. Speaker, is that it is quite obvious to everybody that in this Budget there is a lot more good than bad.

Now, this was done in spite of some tremendous obstacles. The Member for St. John's East starts off her speech by saying there was, in fact, no cut in spending. I would suggest that the Member for St. John's East is simply playing with words, as she accuses us of playing with words. The truth of the matter is, if \$100 is used to provide a service in one year and the next year you want to provide that same service, it is not going to cost you \$100, it is going to cost you \$100 plus a certain inflationary factor. So, to provide that same service, you now need \$107, \$106 or \$105 or \$110 to provide exactly the same service, so if a commitment is made to provide a certain service level, then if inflationary increases are not provided, that is a cut in service, a cut in funding or a cut in service caused by that, in effect, cut in funding in terms of constant dollars, so in actual fact, the Member explained that, the Member for St. John's East explained that in her speech, she explained that funding was frozen and established that program financing was frozen and then tried to pretend that, that in fact, could provide the same services as it did in the year before which she knows is obviously untrue.

It is not true, so, Mr. Speaker, this was one of the obstacles we had to overcome. The Member also

talked about the payroll tax which some people would say is one of the bad things in the Budget, and I agree. Any tax is bad. But in her choice of words I believe she gave impressions that were not correct, she said there is no information available on the payroll tax. She indicated that the Minister of Finance, finally, after a long period of time, gave out some information. I think that if she checks back to the very first day it was mentioned in the House and the very first question that was asked on the payroll tax, the Minister of Finance pointed out quite clearly, at that point, without any probing and everything else, pointed out quite clearly right from day one that there will be no affect on the institutions to which she refers to, no net effect, and that it will be done in such a way that these services would not be affected. The Minister was very, very clear about that. Now, whether the Opposition accepted that as being true is another matter! I suppose what the Member meant to say was, answers were given that at first we did not believe but now we believe them. Maybe that is what she meant to say, but the Minister was very, very clear right from day one, there will be no affect on these institutions, and to say in her speech that after this long period of time, the Minister finally indicated no affect on Education is on. It is not true, it was done immediately, and what the Member meant to say was that the Opposition finally believed after all of these answers and all this information given by the Minister, the Opposition finally believed that that was true. That is really what she meant to say but, Mr. Speaker, the comment that she made that I really want to say

something about, was when she was quite rightly praising the Minister of Health and his input into the process. And she used the statement that in the process there is no doubt that health was a winner. What I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, is that I do not and we on this side do not look at things that way. We do not look at things that way. It is not the Minister of Health's Department anyway. It is our Department, everybody's Department of Health.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Number two, we recognize there have to be priorities and there is a limited amount of money. And that over a period of time we try to solve the problems that exist but we cannot solve them all immediately. We understand that and we apply our priorities. I guess what the Member wanted to say was that she is very pleased that health was one of our priorities. That she was happy with what we have done in terms of our priorities, and not that health was the winner, Mr. Speaker, the whole Province was the winner. We were all winners. Because, Mr. Speaker, a Budget is not to be judged on what is done for one group or another group it is to be judged on overall priorities and what is done in the Province as a whole.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my time is up. It is getting close to five o'clock and we will get back to this perhaps at a later date.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to adjourn debate on this particular item and point out that I intend to call the same thing tomorrow.



I believe we have covered maybe one hour and three quarters or something this afternoon and that most likely, unless there are a lot of petitions from some Member, we will get to the three hours tomorrow sometime. If that is so, then the next one we will call will be the Resource Committee.

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

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