



Province of Newfoundland

FORTY - FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND

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Volume XLI

Second Session

Number 28

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

*Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush*

Monday

[Preliminary Transcript]

7 May 1990

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):  
Order, please!

### Oral Questions

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Now that details of the federal assistance package to address the fisheries crisis has been announced, and in view of the fact that the Premier and the Government, particularly through the Throne Speech and the Budget Speech, have indicated that the Province is prepared to financially assist in addressing this major crisis in the fishery as well, Mr. Speaker, could the Premier tell the House whether the Province will now be announcing an assistance package for the fishery that will be complementary to the federal package, the details of which were announced earlier today?

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:  
No, Mr. Speaker, we would not do such harm to the fishermen and people of this Province as to operate on the same basis as they are operating. We have a different concern. We have a concern for an opportunity for people engaged in the fishery to seek alternative employment opportunities elsewhere, on a voluntary basis if they want to do

it. We are not going to participate with the Federal Government program of pressuring people out of the fishery, as they are seeking to do. We think it is totally wrong.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Mr. Speaker, I must say to the Premier the focus of my question was is the Provincial Government prepared to announce a package, a complementary package - not the same package, their own package. Will the Province use its funding it had been prepared, it had said, for quite some time, to inject to help solve the fishery crisis? Will the Province use its funding to announce its assistance package, the focus of which will be the Government's and the Premier's, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:  
Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to believe that anybody could be so ill-informed as to the real problems in the Newfoundland fishery and the real concerns. We put a proposal to the Federal Government in respect of which we have not yet had an answer. We are still prepared to work with the Federal Government to put that proposal into effect. In the conversations I had last night with Mr. Valcourt, there were a couple of areas where he is prepared to hear further representations from the Provincial Government, and that is one of them. If they are prepared to continue to work with us, we are prepared to continue to work with them. If not, Mr. Speaker,

the Provincial Government will have to proceed on its own to provide for diversification of the economy of this Province without the help and, indeed, in the face of some hindrance on the part of the Federal Government in their approach.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Province, in correspondence with the Federal Government, has indicated its willingness to cost-share programs on an 80/20 basis, I believe, from information released by the Premier today. Now, I understand that the federal aid package announced today, something in excess of \$300 million of that package will be spent in this Province. The Premier is shaking his head. Maybe he will correct it when he gets up. In view of the fact that 20 per cent of that would be something in the order of \$60 million, is the Province prepared to devise a package of assistance to the fishing industry in that amount, or more, the money it has said itself it was prepared to spend, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

No, Mr. Speaker, because the Federal Government is going about it the wrong way. Here is what they are doing. The Federal Government has responsibility, has exclusive jurisdiction.

MR. WARREN:

(Inaudible).

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member for Torngat Mountains would be quiet, maybe the rest of the people would hear, and he might even learn something.

MR. WARREN:

My way or no way.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government has gone about it the wrong way. The Federal Government has exclusive jurisdiction over the management of the fishery stocks in determining who catches what fish, in what amounts, when, what time, and so on. Now, the consequences of their mismanagement of the fisheries is their responsibility, and we have taken that position with them all along. We said to them, if you are prepared to put some additional funds into helping resolve the long-term problems of the fishery, by giving the people who have to look to the fishery an alternative, the choice, if they want to, either to stay with the fishery or to choose to find employment opportunities elsewhere, if you are prepared to work with us, we will put up those funds. We offered this package, a total package of over \$500 million, and we offered to pay \$110 million of it to address these problems. The Federal Government went diametrically the opposite. They put forward a program which they could have done, for all the time they have taken, last December. I do not know what they have been waiting for. Everything they announced today they could have announced last December; there is nothing new that they have announced.

What they did, Mr. Speaker, in the case of their proposal, was to put forward a program which deals only with that aspect of it, the immediate needs of workers and the communities involved. We agree that was part of it, that had to be addressed as well, but the fundamental problem is diversifying the economy of this Province so as to give those who are forced to look to the fishery as a means of earning an income, or an opportunity to get unemployment insurance qualifications, to give them the free choice to choose to go elsewhere. Instead, what the Federal Government came up with was \$90 million.

Now, listen, Mr. Speaker, to the rest of it. Over five years, that is \$18 million a year spread amongst the four Atlantic Provinces. Now what good is that going to do in terms of diversifying the economy of Newfoundland so as to give people who have to look to the fisheries some reasonable alternative elsewhere in the economy if they want to do so, to do it voluntarily? Instead, what they are doing is putting in severance packages, proposals and payments like this, and regulations to prevent part-time fishermen from becoming full-time fishermen and to induce full-time fishermen to leave the industry. Then what are they going to do next year as a means of income, and the year after that, if we do not diversify the economy? So they have gone about it totally the wrong way. We are going to have to discharge the Federal Government's responsibilities as well as our own.

MR. SIMMS:

What nonsense! It is time to face

the fact, boy, that you are the Government here.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On another day we will get into the Agreement in principle which was reached last fall between this Government and the Government of Canada, outlining everything the Premier appears to be against today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the federal aid package has specific community development funds dedicated to trying to diversify the economic base of communities where plants have been announced to close, can the Premier tell the House whether or not the Province will fund a similar program dedicated to trying to do the same thing in other communities where plants are in trouble, for example, Fermeuse, Jerseyside, New Ferolle and Piccadilly, all those other plants in Newfoundland and Labrador, and those communities? Will the Premier fund a similar program to diversify the economy of those communities, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government did that which everybody advised them would be the incorrect thing; they took a lump of money and threw it at the communities and people, with no planning, no nothing. They could have done that last December. Instead, they fiddle-faddled for months. It was this Government

which had to put up \$14 million to get more time so that people would not be thrown out on the streets while the Federal Government played politics with this question. It was this Government which had to do that, and it was this Government which did it when the time came to do it.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing specific or positive in what the Federal Government has done. They took a lump sum of money and said if you are Canso, you had so many people affected so we will allocate so many million; if you are Trepassey, you had so many people, we will allocate so many million; if you are Grand Bank... and they just put a lump sum of money, no planning, no nothing. They could have done that last December, Mr. Speaker. Where have they been for the last six months?

MS VERGE:

They were waiting for your proposal.

PREMIER WELLS:

They were waiting for nothing. They did nothing. We put them to them, and they sat and twiddled their thumbs and did nothing. Now, Mr. Speaker, we are going to build the economy of this Province, even against the Opposition. We are going to build it so that it will be fair to all our people.

What I cannot understand, Mr. Speaker, is the cave-in of the Opposition who, just in the last few weeks, have been complaining about forcing people out of the fishery. Well, that is exactly what the Federal program will do, it will force people out of the fishery instead of -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Which you want.

PREMIER WELLS:

I do not want. I want to develop the -

MR. RIDEOUT:

(Inaudible) and you agreed to it.

MR. SIMMS:

The old master is at it again.

PREMIER WELLS:

Just go back and look at the record.

MS VERGE:

We have that.

PREMIER WELLS:

Well, please do. Please do, and show it to me. Just go back and look at the total record. Do not pick six words out of it and deceive the people of this Province, look at the total record and you will see, Mr. Speaker, that the position of the Government is to provide for orderly, alternative, economic employment so that the people engaged in the fishery will, at the very least, have the choice of being able to stay with the fishery if they want -

MS VERGE:

(Inaudible).

PREMIER WELLS:

If the hon. the Member for Humber East would stay quiet she would hear the rest of it, and then she can have her say.

So that people can choose, Mr. Speaker, on a fair basis to stay with the fishery, if that is what they want to do, or look somewhere else. Our basic problem now is our people do not have that alternative because there is no other economic alternative, and

that is where the Federal Government plan has fallen down miserably in terms of dealing with Newfoundland's economic problems and the fishermen's problems.

MR. SIMMS:

You are doing a great job of attacking the Feds. What are you going to do?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, for the Leader of a Government which only submitted its detailed proposal to the Federal Government on April 3, you would have to have the face of a robber's horse to stand in this House and get on with the nonsense the Premier is getting on with.

Here is the document. Now, Mr. Speaker, can we conclude from the no, no, no answers the Premier has given to this House today as to provincial financial involvement in an aid package for the Newfoundland fishery that this Government is prepared to sit back, wring its hands and hide behind a smoke screen of blaming it all on the Federal Government? Is that the extent of this Government's willingness to deal with this problem, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SIMMS:

Right on!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

No, Mr. Speaker, that is the misrepresentation of the Government position by the Opposition, and I will just tell the House an example of that misrepresentation. He said this

is the first detailed proposal put by the Government. It is not. The Provincial task force was working with the Federal task force to work out a joint proposal for months before that, and were ready, willing and able to put these proposals forward and develop them on a joint basis, until the appointment of Mr. Valcourt and, for whatever reason, matters changed then. Whether that has to do with Mr. Valcourt or it was a Federal Government direct decision independent of Mr. Valcourt, I have no way of knowing. Whatever the cause, it coincided with that point in time.

The last meeting was held on March 7th with the Federal/Provincial joint task force and, from that point on, it was clear they were not going to pursue that course. So we instructed our task force to develop the proposal independently and it was done within two weeks; it was done in March of this year and was hand delivered to Mr. Valcourt on April 3 and we still do not have a response from Mr. Valcourt, still no response. The detailed proposal is there of what this Province is prepared to do to develop the economy of the Province, to give our fishermen and people involved in fish processing alternative employment opportunities on a fair and proper basis.

MS VERGE:

Some alternative.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Premier, as well. I would like to refer him to page 5 of his press statement today, where he indicated the Province was willing to cost-share on an 80/20 basis. He said, '...to the Response Program proposal, and has set aside \$110 million for this purpose over a five-year period, some \$20 million a year.' I would like to ask the Premier, since he has been so critical of what has been announced by the Federal Government today, saying it has been done the wrong way, will the Premier now undertake to spend this \$110 million and do it the proper way?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that over the next five years this \$110 million will be spent. The Province will spend a good deal more than that to do it the right way, so that the people of this Province can stay and live and work in this Province, and earn a living with dignity and self-respect, which is more than they will ever be able to do if the present Government in Ottawa, with its approach, continues to run this country. As soon as we get a change, we will have a good (inaudible) Province.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

The same old garbage.

MR. RIDEOUT:

That is what they did wrong.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, it might be something like the real change the people in the Province are seeing since this Premier took over, particularly the people in the galleries today; they don't have anywhere to work, there is no fishery left.

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier. On page 3 of the letter he sent, his very late letter to the Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Valcourt, April 3, he makes reference to examples of audited fishing operations and industries in the Province and he says, 'A fishing gear manufacturing operation in a community like Grand Bank would be a good example of a backward linkage fishing operation for that town. Could the Premier tell the House if the Provincial Government did any research on that type of operation for the town of Grand Bank? If so, what were the findings?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

No. It is not a brand new idea. We have been putting it forward for several months to the Federal Fisheries Task Force. It had been proposed for several months. I was present on some occasions when it was proposed, as was the Minister of Fisheries. There were other proposals that would provide for alternative employment opportunities in Grand Bank, as well as the manufacturing of fishing gear.

Little Iceland, Mr. Speaker, with a population half the size of this Province's population, not only manufacturers all of its own fishing gear, it manufacturers a great deal of the fishing gear used in this Province. One

company, Fisheries Products alone, imports \$1 million worth of fishing gear a year from Iceland, apart from what it imports from other parts of the world.

Mr. Speaker, we can create a great many jobs in this Province if we put in place a situation that will enable fishing gear, gear used in the fisheries, or induce it to be built in this Province, manufactured in this Province, and supplied to fishermen all over the Province. There is a good opportunity to diversify in that way.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to remind the Premier that when the restructuring process took place in the early 1980s this kind of an operation was very extensively researched and it was found it was not viable, that the fishing companies could buy their gear outside Canada and Newfoundland, I think Korea, and get it much cheaper. That is why it could not work in this Province, and that is the reason for my question. It is obvious you did not do any research on your passing reference to gear manufacturing in this Province.

On the same page of his letter the premier says, 'For Gaultois, perhaps' - perhaps - 'some sort of value-added redfish operation might be feasible in Gaultois.' Was there any research done by the Provincial Government or the Economic Recovery Commission about the possibilities of value-added redfish for Gaultois?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, let me first respond to the comment the hon. Member made about fishing gear. We are not prepared to sit back and do nothing merely because the former Government was incompetent to do anything itself. We are going to do something for this Province. We are not just going to accept this automatic failure - the failures of the former Government. We will develop our own proposals and assess them, and put alternative employment opportunities in place.

Now, in terms of the redfish, Mr. Speaker, we met with the committee of fishermen and people from Gaultois to look at the possibility of expanding and putting in place an independent redfish operation in Gaultois, because they are experienced and very capable in that area. And working with the Provincial Government and with the Federal Government, and with the people concerned in Gaultois, and, incidentally, with Fishery Products International - we have also had discussions with them with respect to the matter - I am confident there is a reasonable opportunity of developing such a redfish operation in Gaultois.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say to the Premier that the only specifics this Province has put forward which is anywhere closely geographically related to Grand Bank, has been the proposal for a Burin Peninsula heritage village, which is a proposal that has been



in the works for years by the Greater Lamaline Area Development Association. I wonder how many fish plant workers from Grand Bank will be working there. And the closest thing to the Gaultois situation specifically proposed is the granite industry development in Bay D'Espoir, put forth by Mount Peyton Granite Company. I wonder how many people in Gaultois, displaced from the fish plant, will be working there? These are the specifics, Mr. Speaker, which have been put forward by this Government to Ottawa, and most of them have been plucked from proposals which have been floating around this Province for years from development associations.

Now, I would like to ask the Premier will he now reconsider community specific assistance of \$110 million, which he told the people of this Province, and he has said again today, he was willing to put into a package with the Federal Government? Will he now make a commitment to this House to be community specific for those communities which are being negatively affected by the fishery?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Let me again address the other misstatement the hon. Member made when he said the only thing mentioned for Gaultois was some granite operation, and the only thing mentioned for Grand Bank was the historical -

MR. MATTHEWS:

Skiing. Skiing at the White Hills, was the other one.

PREMIER WELLS:

That is not exactly accurate, Mr.

Speaker. We did specifically mention fishing equipment manufacturing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

For example.

PREMIER WELLS:

We did mention fishery equipment. We have mentioned other things. We have mentioned, for example, a duty free zone would operate very well in Grand Bank, in the whole southern Burin Peninsula area if the Federal Government -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) in there sure.

PREMIER WELLS:

No, it is not. The whole world is not in that.

MR. MATTHEWS:

It is not in your proposal.

PREMIER WELLS:

The duty free zones are in the proposal.

MR. MATTHEWS:

It is not. I cannot find it.

PREMIER WELLS:

Well, I can find it. It is there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

PREMIER WELLS:

They are in the proposal.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Tell us the page.

PREMIER WELLS:

I will find it. I do not remember the page offhand, but I will find it.

Mr. Speaker, there was also the redfish operation for Gaultois, so the hon. Member is totally wrong when he makes the statement he does. Now, the other question he asked was would the Provincial Government assign specific sums of dollars to the communities concerned. No, Mr. Speaker, we will not be irresponsible the way the Federal Government has been, and just throw dollars at people and walk away from responsibility and continue the failures of the past.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) only money.

PREMIER WELLS:

That has been a specific example of the failures of the past. Buchans is a classic example. They threw dollars at it. When it came to putting the prison in Buchans, which they should have done, they backed down and the former Government let them do it. We are going to do what is right when the time comes, and we are going to develop alternative economic opportunities even, Mr. Speaker, without the help, and even in the face of the efforts of the Federal Government, if we have to.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, we only have seven or eight minutes left and I want to get some answers from the Minister of Fisheries, and probably from the Premier, about the situation as it relates to the Fermeuse fish plant.

As many persons know in this

House, and certainly the Minister of Fisheries knows, in 1955 a plant was put in place in Fermeuse; it has been there for thirty-five years. For thirty-four years it had the support, not only of the local people, but of the Governments of Newfoundland and Labrador, Smallwood's, Moores' and Peckford's Government. In the thirty-fifth year, we cannot get any support for that plant from this present Government. Everytime we have come to this Government to ask for assistance for Fermeuse, it has been no, no, and more nos. I want to ask the Minister of Fisheries is Fermeuse to be one of the first of the excess capacity plants he keeps talking about, and the Premier keeps saying about 'we have too many fishermen, too many plants, too many plant workers', is Fermeuse going to be the first of the plants to be allowed to die? Is there a future for the people of Fermeuse who are in this gallery, and along that end of our shore, in the fishery, or do we have to wait to diversify the economy, or for the people to move away? Is there a future for the people of Fermeuse, in Fermeuse in the fishery?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

I would be inclined to answer with a no and a yes, but I understand there are people in the gallery from Fermeuse. I met with them during the lunch break, and I explained to the people then, as I will explain to the hon. Member now, that he mentioned the short history of the plant, I believe he

said the twenty-fifth year.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The thirty-fifth year.

MR. W. CARTER:

The thirty-fifth year. Let me remind him that on the thirty-fourth year that plant, Universal Seafoods or whatever they were called, went into receivership. It was put there, Mr. Speaker, not by this Government, but by the Canadian Saltfish Corporation, and that is where they are now. I explained to the people from Fermeuse, and I think they understand pretty well where the Province is coming from, that that plant, Mr. Speaker, and the plants in Ferryland, in St. Mary's, Riverhead and Belleoram, are now the property of the Canadian Saltfish Corporation, by virtue of the mortgage that was on the plant held by the Canadian Saltfish Corporation. They advertised for operators and, I am told, with the exception of the Ferryland plant, there were no takers for the other plants. I understand the Canadian Saltfish Corporation is making a statement this afternoon, as a matter of fact, outlining what has transpired to date and what they intend to do in the future. That is where it stands right now. The Canadian Saltfish Corporation, whose responsibility it is to find an operator for the plant to deal with the problem - mind you, we will help, Mr. Speaker, and I have assured the people of that. The Province will do all it can, but they own the plant, they put it into receivership. We will do what we can to help facilitate what they are trying to do.

MR. RIDEOUT:

That is leadership (inaudible).

MR. W. CARTER:

Better than you gave.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary question of the Premier, but I want to correct the Minister of Fisheries before I do so. Before the Canadian Saltfish Corporation put Universal Fisheries into receivership, they came to this Government, that Minister, and that Premier and asked for help but did not get it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. POWER:

We asked for help, and we did not get it from this Government. Now you are washing your hands and saying it is a Canadian Government, Canadian Saltfish Corporation's problem. It is not. It is a Provincial problem, and the Provincial Government has a responsibility in this area.

I want to ask the Premier, since this happened last fall, and since this winter when it went into receivership, what efforts have been taken by this Government to find a new buyer, to diversify the economy in Fermeuse? Try and give me a name of one Government agency, one Government Department which visited Fermeuse, which is trying to set up alternate employment. Mr. Premier, the reality is if this Government does not help the people of Fermeuse, you will not have to diversify the economy, because they will be working in Northern Ontario or some place else.

Now ask I ask the Premier, the people are here, and they are very

concerned, is this Government going to assist the Canadian Saltfish Corporation in finding a new operator for the plant in Fermeuse? Will you assist in loan guarantees, if they are asked for by a new operator? Or, are you just going to diversify the economy when the people have left Fermeuse?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure most people in the Province understand that if a Federal Government agency, like the Saltfish Corporation, has a first mortgage for \$14 million or \$15 million, as they did on this plant, the Government cannot put more money into that company, because all we are doing is paying off and supporting the Federal debt. We just cannot payoff the Federal debt in this way, which they created.

MR. POWER:

You gave \$14 million to FPI and National Sea.

PREMIER WELLS:

That is exactly what would happen, it would go straight to the Federal coffers, and we cannot do that. We are not that irresponsible with the taxpayers' dollars. The Federal Government created this problem. We cannot bail them out. Our taxpayers cannot afford to bail out the mess that was created by the Federal Government in this matter. The Federal Government put the company into receivership, and that has put them now into possession and control of the plants.

This Government, as the Minister of Fisheries has indicated, will help the fish plant in Fermeuse,

as it helps other fish plants where it is reasonable to do so, and in most cases it is reasonable to do so, but it is utterly unreasonable and would be a gross waste of the taxpayers' dollars to put money in behind a \$14 million mortgage to the Federal Government, and we will not be that irresponsible. Mr. Speaker, whenever the opportunity arises, and whatever we can do to promote some kind of operator to operate the fish plant in Fermeuse, or some alternative form of employment for areas like Fermeuse - not just Fermeuse alone, but areas like Fermeuse - we will do.

Let me remind this House, Mr. Speaker, that this situation did not arise on May 5 last year, this was the mess the former Government left the Province in. Do not ever forget that!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

(Inaudible) Universal Multi-foods, you are sitting on your rear. We found Piccadilly, we found Rose Blanche, and you can find nothing.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier earlier said the Federal Government threw money at the present problems, with no planning or no direction, they threw money at the communities.

Perhaps he should know the communities will have a lot of say in how that money is going to be spent to help themselves. They are not being dictated to, as they would be by the Government when they sent their wish list up to Ottawa. What was there for the Southern Avalon which would involve Ferryland, Fermeuse, Trepassey, St. Mary's and Riverhead, all these areas? One project suggested a salmon enhancement program in Holyrood Pond. I ask the Premier, does he think such an enhancement program would employ the people here, and the rest of the people along the Southern Shore and St. Mary's Bay?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

No, Mr. Speaker. We have a particular proposal in mind for Trepassey, for example. If we can get the Federal Government to do what is within its power to do, if it is disposed to do, it will give Trepassey, we hope, a fairly stable future. Now, if the Federal Government will do that, and will work with us, Trepassey and the whole Southern Shore area will have some reasonably stable economic activity, and we think this is what we have to try and build. We cannot just dictate that there is going to be a sewing machine factory in Fermeuse, or an automobile filter factory in Trepassey, we have to work with the Federal Government to try and create a situation where this can be done in Newfoundland.

With the Federal Government running the national economy the way in which it is, focused on building the two massive economic engines of central Canada, it is virtually impossible to build the

economy of the smaller provinces, where it is needed, because they have never had sense enough to be concerned on an equitable basis for the rest of the country. That is what we are trying to achieve. These things are not done in isolation. You cannot wish an economic activity in a community and cause it to happen, it can only be caused to happen when the governments which have the real ability to achieve it will put in place the kinds of circumstances that will induce it to happen.

Now, we hope that within the next year or two, with our effort, we will be able to persuade the Federal Government to work with us to create the kind of economic climate that will allow for that kind of development. Unfortunately, up till now, they have shown nothing but an inclination to be very political in everything they do.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question period has expired.

Before moving on to the next item of Orders of the Day, on behalf of hon. Members, I would like to welcome to the public galleries today nineteen Level II students from Gonzaga High School, here in St. John's, accompanied by their teacher Mr. Jim Power.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

### Notices of Motion

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Department of Health Act."

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 Members Of The House Of Assembly Retiring Allowances Act," "The Public Service Pensions Act", and "The Uniformed Services Pensions Act".

### Orders of the Day

MR. BAKER:

Order 3, Mr. Speaker, Concurrence Motion (Government Services Committee).

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, 3. Concurrence Motion (Government Services Committee).

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say a few things, I guess, in the ten minutes that I have to participate in a continuous fashion on the debate of those Departments which we are dealing with: the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs and Housing; Works, Services and Transportation; Employment and Labour Relations; and, the Department of Finance, are the four specific Departments that we are dealing with in this particular debate.

It is rather timely, I guess, that we have a chance to talk about job creation, employment, and those matters, in view of what transpired here today in the Question Period, particularly as it applied to the situation out in the Ferryland District and the closure of the Universal Multifoods Fish Plant and so on. And, as some of my colleagues raised here today in Question Period, what potential those people who will be displaced, or are displaced at the moment because of the situation occurring, what programs, what ideas, does this Government have in terms of offering employment opportunities for all those people?

We clearly saw, of course, in the responses given today by the Premier, and by the Minister of Fisheries, that very little promise, very little hope is held out for all those people, as well as all the other unemployed people around this Province.

Now, particularly, we know what is happening with respect to the fisheries. The Province itself has no program. It appears the Province does not intend to develop any kind of program of its own. They intend to spend all their time, I guess, attacking the Federal Government for not providing enough funding, or not providing enough funding in the right places, and that kind of thing. It is obvious that is what the Government intends to spend the next two or three years doing, attacking the Federal Government, or, Mr. Speaker, blaming the previous P.C. Administration for all it's woes.

Yet, at the same time, even though they have been given ample opportunity, the Government has

decided it is not prepared to indicate publicly what it intends to do, as the Government. And, need I remind them, this Government is the Government that is closest to the people. This Government is the Government that is responsible for all the social repercussions that will transpire as a consequence of the Government's inaction in trying to deal with the fishery problems.

So, we know what they are going to do with respect to responding to the fishery crisis we have; the answer is, nothing. They do not intend to do a thing. They do not intend to lift a finger. They do not intend, it appears, to develop even a program of their own, even though they have been given all kinds of opportunities. No, Mr. Speaker, they intend to spend their time, as I said, criticizing the Federal Government, attacking the former P.C. Administration provincially, blaming everything on them, but, of course, when they are given the opportunity to tell us what they are going to do to respond, the answer is nothing, inaction.

That is similar to the situation with respect to the Department of Employment and Labour Relations, which Department we are assessing here under this Concurrence Debate. The job creation program that the new Liberal Administration brought in, the job creation program they brought in eventually, because for the first several months they had nothing in place. They cancelled the previous program and said, 'We are going to bring in this great new idea, this great new plan.' What did they bring in, Mr. Speaker? They brought in a so-called Employment Generation Program that may have created 500 jobs, I am

not even sure what the numbers are. The Minister may participate in the debate sometime later on this morning and she can comment. In fact, I will ask her directly if she can give us an update. When the Minister is listening, I ask her to participate in the debate later on this afternoon after some of my colleagues have put some questions to her. Maybe, if the Minister of Social Services can stop wallowing, I can get my question through to the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations. I would like her to give us an update on the job creation program. The last numbers I saw were, I believe, something like 500 jobs created.

Obviously she is aware of some of the problems with that program, and I say this, not in a partisan way.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No!

MR. SIMMS:

No, I am not a partisan individual, the Minister knows that. In my dealings with her, I have always been straightforward and upfront with her. But in the Job Creation Program, the Employment Creation Program, for example, there is a requirement that the positions must stay in place for sixty months, I believe it is, a full year.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Sixty weeks.

MR. SIMMS:

Sixty weeks rather, I am sorry, a full year.

I know, for example, that people in the tourism industry, the service industry, have had difficulties meeting that

requirement for obvious reasons, because quite frequently in the tourism industry a lot of the businesses and operations are seasonal in nature, not by choice, but by fact, I guess. There is really no choice at all. In addition to that, of course, you have people in the construction industry, and everybody in this Province knows that for a construction company to work continuously for twelve months is an impossibility. It cannot be done because of the weather situation and the seasonal situation.

So those businesses though are quite prepared and quite interested to participate in the Employment Generation Program, prepared to put up their share of the funding required to create a job, a full time job, but it is a seasonal job. There is not much they can do about that. But the program requirements restrict them from even participating in the program. And I know people in the construction industry who said, 'I would be happy to create another job and employ another individual, but I can only do it for ten months of the year because you cannot do construction work in the winter and so on. But I cannot access funding under the program.' So there is a problem from that perspective and the same thing with the tourism sector. You know, obviously a lot of the tourism industries are seasonal as well in nature. So they cannot meet that requirement of having to employ somebody for a full twelve months. It is not possible. So why should they be discriminated against then, and not be allowed to participate in the program?

So I hope the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations is

aware of that problem and hopefully will be reviewing it in time for their program next year. And I would like to hear what she has to say about that and is she, in fact, reconsidering that aspect of the program? Because I am sure she realizes there could be even more jobs. Now mind you in order for those jobs to be developed and created, those additional jobs, there would have to be more money. And the problem I understand now, is that even though only one month of the fiscal year has passed they had no new money. No money available for further Job Creation Programs. So therefore, Mr. Speaker, you are almost looking at an impossibility, a Catch 22, so to speak.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to get back to what I indicated at the beginning. After what we saw today in Question Period it became very evident that the Government is just not prepared to focus in on the major economic situation that we face in our Province today, that of providing alternate employment, jobs for people who are normally affected because of seasonality of industries or affected because they cannot find the job opportunities. But on top of all of that you have the fishery crisis and you have thousands of Newfoundlanders in this Province today whose very heritage is crumbling, for thousands and thousands a way of life for all of those people in those rural communities is falling apart; and this Government continues to sit on its hands, continues to blame everything on the Federal authorities or the previous Provincial Government, as opposed to taking up the challenge and trying to do something to address those problems and those



concerns and trying to do something for the people who are going to be dearly affected by this serious situation which we face.

And if a Government ever can win a re-election - I say to my friends opposite, I am going to give them some free advice - if a Government can win re-election, because Governments lose elections, let us not forget that. That is a well known political theory that I think is accepted by everybody. But this Government has a chance to be re-elected, I think.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:  
I think it has a chance, but only if it fulfills its commitment to the people on economic prosperity and viability, and that is where, I think, this Government is desperately lacking in leadership. They are not doing anything with respect to the economy, very little. And their Economic Diversification Programs: we are not familiar with. We know nothing about it. I saw the latest polls.

Hon. Members should have a look at the poll out in Windsor - Buchans that we did recently, by the way. We heard the Premier's comments on a poll that Professor Mark Graesser did in St. John's. Professor Mark Graesser did a poll in St. John's, according to the Premier last weekend. The question was, is the Government doing a good job? Yes. Is the Government doing a fair job? Yes. Is the Government doing a poor job? Yes. What kind of a poll is that, Mr. Speaker? I would like to see something a little more comprehensive, like,

will you vote for this Government? That is the key question. We would like to see it.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
So have we, Mr. Speaker. I tell the Government House Leader that he might suggest to the Premier that he do a poll in his own District of Bay of Islands, by the way.

PREMIER WELLS:  
And Grand Falls.

MR. SIMMS:  
You are welcome to do one in Grand Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:  
Well, I tell you, Mr. Speaker, if Members opposite think, if I run again, if they think I will have difficulty winning Grand Falls District, it is going to take everybody over on that side to come out there to make sure I do not do it.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. SIMMS:  
Okay, Mr. Speaker. I will get back at it again. We will have lots of time, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HEARN:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It shows the interest that Members

opposite have in current events when they fail to get up to talk on practically anything, because under the headings we are talking about all Government agencies. At least they could get up and explain some of the good things they tell us they are doing. It is too bad that the Minister of Transportation, or Government Services, is not in his seat, as he might want to get up and talk about the Education Budget. I heard him on radio twice one day the week, and that is twice as often as I have heard him since he was on promising to abolish school taxes during the last election. The Member was complaining because down in the town of Burgeo the school was losing some funding and he thought it was unfair. Just because boards, he said, do not have money enough, and have to tighten their budget, he did not seem to understand why his school, or his town, should be affected. Basically, what he was doing, not realizing it, of course, not being the brightest, he was criticizing the Minister of Finance for axing the Budget to primary, elementary, and secondary schools.

When you have your own Minister, a Minister in your own Government, publicly on radio, criticizing an education budget, publicly criticizing the budget the Department of Education gave to schools, then, I think, we have real, real concerns. You would expect us to say that - but a Minister? However, perhaps today we should talk about the fishing crisis, because of the concerns expressed here by residents from along the Southern Shore - Ferryland District - just one group of many who are extremely concerned with what is happening. One of the areas that previous Administrations always zeroed in

on was that of the fishery, and the one thing that former governments tried to do was, when problems arose, was to move in to try and do something about it before it became widespread or got out of hand. Over the last few months we have seen a number of areas threatened with dire problems in the fishery, with plant closures, lack of resource, etc. Lack of resource, no one can do too much about, but certainly they can do something about helping companies keep alive during the downtime, because with proper planning we can make sure that in a few years time things will turn around and people who work in our fish plants can be back working there again. But, if we let these areas die - two, three, or five years down the road, there will be nobody left to work in the plants, and there will be no plants worthwhile going in to process product, so consequently, now is the time when governments must take a stand. I saw the Federal Government today come out with a package which, thought it may not be perfect, at least is directed in the right direction. It is specifically directed towards the areas that are affected. If the Premier would concentrate his efforts on that, and if he would listen to the people from the areas who suggest certain things can be done, instead of dreaming up possibilities - most of which have been analyzed in the past and rejected - and sending a list up to Ottawa, as you send to Santa Clause just before Christmas, and expect the Federal Government to say yes, Mr. Premier, we will go along with you and give you money to do things which are not practical or possible and which will have no benefit to the people who are directly affected.

Maybe if he were realistic and identified projects, especially in the area of the fisheries, in these areas where the people have grown up with the fisheries, who want to stay in fishery related projects, and who can, with some proper planning and direction. So, maybe we will go back to the drawing board and come up with some ideas.

The Premier did mention one interesting thing: that he had in mind, and I hope he is listening, some specific projects for specific areas. Let me say to him, that in the announcement today, there is money allocated to the various towns, and they in turn will have a fair amount of say in how that money is spent. Instead of being told you are going to have a bubble gum factory, as the present Administration across would tell them, they have been given flexibility over using the money, through the various communities and planning agencies. They have their destiny in their own hands.

If the Premier has some weird and wonderful idea that might be practical in some of the areas, whether it is fishery related or not, we are not naive enough to think that in the present circumstances everyone who is working in the fishery can continue to work there. Some people are willing to move outside to be retrained, some want to. If they get some assistance they certainly will take advantage of that. Some are in a position to retire, and with the retirement programs offered, and I notice that the Government opposite has been invited to participate in these programs and I hope that it will, a number of people can go on to early retirement, leaving the

few jobs that will be left to the people who have no other choice except stay in these areas, unless, of course, they want to pack up and head for Ontario, which they do not. For the people who want to stay there will be jobs enough left for them.

So if we can come up with some ideas that are practical then the money is there. The money has been provided by the Feds, not to do what the Premier dictated should be done, things that were impractical, impossible, and not related at all to the areas involved, but if the Premier has some specific idea that does relate to the areas concern then, undoubtedly, the areas will look at it. Certainly, our area will look at implementing any plan that is of benefit to that area of concern. If he has the ideas, we will have the money. It should be the other way around perhaps - but it is not.

In relation to the fisheries. Certainly, I do not want to stick strictly locally because there are all kinds of concerns which are not being addressed, most of which can come under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government. We see areas such as Belleoram, Riverhead, smaller areas such as Ferryland that are effected, with no attention being paid to them at all by the Premier or by the Minister of Fisheries. They have not gone to the areas. They have not shown any leadership. They have not looked at other possibilities, other possible operators, there has been no encouragement. In fact, there has been just a total lack of encouragement.

We can look at places such as fishing districts. We sometimes

forget places like Eagle River, where we have had all kinds of fisheries problems the past few years, many of which could be solved by some co-ordination by the Provincial Government. One of the problems down there is the oversupply of fish at times, and the over number of people who rush into the area. The numbers of fishermen who rush into specific areas along the coast and threaten the livelihood of the local people. Then we have large amounts of fish being caught and the co-ordination of getting it to market certainly has not been the best.

We have three or four boats now owned by the Provincial Government, tied up, not doing anything. Boats that could be off fishing in 2G and 2H -

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has elapsed.

MR. HEARN:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was just giving them a few ideas of how to turn around the fishery, but there will be another chance.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in your place and speak on some things that are important to this Province of ours, and Friday I had a few words on what I thought were important issues. Some of the issues, Mr. Speaker, were close to home as it pertained to amalgamation, as it

pertained to some of the discrepancies that I find this Government has perpetrated against certain areas. Areas like my own, St. John's East Extern. I say to the Members across the way, especially the Minister of Transportation who is in his seat right now, that the monies we received from his Department this year, as it pertains to transportation and the needs of the area, none of them have been addressed with the exception of, I think, two programs that were ongoing. There are no monies allocated for that area.

I want to remind the Minister that tourism is not far away places. We have tourist areas close to St. John's, important areas. We have right down the scenic Marine Drive, we have right down farther north to Cape St. Francis. We have areas of tourist attractions in that whole area. You go to Bauline, what more scenic, what a difference of one community with the other, Mr. Speaker. Especially in the summertime, there are so many places to go, so many things to do. But, Mr. Speaker, our roads are in disrepair. All I can get from the hon. Minister is, 'you know, look what you have done for the last seventeen years.'

AN HON. MEMBER:  
That is right.

MR. PARSONS:  
Look what you got for the last seventeen years. We got very little, Mr. Speaker. The hon. the Minister of Social Services, he is smiling when he says that, he knows what I am saying is the truth, that we did not receive only our just reward in those sixteen years or seventeen years. And the Minister of Transportation

should look now at tourism, should look at the needs of the people in that particular area and authorize his Department to spend some money, to fix up the pot holes, to fix up the breaks that are in the pavement at this particular time, to look down on Pouch Cove Road on the way to Cape St. Francis and see it within his heart to say people should not be subjected to that. How can we expect tourists to travel those highways so close to St. John's?

Let us say a boat comes in here tomorrow which comes in regularly, Mr. Speaker, every summer, and they want to go some place for a half hour. They cannot go to Terra Nova Park, they cannot go to even Gushue's Park. But, Mr. Speaker, you can certainly take them on a bus ride or a ride by car, taxi or whatever to areas like Pouch Cove, Flatrock, Bauline, Outer Cove, Middle Cove, Logy Bay, any of those areas, Mr. Speaker. But people are reluctant to go there now because the roads are in such dire need.

Mr. Speaker, we did some work on some of the roads down there, and I though perhaps, hopefully we could see some work ongoing this year. But the Minister of - I called him once the anti St. John's Minister - finds it within his heart that we do not get a cent. I don't think we got a nickel down there this year, Mr. Speaker. Again, only a couple of programs: one in Middle Cove, Outer Cove and Logy Bay that was ongoing, and the other is a few roads in Pouch Cove, that again was ongoing, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to go back, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Transportation again. I hope, for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, - I

said I hope, and I hope that he changes his mind. I hope he gets some sense pumped into him by someone over there on the other side, to come up with an announcement as it pertains to the outer ring road, Mr. Speaker. I mean the outer ring road, whether we like it or not, we can say the money should be spent in other areas: and I know there are other areas that have grave concerns, Mr. Speaker.

But also, and I have mentioned it over and over and over, the Eastern Avalon has, one third of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador. So actually, if you put your dollars in their true perspective on a per capita basis, then Mr. Speaker, they would get one third of the monies that are being spent by Transportation. Mr. Speaker, they are not getting one-fiftieth of it because of this Minister. And I would like to remind the Minister also, that the monies in the Rail Agreement were there for the Outer Ring Road and it is only because of some left wingers -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Right wingers.

MR. PARSONS:  
Left wingers.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:  
I do not know. Are they right wingers?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
They are wingers anyway.

MR. PARSONS:  
They are wingers for outer ringers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. R. AYLWARD:

You are right, the University crowd.

MR. PARSONS:

Well the University people, including professors. They are left wing, and those are the people, I have met with. My God Almighty, Mr. Speaker, their rationale is unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, it was only because the past Government, when Pippy Park came into being, the land that was known as Pippy Park, that road would have just touched the edge of it as it went along. But because this Government foresaw great things for Pippy Park with this new road going in, they took in, they amalgamated a great piece of land next to Pippy Park. Now what the left wingers are saying, here comes the road, right through the middle of Pippy Park. It was not through the middle of Pippy Park. It was only because of what the Government acquired that made that road through Pippy Park. Now we know, Mr. Speaker, even in the parks we see here in Newfoundland, the parks that we see on the mainland, that a road does not necessarily take anything away from a park.

DR. KITCHEN:

Right down through the middle of Flatrock.

MR. PARSONS:

You could not put it in a better place. I must say to the hon. Minister of Finance, you could not put a big road through a better place. You are one of the ones, I remind the hon. Minister, you are one of the ones who is reported to be adamantly against the Outer Ring Road, and I hope one of those

days you are going to get up in your place and you are going to either say, the Member for St. John's East Extern is right or he is wrong. But the point remains you are one of the people out there, you are in cahoots with the old anti-Minister of St. John's; anything that happens in St. John's, he is against it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

Yes, you talk about anti. You have an anti-St. John's Member over there. He is almost getting you in line.

But, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister of Development will announce the Outer Ring Road. I mean, Mr. Speaker, it is necessary to relieve a situation that is happening now on Prince Philip Parkway. And after he concedes to bringing this about, Mr. Speaker, then we are going to have to look at the Torbay bypass road, which is also in the cards, Mr. Speaker. There has been land being acquired in Torbay for a number of years to facilitate this road. But until the Outer Ring Road is - well at least started - then we cannot do anything about the Torbay bypass road.

Mr. Speaker, I can see the Minister of Development yawning. I know it must be pretty tiresome on him over there sitting in his place.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The Minister of Transportation.

MR. PARSONS:

Oh, the Minister of Transportation, I am sorry. I will take that back.

I mean that is one thing we can say for the Minister of Development, you will never see him yawn, because he is young and enthusiastic, vibrant, you know, full of life or whatever, this Minister of Development. But this Minister of Transportation -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. PARSONS:

Well he is a young man. The Minister of Justice is a young man; and even my friend the President of Treasury Board.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

No, he is not. I think that when it finally boils down to somebody having to sign that cheque for the Outer Ring Road, I believe the President of Treasury Board will only be too glad to put his John Henry on it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PARSONS:

Mr. Speaker, I was going to say a few words on the fishery, a few words of praise, I suppose, for the Federal Government today in the program they brought in. But dismayed, Mr. Speaker, in some of the answers given by the Premier today as it pertains to the fishery. Mr. Speaker, I have said over and over again that when we were a colony we managed our own fishery. And if we do not have money enough to supplement what comes from the Federal Government, then, Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day in Newfoundland. All I hear today in all the answers to questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition and my other

colleagues was, 'Blame it on the Federal Government. Blame it on the Federal Government. We did our best. Blame it on Mr. Crosbie.' Blame it on anyone except themselves; not one single cent - they said they put \$15 million into the FPI plant on the Southside. They were forced into it, Mr. Speaker. They were not going to do anything for the Southside. They knew the Southside plant was closing and did not do anything about it, until they were forced to put that money in there.

Today, again, I listened in awe when, in the letter the Premier sent to Ottawa on April 3rd - April 3rd, Mr. Speaker, how long did it take the Premier to get a letter to Ottawa, telling Ottawa what he felt were the best requests for the people involved in the fishery, the people short-changed in the fishery. I had the privilege to look over his list.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has elapsed.

MR. PARSONS:

May I finish, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

By leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. PARSONS:

Mr. Speaker, I saw some of the items that were top priority for this Government. One included Marble Mountain, I think an expenditure of about \$50 million. Now, Marble Mountain is a good thing, Mr. Speaker. It is a good thing for Newfoundland and

Labrador, a good tourist attraction but, Mr. Speaker, how many fishermen are going to get a job on Marble Mountain? Those are the people who have the problems, which should be addressed, and are not being addressed by this Government.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is rather interesting to see the strategy of the Government. I am not quite sure what the strategy is.

We have about an hour and ten minutes, or so, left -

AN HON. MEMBER:

An hour and two minutes.

MR. SIMMS:

- an hour and two minutes left to debate in the Concurrence Debate on the Estimates of the Departments of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, Finance, Work, Services and Transportation and Employment and Labour Relations.

Now, that hour and two minutes is going to be there anyway. Sometimes, Governments use the strategy of letting them go on, on the other side, to run out the clock, but the clock will still be there.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It will still be there.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, the clock will still be there. So, I think the people, the thousands of Newfoundlanders out there today right now, in

radio land, listening to the salient points being presented by my colleagues, the hard-pressing questions that are being put forth by Members on this side of the House, would like to have some answers from time to time. We do not expect Ministers, who are tired and overworked, to jump up after every ten-minute interval, but I think it would be reasonable to expect somebody to get up once in a while and say something about what the Government is doing.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Did the Minister of Employment get up?

MR. SIMMS:

I did my best. I asked a few questions of the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations. I thought I might goad her into getting up, but no response. The Member for St. John's East Extern put questions to the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation about the Outer Ring Road, and other questions. My colleague, the Member over here, put questions to the Minister of Finance.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, about the education funding in the Minister of Finance's Budget, and things like that. It is all relevant, but nobody gets up.

Well, maybe I will try another tactic.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What about the payroll tax?

MR. SIMMS:

Perhaps I will touch on the payroll tax briefly. Let us touch



on the payroll tax briefly and see if we can get him up. Maybe we can then go to negotiations in Labour Relations, so the President of Treasury Board will feel fit and feel free to stand. But I am first going to go to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, because I want to ask several questions pertaining to the portfolio he holds, and the many facets of that portfolio, all of which are much too cumbersome and difficult for this particular Minister to handle; nevertheless, he has the ultimate responsibility for it. I refer, for example, to not only municipal grant funding, but I refer to the Recreation Capital Grant Program, we used to have in this Province at one time, which was very popular. The Member for Exploits, who is sitting next to the Minister now, frequently supported Recreation Capital Grant funding for communities around the Province, to help them with their little softball fields, or to help them fix something at the stadium in Bishop's Falls, or to help the Curling Club fix their leaking roof, all kinds of things. Gander used to get all kinds of little recreation capital grants. The community of Benton, which is having difficult times these days with its Member I understand, some difficult discussions and debates have been going on behind the scenes, but the community of Benton would love to have \$10,000. It is not a big amount, and paying it over a three year period, it is nothing; or \$5,000, whatever it is to help put a little softball field in place or a little soccer field.

And this Government, I cannot understand why they do these things. I cannot understand it! It was a paltry amount of money in

the capital budget. I know last year, for example, the funding required to meet the commitments that had already been given over previous years was about \$1.9 million - last year - it may be a bit more this year. That is what it was last year. It is not a big amount of money. Then, I think, it was proposed to put another \$500,000 or \$750,000 in the program last year for new capital grant funding. It was not a big amount of money; it was capital funding, and it served, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, representing the historic District of Bellevue, it served many, many needs of many small communities, communities which were not able to put up big stadiums or put up a curling rink or anything large and grandiose like that, but with \$5,000 or \$10,000, and with some local initiative and local labour, it could sure as heck put in a nice little ball field for the people in that rural community for a bit of recreational exercise. But this Government eliminated the Recreational Capital Grant Program for this year - they eliminated the program.

Now, I know, Mr. Speaker, you must have thoughts in your mind, and if you were in the position to ask a question, as I am, I am sure you would ask the same question: Why on earth did the Minister eliminate the Recreational Capital Grant Program? I will tell you what I think happened, Mr. Speaker. It is only speculation, because I have no way of knowing for sure, but I think the Minister, himself, was fairly supportive of the program. That is my guess, that he, himself, saw a lot of value in the Recreational Capital Grant Program, along the lines I have described, to assist small communities. I have a

sneaky feeling he supported that kind of a program. And I have a sneaky feeling there are others in the Cabinet who supported the program, but when it came to the crunch around the Cabinet table, the fifteen people who sit around the table, they were having to deal with a situation forced on them by the Minister of Finance who insisted, Now, boys and girls, we have to cut the deficit - we have to cut the deficit! Never mind the people, never mind giving them any social programs; forget that foolishness, we have to cut the deficit. So where do you cut? And it is often put forward, every year. I remember when I was in Cabinet, through the Budgetary process that kind of a suggestion would always come up. In fact, the bureaucrats would often put forth ideas they felt there was not a chance in the world the Government would ever eliminate. It was their favourite programs, and the most difficult ones politically, I suppose, to eliminate. So they would always put forth -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible) programs.

MR. SIMMS:  
We did from time to time, but this Government has done it all. So you have a situation where most of the Cabinet, in my view, supported the Recreational Capital Grant Program, but, as we all know, what happens in that Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, when it gets around the table up to the middle of the head table, the decision is made.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
The head table?

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, the head table where the Premier sits.

MR. BAKER:  
All the same table.

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, all the same table. When it gets up to the centre where the Premier speaks -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:  
I will bet almost anything that the word came down from on high which said, Okay, there is lots of difference of opinion on this Recreational Capital Grant Program. It is a good program, however, we have to make a decision. I say I say cut it, and that was the end of discussion. The rest of the Cabinet were not prepared to fight the Premier, no question, and that is what happened there. I do not expect a Cabinet Minister to get up and say that. No Cabinet Minister will get up and say that, because he is not permitted to because of the oath of secrecy. But I can tell by the grins on their faces, their smiles, their eyes twinkling and everything else, that they are saying, go to it Simms, boy, keep at it, because that is what we were saying in Cabinet but we could not get anywhere with it with the Premier.

Maybe the Minister responsible for Recreation will comment on whether or not he was happy to eliminate the Recreational Capital Grant Program, which has served this Province well, particularly rural parts of Newfoundland. But keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, it is another attack on rural Newfoundland, because that is where that program favored, no question about it, and it ties in well with amalgamation and all these other issues which are

centrally focused on having big large communities, urban centres only, forget rural Newfoundland. It is all part of the overall mind-set of the hon. the Premier, not Members of Cabinet. I know what Members of Cabinet think, I know what many of them think, and one of these days we will see more Members of the Cabinet be as strong as the Minister of Social Services who is, I am willing to bet, prepared to talk back to the Premier, prepared to put forth his point of view, prepared to argue with the Premier.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

He is not happy (inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

I think he still is, but maybe is is not. He is, unfortunately, about the only one sitting around the table who is prepared to stand up to the Premier. Now, that is a bit of inside information I give to the Member for Placentia, for example, who may wish to stand up in this debate.

My other question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs deals with a local issue out in Grand Falls, amalgamation.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The water treatment plant?

MR. SIMMS:

I will get to the water treatment plant. It is a serious question. I want to know when he foresees the decision on amalgamation being made? Is it going to be made around the Cabinet Table, or is it coming into the House of Assembly, as he said, or is he going back to the communities and the councils and ask them to respond to what you think should happen, and that kind of thing? I want to know what the process will be, and the

timing. I am seriously concerned about it - not concerned, but interested in knowing what happens. I hope he will stand in his place and elaborate a bit on that. While he does it, I would like him, then, to tell me whether or not the accusation made by some out in Central Newfoundland with respect to the funding of the water treatment plant, some of whom call it blackmail - I am not sure but I might have been one of them. I cannot remember now for sure. But I do know some did when he said in response to the communities out there, we will not provide funding for the water treatment plant until the amalgamation issue is dealt with. I think that is essentially what he said. In fact, I have a copy of the letter.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What Minister?

MR. SIMMS:

The Minister of Municipal Affairs. There were many out in Central Newfoundland who said that was political blackmail. As I said, I am sure if I was one of them who said it, but I do know many others said it. I want to know now if the issue of the water treatment plant funding will be dealt with after amalgamation. Will it, in fact, be dealt with? Is it still alive? Is it sort of on the shelf for active reconsideration, or more consideration after the amalgamation issue is dealt with? I would like him to answer that question for me because, as he knows, and as I have said in response to him, amalgamation, in my view, should have nothing to do with the decision on the funding of the water treatment plant, because the people out in the area deserve good, clean water. It

should have nothing to do with amalgamation. So I was not happy with that particular decision, but I will give the Minister a chance to respond to it and comment on it.

I know from talking privately to my two seatmates, geographically speaking, the Member for Windsor - Buchans and the Member for Exploits, that the Member for Windsor - Buchans, the Member for Exploits and I are bum to bum and cheek to cheek on this particular issue with respect to the water treatment plant; we think the water treatment plant funding should be provided because the people deserve good, clean water.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member's time is up.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say a few words on the Concurrence Debate, and I think I will begin where my hon. colleague for Grand Falls left off. I am surprised, Mr. Speaker, that no colleagues opposite are getting up to defend the expenditure of Government funds in those Departments. I had a chance, in the last half hour, to go through Hansard for Thursday and Friday, and I would like to refer to comments made by my hon. colleague and good friend from Eagle River.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to be complimentary to the hon. Member, as I usually am. I am glad my hon. colleague brought this up, because other than the five or six occasions on which I brought up this particular issue, in this hon. House, I do not recall another Member, on either side of

the House, bringing up this concern again. But I notice my hon. colleague from Eagle River has. I do not know if my hon. colleague read my speeches over the last nine years or not. Knowing my hon. colleague, and knowing how hard I have been fighting for the people of Labrador over the last nine or ten years, I would think, since my hon. colleague is new in this House, he would want to try and find out if we are both on the same wave length in fighting for the concerns of the Labrador people. Reading my hon. colleague's comments on Friday or Thursday, whatever day it was - I think it was Friday - I got the feeling my hon. colleague does have a real feeling in his heart for the people whom he represents. I would say this, Mr. Speaker, whether he is in the House or on the Labrador coast, regardless of where he is, because I have said this before and I will say it again: I am talking about the concern he expressed with respect to the Federal Government, and with respect to unemployment insurance for fishermen.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those who were in the House on Friday - I was not here, because I had my duty to my Church on Friday. I am proud that once in a while an individual Member will put politics aside and look at his obligation to his Church. That is what I was doing on Friday, and I have no qualms about that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HOGAN:

(Inaudible).

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I say to my hon. colleague from Placentia that I was in the territory of my hon. colleagues from Carbonear, Harbour

Grace and Port de Grave, over the weekend. I had to pay my dues to my Church, and that is one of my obligations, naturally, as a Christian.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Did you pay (inaudible)?

MR. WARREN:

Oh, yes, definitely, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt about that.

However, I would like to get back to what I was saying. A few moments ago, I was talking about my hon. colleague from Eagle River. In fact, I say to my hon. colleague I was very, very complimentary to him and I would like to continue what I was saying. Mr. Speaker, I usually am. However, I compliment the hon. Member on his concern about UI for fishermen. Now, Mr. Speaker, here is where I have a problem.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You have a problem everywhere.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be distracted now, because I would like to continue with my concerns about a very important issue. I refer to my hon. colleague, and if my hon. colleague so wishes, I can dig up the correspondence -

AN HON. MEMBER:

That was nine years ago.

MR. WARREN:

No, eleven years ago.

AN HON. MEMBER:

All of that?

MR. WARREN:

Yes. Goes right back to 1979. If I can recall correspondence I wrote to Mr. Rompkey and Mr. Lloyd

Axworthy - I am just trying to think of some Ministers of Immigration for the last eleven years now -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Barbara McDougall.

MR. WARREN:

Yes, Barbara McDougall definitely, and John Roberts. In fact, there were eight or nine. I consistently corresponded with those Members asking if they would, as Ministers in the Government of Canada, make representation and get the unemployment insurance changed for the Labrador fishermen.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you how far I went. When Mr. Rompkey was invited into Mr. Trudeau's Cabinet, that was a glorious day for the people of Labrador; the people in Labrador were quite happy they had a person to represent them in the Cabinet. So, I have correspondence where I wrote Mr. Rompkey asking him to help change the laws, change the rules and regulations for the fishermen on the Labrador coast, exactly what the Member was saying this past Friday. However, Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate thing about it is that neither Mr. Rompkey, Mr. Axworthy, Barbara McDougall, Mr. Roberts, nor any of the Federal Ministers, have seen fit to answer in a positive manner the requests we have been making. So I say to my hon. colleague, I agree with him.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) everybody.

MR. WARREN:

I know. At least I have another Member with me now on the coast of Labrador, so let the two of us fight the Federal Government and

Ottawa to get it changed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, there is an example. I can understand why my colleague gets frustrated with his own Members.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) when we were over there.

(Inaudible).

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I need the protection of the Chair for one simple reason. Here we are talking about an issue, where a colleague from Labrador has been fighting for changes in the Unemployment Insurance Act, and the hon. the Minister of Social Services has again shown, as other Ministers and other Members on that side show with respect to the Labrador Coast, they do not care about the issues which are brought up. Mr. Speaker, you were listening to what the hon. Member said, that he wanted to see UI regulations changed.

MR. EFFORD:

I will tell you I was more interested in Labrador than putting a \$25,000 washroom in my office.

MR. WARREN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is interesting. I would say to the hon. -

MR. EFFORD:

You did not care about the Labrador people then.

MR. WARREN:

I sure did, Mr. Speaker. I want

to ask the hon. Minister, did you put any stoves in houses in Labrador lately, or did he get stoves from some other sources?

MR. EFFORD:

Yes.

MR. WARREN:

Oh, you got them from some other sources. I see. Now, if you want to talk about washrooms, I will talk about stoves. Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. gentleman, if there are any stoves for sale, please send them to Davis Inlet, they need them, okay? And make sure you buy them at cost.

MR. EFFORD:

Yes.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, to go back to what I was saying about my hon. colleague and about unemployment insurance, I think my hon. colleague has made a good point on UI. I will support his endeavors to get the UI regulations changed, because they need to be changed. Unfortunately, the Minister of Social Services does not know what it is like on the Labrador Coast between May and September. That is the unfortunate part about it. The hon. gentleman is afraid to go on the Labrador Coast between November and June. He is not going to go up before July, when he can go fishing. That is the problem, Mr. Speaker. He had the past year and he did not go up on the Labrador Coast, and I am saying to the hon. Minister remember, there are concerns in Labrador twelve months of the year, not two months of the year.

MR. EFFORD:

(Inaudible).

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, might I say to the hon. gentleman why hasn't he gone down before? Why didn't he go down last week?

MR. EFFORD:

I spent the weekend fishing down there.

MR. WARREN:

I knew you did.

MR. EFFORD:

I do not lie about things.

MR. SIMMS:

Ask your colleague, the Minister of Development, and he will arrange it for you.

MR. EFFORD:

Yes.

MR. WARREN:

We were talking about fishing, Mr. Speaker, but we were also talking about unemployment insurance for fishermen. Unemployment insurance for fishermen is very, very important to the people on the Labrador Coast who cannot begin to prosecute the fishery until the first of June, at least, and then it is only until the last of September at the latest.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has elapsed.

MR. WARREN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No leave!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Placentia.

MR. HOGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not know what my hon. friend for Grand Falls means by his interruptions, or what he is trying to prove, but I am glad to stand at this particular time to contradict some of the garbage that is spewing out of the mouths of the people on the other side, particularly when it comes to recreation programs. The Regional Recreation Program, which has been introduced in this Budget, is probably the best program that has ever been made available to municipalities and communities in this Province. It is one which municipalities and recreation commissions have been seeking for some time, and to see it in this Budget after just one year is a good thing; it is a good thing for our recreation commissions, it is a good thing for our municipalities.

I realize the smaller grants program has been cut this year, but if we had introduced it this year, Mr. Speaker, we would have to carry it on into next year. We have to have that lull for this year, while officials of the Department, recreation commissions, municipalities and Members of the House can have their input into a new program, which hopefully will be introduced in the Budget next year. If necessary, as I understand it, there are mechanisms in place in the fiscal arrangements of Government where they can bring in such introductions, introduce such small programs.

The communities out there are not being deprived as hon. Members opposite would like us to believe. Since my friend from Menihek is here today, I will reiterate what I said the other day, that I am in favour of the subsidy program to athletes

travelling from the Island to Labrador and from Labrador to the Island. I know, during my days down there, it was a great asset to those who wished to participate in athletic events throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I will try to encourage and rationalize with those who are studying the review of the program to see that it is introduced again next year. People opposite would like us to believe it was dropped this year. It is not dropped this year, it is still in place and people can still take advantage of that program this year.

By next year, by the time the Budget comes around again, and my friend, the hon. the Minister of Finance stands in his place and produces more of these programs, the eyes of the public will be opened, just as they were when the last Budget was introduced.

Getting back to the roads program this year. The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation has introduced a capital works program which far exceeds any program that has ever been introduced. Granted it is one that probably grew out of some arrangements by our predecessors, nevertheless it is there, and the work came out early; we are not waiting until mid-summer so that the work will not start until next year. Some of it is started already. It was probably delayed because of the weather over the weekend, but I know, in regions of my District, some of the work is already underway, or just about to get underway, and that is the way it should be. We should not be waiting until the latter part of the year to introduce these programs, we should be introducing them early so that people needing

work during the summer and during the construction season can get at it early, instead of waiting until fall and probably going on into the following year.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to reiterate my earlier remarks about the Department of Employment and Manpower - Labour Relations. I will get it right one of these days! The hon. Minister's work in Occupational Health and Safety, in particular, in which I have great interest, has far exceeded that of any Minister in that position in my memory, and I have been at the Occupational Health and Safety game for far too long.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
How long?

MR. HOGAN:  
How long? Thirty years, anyway, I have been involved in that, and I have never seen anybody have input into Occupational Health and Safety at that level of the present Minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. HOGAN:  
My friend from St. John's East Extern got up. I do not know whether he spoke to the subject under debate, or not. Did he?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
No.

MR. HOGAN:  
I cannot understand that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EFFORD:  
Old anti-confederate (inaudible).

MR. HOGAN:  
Yes, anti-confederate; anti-everything. I do not know



what has come over the man since he got elected to politics. At one time he was a very positive fellow. I worked side by side with him for years, probably not cheek to cheek.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You turned your back to him, did you?

MR. HOGAN:

Oh, yes. One time he was a good fellow to have to your back. And I was probably a good fellow to have to his back. But it seems that those days are gone now, you cannot turn your back on him. Gone! Gone! Because every time he gets up in this House he contradicts his own code of practices, his own code of ethics, everything he believes in and exemplifies outside this House, outside this building, probably outside the city. Probably something funny comes over him when he comes across the -

AN HON. MEMBER:

When he comes to St. John's.

MR. HOGAN:

Yes, when he comes to St. John's. That is it. When he comes to St. John's, he gets that mentality. Whatever happens to him when he comes up Torbay Road, coming to the House, he undergoes a change at the boundary. The boundary is right there by Wedgewood Park, is it?

MR. PARSONS:

I am the only thoroughbred St. John's (inaudible).

MR. HOGAN:

Once he passes Wedgewood Park, he switches from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde, or from Mr. Hyde to Dr. Jekyll, and he comes in here and he is a poor-mouthed, mean-mouthed

Tory, which I know he is not.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. HOGAN:

Well, I cannot blame him really. I cannot blame him for being against the amalgamation that was put to him, his colleague sitting next to him has this super city idea, you see. Amalgamation would be a good idea in their area if it is done in a certain fashion, but if you listen to the super city, and if he listens to the Member for St. John's East, well, then, they are going to be lost in Pouch Cove or Flatrock, wherever it is he is set up now. I have some interest in that particular District, because I have some friends down there.

MR. PARSONS:

You have a brother down there.

MR. HOGAN:

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the hon. the Member cross over the boundary in Wedgewood Park and he loses all his senses.

The Minister of Finance, on Budget Day - I have to get it out. I cannot find the particular subject. Although I ran across another one. Look, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader, Tom Rideout: 'Give Tory Leader Tom Rideout a chance.' I do not know who put this in my notes, but it is signed by our good friend, and a friend of the hon. the Minister of Social Services, Ted Noseworthy. He thinks leader number one is the reincarnation of Joe Smallwood. May God forgive us!

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to stand and support the Ministers who put forward such innovative, such new Liberal programs in their various

Budget Estimates they brought to the table here in four Committee meetings. I am disappointed he is not here again today, the hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West. Except for him, the evening went well. The hon. the Member for Port au Port chaired a very difficult meeting. Our friend, I do not know what happened to him, but he must have taken the same pill the hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern took, and got ugly during the meeting and it sort of deteriorated. But the hon. the Member for Port au Port did handle a good meeting, and it went well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Menihek.

MR. A. SNOW:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to, in speaking in the Concurrence Debate on the Budget Estimates for the four Departments, Municipal and Provincial Affairs, Works, Services and Transportation, Employment and Labour Relations, and the Department of Finance, say I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on them, and relate to this House how it specifically affects some of the residents and some of the companies in my particular District.

First I would like to correct what the hon. the Member for Placentia suggested in his speaking. I know he did not deliberately attempt to mislead the Members of this House when he suggested that some people on this side are leaving the impression that Travel Subsidy Programs, which were in place for twenty-four years, have been discontinued in Labrador. In

point of fact, he suggested they were not. There were two programs available to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador over the past number of years, one instituted twenty-five years ago, and one instituted about sixteen or seventeen years ago. One program is completely gutted, slashed, done away with, so it is correct when people on this side of the House stand up and suggest that the program is completely discontinued, one particular program, that is the Labrador Air Passenger Subsidy Program. The one, as a matter of fact, that the hon. Member, I believe, had the opportunity of participating in a citizen's committee that represented the people of Menihek, or Labrador West as we were known then, in a delegation that was sent here to lobby the previous Liberal government in 1966, I believe it was.

The people of Western Labrador appreciated the fact that he was able to convince the hon. Premier, and the people associated with the Government at that particular day that that program should be instituted.

MS VERGE:

Did he use the name Labrador West?

MR. A. SNOW:

The hon. Member knows the concerns of the people of Western Labrador because he lived there for a period of years. So I just want to state that while one program was completely discontinued, the other program was cut back by \$100,000, so I know the hon. Member would not want to leave that specifically in the Hansard.

MS VERGE:

Is the Member for Placentia defending the cutbacks?

MR. A. SNOW:

I am sure when the hon. Member is put in Cabinet, because there are going to be a few of them flicked out of Cabinet, there has to be. When he is put in there he is going to be able to articulate the needs and concerns, not only of the people of Placentia but the people of Labrador too.

And we will have those programs back because he will be able to, rant and roar, louder than the hon. Minister of Finance and, of course, convince them to do things that can help this province.

MR. EFFORD:

You fellows are dead over there, no life in you at all.

MR. A. SNOW:

But first Mr. Speaker, I want to speak just a little about the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs. This overworked Minister who also lived in Western Labrador for a period of time, and people in Western Labrador thought he would be able to address some of the concerns because of his brief tenure in Labrador, that he may have some understanding of indeed, some of the privations that people have in living in Labrador, but - lo and behold - for some reason he seems to have a very selective memory with regard to what is needed, and what is necessary, and what is right as programs for the people of Western Labrador. He has completely ignored the transportation issue with regard to the subsidies that were in place. He has completely ignored the request for a method of a greater amount of funding, or a better method of getting revenues from the mining industry in allowing the taxes to be collected from the mining company.

As a matter of fact I would suggest that that is probably one of the biggest reasons why they came in with their infamous payroll tax. It was pointed out to them that there may be some monies that could be generated, and we know that in Western Labrador the mining industry alone will contribute about \$ 3 million of extra revenues coming out of Western Labrador into the coffers of this province.

And, of course, then they see fit to gut particular programs and not provide a return on the tax dollars. The commitment that these people - the miners that work in Western Labrador - and this government then decides to cut the services to the residents of Western Labrador, although increasing the tax burden upon them. They are also very disappointed in Western Labrador about the lack of concern for any type of subsidy for regional recreational facilities in the Wabush Recreational Centre.

My good friend His Worship Mayor Kelly in Wabush has made representation after representation to this Administration to attempt to get a subsidy in the operation of the Wabush Recreational Centre.

This is a Regional Recreational Complex, it provides a much-needed recreation, I might add, because of the climatic conditions. It is necessary to have that type of recreational facility and they do indeed provide a bowling alley, a swimming pool and a gymnasium. And of course they spend about \$700,000 a year on recreation and a big chunk of it goes to the operation of this particular recreational facility. Being a small community they have quite a

burden. Now the hon. Members on the other side of the House and some other people, are suggesting that the residents of Labrador City, through their Town Council I would suspect, are suggesting that they should help pay for this recreational complex. Well, in point of fact, the residents of Labrador City do help pay for the operation of this recreational complex in the fact that they are using it about 80%. So about 80% of the revenue generated within the complex are paid by Labrador City residents.

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please!

I want to remind hon. Members that, and I could name the Districts, but there are people making comments out of their seats. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Member.

I recognize the hon. the Member for Menihek.

MR. A. SNOW:

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I am sure the hon. Member for Eagle River, if he ever goes back to his seat, would like to be able to stand and speak and address some of the concerns of the people of Western Labrador, because he too lived there for a brief tenure. And maybe he would be able to convince his colleagues in Cabinet, who would have some sway over the Ministers, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs and, of course, the Minister of Finance. Hopefully maybe he could also convince the Minister of Social Services to not fall asleep in the Premier's chair, because I am sure he will be disappointed in him when he comes back and finds that he is asleep in his chair. But

another particular Department that we are debating here today, or discussing here today, and I would like to have some questions to the hon. Minister responsible for the Department of Works, Services and Transportation.

That particular Department, of course, was also involved in the Travel Subsidy Program in Western Labrador. I do not want to specifically mention, or go into that too much now. I would rather speak more specifically about the Trans-Labrador Highway.

One of the things that this Government has talked about since they were elected, was that they were going to provide an infrastructure. We even heard it mentioned here today that they were going to provide a favorable climate for businesses to operate, to generate more revenue, more employment into this province.

They were going to create a favorable atmosphere for more entrepreneurs to invest their money and create new business and thus create more employment in this province. Entrepreneurs did that in Western Labrador and they wanted this Government to maintain a highway, the Trans-Labrador Highway, to just clean the snow off about 6 to 10 Kilometres. This government, this particular Department, saw fit not to remove the snow, although it had been done for years previous by the provincial government. It should have been done this year.

A small operator, or an operator of a small sawmill had to, through his own expense, maintain that road, to clear the snow, and that particular Minister completely disregarded his responsibility in doing it, even though previous

governments had done it. Now that is a very big disappointment and it is hypocritical of this Government to suggest that they are attempting to provide an infrastructure, or an atmosphere that would create greater opportunities for entrepreneurs to invest money, because that is not exactly what they are doing.

When a person invests money in Western Labrador they attempt to make it even harder for him to operate his business and that is completely unfair and irresponsible, I might add, by that particular Department.

The snow should be removed from the road now. There is still a couple of feet of snow in Labrador. It is interesting to note, on the other side of the reservoir, the Ossokmanuan Lake, that a contractor has removed the snow from the road. Why has he done it? Because he wants an early start on construction on that part of the highway. That is on the eastern side of the Trans-Labrador Highway being constructed over near Churchill Falls.

On the Western side the province will not spend the money to clean the snow. The contractor wants an early construction; he also wants to ensure that the snow is completely ploughed from the road so that in the spring runoff, it will not do damage to the road and thus cost him more money in maintenance this year. But on this side, of course, this particular Government does not want to see an early construction, because I do not believe that they really want to see a completion of this particular part of the Trans-Canada Highway, this

Trans-Labrador Highway, they merely want to send up a little bit of smoke and mirrors and mislead and misdirect the people of this Province.

This Government does not see fit to provide an infrastructure, at least in my part of this Province. They leave that completely to the private sector, completely to the private sector. If anybody wants to maintain the road down in Burgeo, I am sure that the Government would be down there. Or indeed if they wanted to plough the snow off the highway that goes past Gander, the Provincial Government will be there. But in my District, it is not done by the Government, this Provincial Government, it is done by the private sector. And that is wrong.

The Government should live up to their responsibility and not abdicate their responsibility, but live up to it and have those roads cleared of snow in Western Labrador, and not just leave it to the mining companies or the construction companies to do the maintenance on this highway.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. gentleman's time is up.

MR. A. SNOW:  
Thank you very much.

MR. REID:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Member for Carbonear.

MR. REID:  
Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few brief comments this afternoon on the four Departments this

particular Estimates Committee have dealt with. And I want to start off by saying that being a new Member and having watched Governments over the past number of years, when I look at what this Government has put forward now in two Budgets, by my hon. colleague the Minister of Finance, I can only say that the course that we are steering has to be one of, hopefully prosperity down the road, and I can honestly say that for a long, long time we are finally seeing some movement on the part of Government towards a sound, fiscal policy for the Province. I believe, and I have said it on a number of occasions, that the present Minister of Finance is taking the approach that has been needed or that was needed to be taken a long time ago in Newfoundland, and it does not seem to me like many previous Finance Ministers really had the guts to do it, or as the hon. Members on the other side say 'intestinal fortitude'. So I congratulate the Minister of Finance for being upfront and honest with the people of Newfoundland, and from what I am hearing in my District, most people in my District are saying he is doing a wonderful job, finally someone is there that does not mind letting the public of Newfoundland and Labrador know exactly what is going on when it comes to economics within the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. REID:

I often sit here and listen to my hon. colleagues from the other side make derogatory comments about our Transportation Minister, and I guess the Transportation Department, as a whole. But I am

probably one of the happiest Members on this side of the House because of the great and different working relationship that my constituents and myself have now with the new Minister of Transportation, as it compared to the working relationship that my people or my constituents had with previous Ministers of Transportation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. REID:

Just this past week I had a town council in from my District for a day, they had a number of things to do, tender openings and different things, and they wanted to see the Minister of Transportation. Well not only, Mr. Speaker, did they get a chance to see the Minister of Transportation, but they met the Minister of Health, they met the Premier, they met the Minister of Finance, they met the Minister of Education, and when they walked out of here on Thursday afternoon they just could not believe that these people were so accessible to small town councils, and to people in Newfoundland in general, and they walked away quite proud of themselves and quite happy and content.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Heretofore unheard of.

MR. REID:

Not as long as I remember, and I was mayor of the largest community in my District for seven and a half years. I can assure this House that, on no occasion, was I ever treated, Mr. Speaker, to being able to get in not only to

see one Minister, but maybe eight or ten, at any given time. They appreciate that, and I appreciate it, as well.

I have been successful in relation to Works, Services and Transportation, very successful, I guess, in the past couple of years, to be able to secure sizeable amounts of money for roads in places like Freshwater, for example, where I believe, Mr. Speaker, if I am allowed to say this, that the last time a road was paved was back in the days of an hon. colleague of mine, the hon. George Clarke, who was once a Speaker of the House, and I believe that goes back to something like twenty-two or twenty-three years ago.

And now this year, I was able to go to the District and announce that paving, and funding for extra paving and new paving was going to be completed in my area. And I will be honest in saying this, Mr. Speaker, I am sure I am not the only satisfied Member on this side, I am sure there are others, but I challenge anyone to find a more satisfied Member of this Government than the Member for Carbonear.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. REID:

I have had a connection, over the years, with labour in the Province. I suppose I am considered, and I do not mind being considered a union person, like a lot of us, I guess, sitting in the House. I have a number of friends in the Labour movement in this Province who are, on a continual basis, meeting with our hon. Minister of Employment and Labour Relations. And the

comments I am hearing from these friends of mine are basically comments that this Labour Minister is doing a good job. Her door is open, the Department is open, and with the new Deputy Minister in place now, I am sure it will even become better, as time progresses. I thank the hon. the Minister of Labour for being open-minded, as well as accessible, to all those people who demand her attention in the Labour movement. I am sure that before this year is out, we will see a number of, maybe not so touchy issues as they were in the previous Administration or the one before that - we will find that the Labour movement in Newfoundland is quite happy with the progress they are making in negotiating with this particular Government.

I have, as I said, been sitting for seven and one-half years before coming to the House, as Mayor of the Town of Carbonear. I have gone through, Mr. Speaker, three Ministers of Municipal Affairs, three in the previous Administrations and now, a fourth, in this Administration. There is no doubt in my mind that he is the best. I do not have any problem whatsoever.

When I look back and think about my year as President of the Federation of Municipalities and the dealings I had with our hon. retired friend from Gander, Mrs. Newhook, and the year I spent with her, travelling - and she was an honourable lady, always gave me the attention that, I guess I demanded as President of the Federation, as well as Mayor of Carbonear. I can honestly say that the whole question of the amalgamation issue, which quite often comes to this House from the

opposite, is certainly not a new question. We have been talking about amalgamation in Newfoundland, I suppose, for the past twenty-five years, one way or the other. But, Mr. Speaker, it took that gentleman up there in the corner, the hon. the Minister, to find the guts and intestinal fortitude to introduce it to this Province, out in the open, so that everybody could have a chance to debate it. He had to introduce it to give the Opposition lots of opportunity to criticize him for it.

But I can honestly say, Mr. Speaker, that he was the only one who had the guts to do it. I appreciate him for that, and I know from experience that when I listen to the hon. the Member for Grand Falls and I think back some five, six, seven, eight years ago, when we were talking about the problems that Grand Falls was having, the problems that Windsor, across the tracks, was having, all those questions were prevalent in this House and in the Province for years.

In the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, the Town of Carbonear, and the whole District of Carbonear has faired quite well. I can honestly say, Mr. Speaker, that whenever I bring in anyone from the area, or they come in on their own, or even if they do not come in, if there is a question arises as to funding or help in anyway that the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs can provide for any of the communities or any of the residents, I guess, in my District, the gentleman is always there. He is always there to help wherever he can. I must give his staff a word of congratulations and appreciation as well, because

his staff is doing an admirable job.

A couple of my hon. colleagues prior to me standing talked about the funding for sports and amateur fitness in the Province, and some of the cuts that occurred. I have not looked upon them as cuts, Mr. Speaker, because I can honestly say that my District has gotten more money in sports, to accommodate sports facilities and some of the recreation commissions in the area, than they have gotten in a very long time. So what do I have to complain about, absolutely nothing.

I am also very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be able to say that water and sewage services, as well as roads in my District, have been adequately taken care off. I am going to continue to lobby the Minister and I am going to continue praising the Minister because I think, to be quite honest about it, as we all know, the better you get along with Ministers and with anyone in Government even in the Opposition for that matter, the better chance you have of succeeding to get the things that you need in your District. And I take that to be the approach -

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. gentleman's time has elapsed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

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



MR. PARSONS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I saw the two Ministers over there in the back row, Madam Minister is going back to her seat now, I have some concerns as it pertains to her Department. But first I would like to speak to my old friend the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

I would like to ask the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs what is the procedure within his Department - could I have your attention for a moment. Let me say this to you. I was called last night by the Mayor of the Town of Flatrock, he said 'we have a problem.'

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

Oh, yes. I am wide-open to calls seven days a week.

The Minister may not find this so funny, let me speak to him directly. The Mayor called and said they were out of funds. The bank, as he knows, when their budget comes down, they are allowed 20 per cent of that budget, the bank will finance it without any money coming in.

Now last year they did an assessment in the Town. The assessments were finished in early fall, October, then they said okay no problem. The assessments are in, we have what is necessary for you to do the billing on a mil rate subscribed to do by all the council. Then they said okay, we cannot bring it in right now. We cannot have the assessments ready, but that is okay, we will have it ready by the last of March. March, the assessment is not in.

The last of April they still do not have the work done.

I would like to ask the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, can he tell me, will he get up sometime whenever he finds it appealing to himself, or I can get his attention, or gets the nerve, to get up and explain to me what is taking so long? I mean, here they are now, the bank has said okay, we have supplied you with the 20 per cent. That is our commitment to the Town. Now there is no money to run the Town. There is no money for lights, just maintenance, just every day needs. But why is it taking so long? What is happening over in the Minister's Department? Glory be to goodness, there are less than 1,000 people in the whole community. The assessment was finished in October. I mean, some people are saying to me, Is it because of the attitude taken by the Flatrock Town Council in sort of defying the Minister? I hope it is not. I do not want this to be a Latvia. I know better than the Minister. Oh, I do, and I would not accuse him of such. But I don't know about certain people within his department. Let's call a spade a spade. That cannot happen. You cannot put a gun to people's heads like that. There is no money down there to run the little town. We are not over in Lithuania you know, where the government says, 'Okay, you are not going to have it, or we will pressure you into giving in'.

I want to say again to the Minister of Municipal Affairs that something has to be done, and something has to be done tomorrow - something has to be done tomorrow! I hope he is listening, and I hope he will do something tomorrow to alleviate the problem

in that community. You know, when the Minister sent out the directive, or the letter to the Town Council of Flatrock telling them that they should charge 13 mils -

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is not right, you know.

MR. PARSONS:

There are lot of people down there now who think this is what they get for doing just that - doing just that. But I don't think the Minister really knew what was happening here. I certainly didn't, because I would have gone to see the Minister. But I am sure the Minister will rectify it as soon as possible. It is a situation that should never occur, should never be!

MR. EFFORD:

(Inaudible).

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

MR. PARSONS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't mind the Minister of Social Services, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Nobody minds him.

MR. PARSONS:

Nah! We don't mind him, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we encourage him every now and then, because most of the people on the other side are tight-lipped; they are told not to say anything. But the Minister of Social Services, I will admit, we all agree, he has the backbone, boy, he has the intestinal fortitude to get up and say what he likes, no holds barred.

I think I have about three

minutes, and I would like to direct a few observations I suppose, not questions, to the Minister of Employment and Labour relations. A week ago past Saturday, there was a wreath-laying ceremony here in the foyer of Confederation Building. The Minister was there representing the Government, and I was there representing the Opposition. But I was sort of bewildered at what came across from all the people who were laying the wreaths. There was very little said about the Ocean Ranger disaster itself, very little. In fact, I am sure the Minister saw it as well as I did. There was very little emphasis placed on the actual sinking of the Ocean Ranger. I had a personal feeling of remorse at that particular time, because there were two rigs out there that night, the 14th of February, and we did not know for the first hour, after the Ocean Ranger had sunk, which one it was, and I had a son on the other rig, the 706.

But in saying that, I thought there would be greater emphasis placed on the actual sinking of the Ocean Ranger. Instead everyone there placed all sorts of emphasis on the Occupational Health and Safety aspect. I am sure the Minister was as concerned as I was that there are so many people out there now who would not have one word to say along those lines, perhaps three to four years ago. But now, with Hibernia coming on stream, with many more difficult things to do, things that are really technological, it is a whole new sphere of action and we are going to have to be more careful as it pertains to health and safety.

I think what the people looked at,

and what it took a few years to get across to them, was that perhaps the Ocean Ranger should never have happened. I believe we all agree on that. The thing that came to my mind right away, and in a sense it has been in my mind ever since, is that now, with the advent of Hibernia, we have to be more conscious of, and the people in industry made more aware of, what can happen and what will happen if we are not on top of it. I think stringent rules and regulations have to be brought in to address training and education. The hon. Member for Placentia is quite right, but there are going to have to be a lot of rules and regulations, even in the educational aspect of it. You are going to have to be forced, you know, like those EMA programs, which are good programs but not great enough; they are not in depth enough to address situations we are going to have within the next year. I say to the Minister - she is on the ball, and I hope that she stays that way - I hope she will bring in new rules and regulations so that we never have another Ocean Ranger disaster, God forbid! With that said, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is it the pleasure of the House that the Report of the Government Services Committee be concurred in.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

I presume the time has expired, has it?

MR. SPEAKER:

Yes.

MR. SIMMS:

I just wanted to make sure.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is it the pleasure of the House that the Report of the Government Services Committee be concurred in?

On motion, the report of the Government Services Committee was concurred in.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Order 2. Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into Committee of the Whole on Supply.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are now moving to the last of the Estimates which have not yet been considered by Committee. These are normally done in the House of Assembly Committee of the Whole. Under the time allocation allotted for Budget debate, I would like to point out that we have, at this point, twenty-four hours and twelve minutes left of debate. As this is the only item we have left to debate, we should have time for a very thorough debate on the Estimates of the

Heads which have not yet been examined by Committee.

The Executive Council includes the Lieutenant-Governor's establishment, and we all know about that: Government House, the official residence, the staff, and so on, in Government House. The office of the Executive Council is responsible for all the support services to Cabinet and the Committees of Cabinet. The Premier's office is staffed to assist the Premier in the performance of his duties as head of the Executive Branch of Government. Provision is also made for the President of the Executive Council and Committees of Cabinet. The Cabinet Secretariat provides support services to Cabinet and all Committees, except Treasury Board. The Secretariat is responsible for review and development of the Classification Appeals Board, Newfoundland Information Services, operates a Communications System, and so on.

Now Treasury Board, which is the other branch of the Executive Council, is a Committee of Cabinet responsible for the development of financial personnel and administrative policy in the public service. There is a secretariat which provides direct support staff, and its responsibilities include budgeting, collective bargaining, insurance services, classification and pay, personnel policy for public servants, and organization and management advisory services to all Government Departments which we have already considered.

The final branch, the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat - that is the direct responsibility of the Premier in

this instance - is responsible for all intergovernmental matters, which would include all matters of agreement between Federal/Provincial Governments pertaining to cost-shared agreements or any other type of agreements that might be reached. In addition, of course, the women's policy office comes under this particular Heading. The women's policy office, I might say, Mr. Chairman, I am quite proud of. They have done tremendous work in the last year, and I will be talking more about that as time goes on.

Mr. Chairman, I have heard today, in the Concurrence Debates, Opposition Members indicating that they were kind of disturbed and upset that Ministers were not standing up and taking up time to participate in the Concurrence Debates. Mr. Chairman, I would like to comment on that for just a few moments. I firmly believe the Opposition plays an important role in the House of Assembly. I am a firm believer of that, and I am also a firm believer that the Opposition should be provided with an opportunity to make whatever constructive comments it wants to make concerning this particular process. I believe we should give them as much time as we can under the rules to explain their position in the various matters, and lots of time to explain exactly what it is they are concerned about. The mere fact that Government was not hogging the show, the fact that Government was giving time for concerned Opposition Members to express their views, I did not think that would be a matter that would be complained about. I am very surprised at that. As each Member got up in their ten minute allotment, they spent the first

Four or five minutes, with one exception, the Member for Menihek did not even mention it, talking about the fact that Government Ministers were not standing up and talking in this particular Concurrence Debate. They wasted almost half their time making that point, which I thought was kind of a waste of valuable time.

I know the normal argument is that the Opposition have a lot of constructive comments they want to make, and they should have time to make the comments. We reiterate once again, Mr. Speaker, I am a firm believer in the importance of the Opposition, and the importance of them expressing their opinions, making constructive comments and recommendations for change, and I really look forward to it.

I expect we will find the same kind of thing in this particular debate. We have, as I say, twenty-four hours of debating time left to devote to Executive Council, and this will provide Members of the Opposition with a lot of opportunities to express their opinion, but do not expect that Government Members will get up all the time. I may sit in my place, and the Premier, when he is here, may sit in his place to listen to two or three speakers before we respond. I would like to indicate to Opposition Members that we will be paying very close attention to the questions they are asking, I will jot them down, and I will try to get an answer to every, single one of them. We have time for a very thorough debate on this, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have to get my breath first, Mr. Chairman. I was so overwhelmed, and so overawed by the introduction.

MR. REID:  
You were overawed?

MR. SIMMS:  
I am absolutely sure the hon. the Member for Carbonear would not be familiar with it. The President of Treasury Board's introduction to his Estimates, Estimates of Departments for which he has the primary responsibility, being the Government House Leader, the President of the Executive Council, the President of Treasury Board, I am sure a designation which he is embarrassed by when he hears it used, but I like to pay him tribute by saying he must be, I presume, the Deputy Premier of the Province. Somebody acts in the place of the Premier, I presume. When he is not here, who is the Acting Premier?

MR. BAKER:  
There is no such creature.

MR. SIMMS:  
There is no such creature. Nobody represents the Premier if he is out of the Province?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
So that would be, presumably, the Government House Leader? So he is the Acting Premier. He does not like to hear it because he is too modest, but he is the Deputy Premier. Let us face it, that is

what everybody recognizes him as, and we recognize him as the Deputy Premier, the second strongest man in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chairman, before I outline the approach we intend to use in this particular debate, let me just respond briefly to some of the patronizing remarks of the Government House Leader, and the rather convoluted, silly and stupid argument he made with respect to the approach of the Opposition in debating the Estimates of the various Government Departments. He said they appreciated the Opposition's role and they understand it, and the Opposition should have time to get up and debate and ask questions and all that kind of thing, and he said we should give the Opposition lots of time, but he also said 'We intend to sit back and listen to the questions, and periodically we will provide some answers.'

Well, now, I do not know exactly how he accomplished that, because in the last round of debates on the four Departments we just dealt with, Government Services - Municipal Affairs and all the rest of those Departments - there were several questions asked by Members over here: I asked a half dozen, some of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, some of the Minister of Employment and Labrador Relations; my friend asked some questions of the Minister of Transportation, and not one Minister got up to respond.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it is rather silly and stupid to try to make the points he did, that the Opposition should have lots of time to ask questions and we will sit back and listen to

everything. I mean, the purpose of the debate on the Estimates is to ask questions as we go through them, and you expect the Minister responsible, or one of the Ministers, in the case of the Concurrence Debates, to get up and respond. If they want to get up and attack the Opposition and say the Opposition is doing a poor job and all that stuff, that is fine! Obviously under the democratic process, and the parliamentary process we use, we expect Ministers opposite to get up and answer questions when they are put by Members.

We had a whole rash of them for the last hour and a half to Ministers in all four of those Departments. I, myself, asked questions of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Employment and Labrador Relations, under the Concurrence Debate on those Departments, and not one of them got up to answer. The Member for St. John's East Extern and the Member for St. Marys' - The Capes asked questions of the Minister of Transportation. Nobody got up to answer.

So the argument he made is rather silly, and I do not think it holds much water - the Opposition should have lots of time and everything like that. Sure they should have lots of time, but it is not by the grace of the Government, it is by the rules, and we practice by the rules. The rules provide time for us, and we are quite satisfied to work under the rules as they now stand.

So when he says every Member who got up here wasted three to five minutes at the beginning pointing out Ministers were not getting up to answer questions, what in

reality he is saying, having admitted it, is that the Government itself forced us to waste four or five minutes, if, in fact, that is what we did, by not allowing Ministers to get up and answer questions. So if he wants us to stop wasting time commenting on that point, then why does he not instruct his Ministers, or whoever wants to get up and answer on behalf of the Government when we ask questions.

We will endeavour, Mr. Chairman, as we go through the next twenty-four hours -

MR. REID:

(Inaudible) handle it alone?

MR. SIMMS:

I am quite capable of handling it alone I tell the Member for Carbonear, unlike the Member for Carbonear. We expect throughout the course of the next twenty-four hours or so we have allotted under the rules, which, by the way, is probably five or six hours more than we would have any other year - every other year you always had about eighteen hours remaining, I guess it was, or something along those lines, for the Departments which were not scrutinized in the Estimates Committee. This year we happen to have a half dozen more hours, I guess because of the lesser number of Departments. So that is all.

We have lots of questions, and we will go through them as time goes on. I am particularly looking forward to being able to discuss and debate in this particular juncture, I guess, in our Budgetary process, asking questions related to the Government's overall operation. After all, you are talking about the Premier's Office. The Premier

is the Leader of the Government and, therefore, is responsible for everything that happens within Government. And every policy that is undertaken by the Government, the Premier is responsible for. The questions and the debate on financial matters and the Budgetary process are always quite wide-ranging and far-reaching. If I remember rulings in the past during budgetary process debates, very rarely has a Speaker intervened to call relevance, because relevance in a budgetary sense is very, very difficult to define, and always the Member gets the benefit of the doubt, according to Beauchesne.

But we intend to ask a lot of questions, not just a specific question about how much money the President of Treasury Board has there for this or has there for that. Particularly, since the Government House Leader points out that under these Heads we are talking about, for example, Intergovernmental Affairs. Now there is a Head I think we could spend hours on. Because it is my understanding the role of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, is to handle negotiations that would be required between Governments, Federal and Provincial, but also to try to foster good relationships with other Governments and Governments of other jurisdictions. Surely what we have seen transpire over the last several months with respect to the Meech Lake issue, for one, and the kind of situation that has arisen, the tension that has arisen between Leaders of certain Governments in Canada and the Government of Newfoundland, through the Premiers, is a rather testy situation. Members can

shake their heads all they want. It is a fact. It is a reality. The sooner Members wake up and face the reality they will realize it, whether you like it or not. I do not agree with it, but it is a fact. The last person in the world this Government should want to have as its Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs would be the hon. the Premier. I think he is the last person in the world you would want in a delicate situation, and with the responsibility of trying to foster good relationships.

MR. DICKS:

They should have the Minister of Finance.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, the Minister of Finance might be a better choice as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in dealing with provinces up-along, like Quebec and those.

In addition to that, as the House Leader has pointed out, we talk about the operations of Government House. Generally speaking, it is a practice and a tradition that not a lot of questions are asked in the public Legislature about Government House. However, that does not mean you could not ask questions, or you should not ask questions. I want to ask the Government House Leader if he would give us a report on the ongoing work which has been taking place at Government House, the renovations and the improvements to the Government House facility. I think there was a three year plan in place. I would like to know at what stage it is. What is the status of it? How much more is to be spent on it this year? How much is intended to be spent on it in future years if, in fact, the three year program is not yet

completed? How much has been spent in totality on the Government House facilities, not just the residence? There was some funding, I think, for improvements to the grounds and the residences and so on. That is one question I would like to have answered sometime throughout the course of the next twenty-four hours.

With respect to the Premier's Office, I would like to have some indication from the Government House Leader, I suppose, as to the number of staff in the Premier's Office today, which is not a difficult question to get answered, the number of the total staff: secretaries, temporaries, special assistants, the whole kit and kaboodle.

MR. BAKER:

No problem.

MR. SIMMS:

I know it is no problem.

MR. RAMSAY:

Put it on the Order Paper.

MR. SIMMS:

I will not put it on the Order Paper. The President of Treasury Board says it is no problem to get the answer. If the hon. Member wants to answer questions, let him get into Cabinet, he will then be able to answer questions. Until then, I am not going to put questions to the Member for Port aux Basques. We will get a chance to talk to the Member for Port aux Basques after he returns from his meeting in Port aux Basques on Wednesday, at which we will have some representation, as well; we look forward to that particular meeting.

I would like to ask the President



of the Council, in his capacity as President of Treasury Board, to explain to the House what the reason was for the decision to eliminate an entire Division within the Department of Treasury Board. There was a Division down there, and perhaps he could just help me and remind me of the name of the Division. I can get it, but I just forget it off the top of my head now. What was it called, the staffing or something? They were the group of people, as I recollect, who would put the Treasury Board papers together, basically, for the Minister and for the Ministers, the members of Treasury Board. They were the people in back who got all the information together, did all the investigation of the issues, correlated all the information and put it together in Treasury Board, in documents, for Ministers who sit around the Treasury Board table and have to make these oodles and oodles of decisions, forty or fifty at a time, I suppose, at every meeting. I understand that entire division has been eliminated. I would like to know why that was done and, secondly, what is happening? Who is doing all this work these people were doing? I am not sure how many were in that division, but there were a number of staff people, it was a small division.

I know some of the staff people have gone to other divisions in Treasury Board, or elsewhere, but that is not my question. I want to know why it was eliminated, and how much did it save? Did it save money, or was it just transferred to other divisions? And was it determined that the role of these people in that division was not important enough to keep them in a separate division? Who is doing

up the background information now, and who does the investigation on preparing the Treasury Board papers for Ministers?

Now, Mr. Chairman, I do not know what time I have. I had fifteen minutes at the beginning, was it not?

I would expect the Member for Pleasantville will have an opportunity to stand and speak in the debate, and ask some questions. Under this next twenty-four hours, lest you think twenty-four hours is an awful lot of time to spend in this area, don't forget we also have the Economic Recovery Commission we can deal with under this particular Heading. I can assure hon. Members opposite there are lots of questions which can fill up twenty-four hours on the Economic Recovery Commission alone, and which we also intend to pursue.

Several of my colleagues here will have some questions to the Minister responsible -- and I guess that comes under the Premier. I presume the President of Treasury Board, the Government House Leader, will be handling the answers in most cases. I do not expect to see the Premier here that frequently when doing these Estimates, even though, as Premier, he should be here.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, from time to time.

A number of my colleagues here, of course, the Member for Humber East, the Member for St. John's East, will have a lot of questions to ask the Minister responsible

for the Status of Women. I am sure he would look forward to being able to respond to those questions, but I want to indicate to him now that there are questions which will be asked.

With respect to the operation of the Women's Policy Office, does the Government intend to, for example, upgrade the position of the senior administrative person in the Women's Policy Office from an ADM level, I think, to a DM level? something that was being requested in the past by the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, among many other issues that will be raised by my colleagues, the Member for St. John's East and the Member for Humber East, as well as myself and a few other former Ministers who served in that capacity in the past. That is one little question I would like to have an answer to.

The operation of Newfoundland Information Services -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Salary, yes. I want to know what the salary difference would be, and how much more it would cost to make her Deputy Minister status as opposed to an ADM status.

One of the other questions is on the operation of Newfoundland Information Services.

I remember Members opposite, when they were in Opposition - I believe the Minister of Social Services may have been one of them - used to frequently complain about the Newfoundland Information Services operation. What is ironic about it all is I do not hear a word of complaint from them

now. That is the ironic part. But they used to complain because Ministers could heave out press releases through Newfoundland Information Services, and that was terrible, and Opposition Members had no opportunity to do that stuff.

MR. EFFORD:  
I have not used it yet.

MR. SIMMS:  
The Minister of Social Services has not used it yet, but I can assure him many of his colleagues have used it, many of them.

I would like to know specifically what the cost of the operation of Newfoundland Information Services is? He could point that out to me now or sometime. What is the cost of the operation of Newfoundland Information Services? Does the Government feel, as it did when they were in Opposition, that this service is a waste of taxpayers' money, or have they somehow changed their views and opinions on the use of Newfoundland Information Services? I would certainly like to hear the philosophical reasoning for keeping the service and system in place as opposed to eliminating it, which Members on the Government side, when they were in Opposition, frequently called on the Government to do. Maybe they have seen the light and they think it is of great benefit.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
That is right.

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes. That is right, the Member says.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with the Executive Council, of course, which is the entire

Cabinet, the entire structure of Government, the entire operation of Government, so whilst my few introductory remarks here today have dealt with clear items that come under Executive Council, the Premier's Office and Intergovernmental Affairs, I would submit that any Member who wanted to ask a question about almost any item of Government operation could ask it under this next twenty-four hour period, because the Executive Council is indeed the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. SIMMS:  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will get back to it, unless there is nobody over there who wants to get up at this point in time. The Government House Leader said he was going to sit back and wait for a little while, but it is up to himself.

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have just a couple of brief comments. Some of the plethora of questions that the hon. Member has thrown across the floor will need looking into. They are not just factual number questions, but questions about the ongoing plans, and specific stages, rather than the amounts of money. I will endeavor to get the answers for the hon. Member. The question on the Premier's Office: the Premier will not be here until a little later on perhaps, tomorrow, or whatever, so I will leave the

questions on the Premier's Office to the Premier to answer. I am sure there will be a lot of other questions other than the staff compliment level, but I will inform him of that particular question.

In terms of eliminating an entire division within Treasury Board, I will give the hon. Member a full report on staffing in Treasury Board. We have eliminated some positions, and we have combined some small divisions in an effort to streamline service and make it a little more efficient. This goes on all the time. As personnel changes, and so on, and you have a look at your resources within the Department, you always are in a process of change, adjusting your Department to the expertise available. This is one of these cases where we feel that we have become a lot more efficient, but I will have a lot more details for the hon. Member later on.

Will the ADM for the Women's Policy Office become a DM? The answer to that is, no. We have no plans to do that at all. That is the general questioning we had on that particular office, but again, I will get into the details of that division a little later on. NIS. This is why I stood at this point. I just wanted to make a comment about NIS. The hon. Member is quite right, in Opposition we were very upset with NIS, and quite often expressed our opinion, very loudly, about NIS, and how it was operating.

We had many problems. We found that it was very difficult to use NIS, and that it seemed to be something that was used for, not the Government as Government, but that Cabinet Ministers were using

it politically, getting an awful lot of political stuff out, a lot of political things in the press releases, and when we tried to use it every excuse was looked for. If there happened to be a word that could be interpreted by some very imaginative person as being political, then it would not be allowed, so what we were concerned about was the way it was being used. I am not going to get nasty and start attributing blame here. What I am going to say simply is that this is the system as it evolved. We have looked at it and we do feel that there is a function for NIS and it is not a purely political function, the function of getting information out about Government programs, and so on, in a totally non-political manner, and that is the way we are attempting now to use NIS.

If we find, at some point down the road, that it is not really useful and that we ourselves become guilty of some of the excesses, then perhaps, at that point in time, we will decide to cancel it as it is no longer serving its function, but we feel there is a place for NIS to get information out. We find that there is a certain demand out there for such information services.

We find that if we were to cancel NIS, and then Government attempts to get information out about new programs and so on, that it becomes perhaps more costly to do it on an individual basis within Departments. And it is perhaps more cost effective on an individual basis to use NIS to get things out. So we do see that NIS can be a valuable use of taxpayers money and we will try not to make it a waste of taxpayers money. So in essence that is the comment I wanted to make specifically at

this time, and I have taken notes of every question the hon. Member has asked and he will be getting detailed answers in due course.

MR. SIMMS:  
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. SIMMS:  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the initial response of the Government House Leader. I can appreciate the fact that he would not have answers to the questions that I have asked and this is only the first series of questions. And as Members opposite can now appreciate, we have asked a lot of questions for which we have not been able to get answers. The Minister says he will have to check it out. He will have to get more information and so on. Well that is fine, that is fair ball. I do not mind that at all, as long as Members opposite do not shout across and say, ask some more questions, ask some more questions. Because there is no point in asking questions if the Government House Leader and the Ministers opposite do not get up and respond and answer the questions.

MR. EFFORD:  
Ask me some questions.

MR. SIMMS:  
Now the Minister of Social Services, as is his wont on almost a daily basis, is over there saying, ask me some questions, please ask me some questions. He is always begging to be asked questions. Well, Mr. Chairman, I remind Your Honour, and I am sure sitting at the chair you are fully

familiar of everything that transpires in the House, and Hansard records it all, and you read Hansard daily, I am sure.

I am sure Your Honour will recall that onetime here I did ask him a question.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He could not answer it.

MR. SIMMS:

Well it is not exactly fair to say he could not answer it, but what was interesting about it, it was a question that I took directly from Hansard of two or three years ago which was asked in Opposition by the then Minister of Social Services when he sat over on this side, and I asked the question verbatim to the Minister of Social Services, and what is absolutely uncanny is that the answer the Minister gave is the same answer practically, well I will not say word for word, but certainly the same answer that then Minister of Social Services, Mr. Brett, I believe it was, gave to my friend for Port de Grave when he was in Opposition. Almost precisely the same answer as the Minister. And his response in Hansard to the Minister's answer of three years ago was unbelievable, Mr. Chairman, absolutely unbelievable that answer is. This was the same answer and the same question that had been asked. So that is why I do not ask the Minister of Social Services too many questions. That is one of the main reasons.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if I could just run through a few subheads for the Government House Leader, so when he is doing his research and getting some answers he can perhaps answer these for me. Maybe if he knows the answers off the top of his head he can stand

and give them to me. But under the Office of the Premier - by the way he did not comment on the Lieutenant-Governor's Expansion Program, if you know anything about it.

MR. BAKER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

If the Government House Leader knows anything about what is happening down there he could tell me. If he does not, then I appreciate he will have to get some answers.

But under Executive Council, the Premier's Office, 2.1.01(3) - Office of the Premier. The revised expenditure figure under Transportation and Communications for the last fiscal year showed an expenditure of \$55,000. This year the Estimates show a budgeted figure of \$78,500, which is a fairly and considerable increase I guess of, I do not know, 30 or 40 per cent, it works out to. So I would like to know does the Premier intend to travel more than he has travelled during this past year?

MR. MATTHEWS:

I hope not.

MR. SIMMS:

You know, I think most of us would appreciate it if he did not. But does that mean that he intends to travel more? This is the Premier's Office, so I presume it is the Premier's travel vote, I am not quite sure, but -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Well whatever is required, but there has to be some limits to it

presumably, keeping with the Government's philosophy of restraint and all that kind of thing. But why is there an increase of 30 per cent or 40 per cent or whatever it works out to be there under the Premier's Travel?

Secondly under the Executive Support head - 2.1.02.(3), you will see also a sizable increase in the travel, Transportation and Communication vote for the Executive from \$116,000 actually spent this past fiscal year, to \$155,000, which again is a sizable increase of forty-odd thousand over last year's \$116,000 vote, so that is 30 per cent increase or whatever it works out to be. So I would like to know that is for?

In addition, under 2.1.03 (6), Administration, under Purchased Services, the expenditure last year was \$18,000 the budget was \$110,000. So I do not know what the \$110,000 was meant for then.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Purchased Services.

MR. SIMMS:  
Well, I do not know.

If they budgeted \$110,000 in the Premier's Office for Purchased Services under Administration, it must have been budgeted for a reason. They must have estimated that you need money for this, you need money for that, and that all adds up to \$110,000. Unless, of course, this was done last year the same way that the Minister of Finance did his payroll tax. In which there was no thought given to it at all, they just pulled a figure out of the air, and that was it, here is what we will raise. But we will have more to say about that a little later on.

I am intimidated. The Minister of Finance intimidates me. I have to rush away from the payroll tax issue quickly and back to the Government House Leader because I cannot stand to be threatened by the Minister of Finance. I just cannot stand it.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
No. I will have to refresh my memory afterwards.

Now, of course, the budgeted figure having only spent \$18,000, the budgeted estimate is \$63,000. Now what was that, a 300 per cent increase or something? I cannot see how the Minister of Finance would allow those kinds of things to occur in keeping with his philosophy of restraint. Anyway, I will rush through a few more of these.

Another interesting one is 2.2.03, on the next page under Executive Support, for the President of the Executive Council, who is the Government House Leader. There is a 2.2.03.(5) vote under Professional Services again, -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes.

Which last year it budgeted \$10,000 and spent \$10,000. But the President of the Council's executive people have now budgeted \$131,000 for Professional Services, under that vote.

Now, I would like to know from the President of the Council if he could give me the answer. If he wants to give it to me now or if

he would prefer to do a bit of research on it, that is fine, but it is an obvious question. What was spent was \$10,000, what he has budgeted this year is \$131,000, and it is under Professional Services, that is where you get a few flags once in a while, or a few pins or something. That is it basically. So \$10,000 would be a reasonable expenditure for a Minister of any kind, but this is not under the Minister's vote. It is not under the President of the Executive Council. See, the President of the Executive Council

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Oh, that is an interesting question too.

Last year he spent \$3,900 for Purchased Services 2.2.01.(6), and this year he has budgeted twice as much, \$7,500.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Why not?

MR. SIMMS:  
Well, I do not know why. That is why we are asking him the question, and the Minister of Forestry, I thank him for helping us ask the question. The Government House Leader will give him a dirty look for it, but there it is. So -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
What about old Grimes?

MR. SIMMS:  
Okay, maybe he can explain that to us. I understand supplies and so on, but that is not where supplies come from. This is Professional Services, it is not supplies, as I say to the Government House

Leader, lest he think it is supplies. But why does the executive have an increase from \$10,000 up to \$131,000? That is a reasonably large increase for Professional Services.

Moving onto the next page, these are just a few preliminary questions, 2.2.04, the Cabinet Secretariat under Administration. 2.2.04.04, supplies again went from \$11,600 spent last year to \$54,000 estimated this year. So why the sizable increase? Why the difference? Why the 300 per cent increase? Those are the kinds of questions that need to be asked.

Now, in all fairness I also want to know, under economic research and analysis, 2.2.05, and then down to 05 again, professional services. Last year it was \$417,000 spent. I suspect that was for that model macroeconomic or whatever it was called, right? But this year they still had budgeted \$216,000. So, what is that \$216,000 going to be used for? Is there something more being purchased for the executive council? More equipment and so on, computer equipment?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
No.

MR. SIMMS:  
Which if it is, by the way, I support it. I think the group in that division of the economic research and analysis division of the executive council does magnificent work and deserve all the support and help they can get. Just before I sit down, if I might ask the question, because I want to get into questions like pay equity too a little later on, but I want to ask the question: the Minister in introducing his estimates said that this heading

for the next twenty-four hours that we are going to be debating covers executive council, and he went down through Government House, Premier's office, President of the council, Cabinet Committees and so on, and he mentioned Newfoundland Information Services. That is why I asked the question, because he prompted me to ask a question about Newfoundland Information Services. Can I ask him where in his estimates the operation of Newfoundland Information Services is covered under this head, because I do not believe it is. I believe it was always in Public Works. So maybe -

AN HON. MEMBER:

The responsibility is here.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, what I wondered is maybe as the Minister read over his notes, which he perhaps was not thoroughly familiar with, he does not read them night and day and morning. He does not wake up at night, or 3:00 in the morning and read through all this stuff. I wondered if he meant to talk about the Newfoundland statistical agency, which does come under his ambit but he did not refer to in his introductory remarks. So I just thought it might be an oversight. But nevertheless we have agreed that you can discuss almost anything anyway, but I just wondered if it in fact had been transferred to Executive Council from Public Works. Perhaps the Minister of Public Works can tell me. Has it been transferred?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes.

MR. SIMMS:

So it is under Executive Council not under his Department any more?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Pardon?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

The responsibility comes under the President of the Council, and that is you. But the head, the vote and the head is still under the Minister's Department of Public Works is that it?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Pardon? I am asking the Minister of Public Works, who is much more familiar with these things, obviously the President of the Council does not know.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

You will answer later on, okay.

But I am wondering what is going on here, because all of a sudden the President of the Council is answering for Newfoundland Information Services. I cannot find it in his heading anywhere. So obviously something has happened. Something has happened. We have uncovered something. Now we are not quite sure yet what it is, but we are getting to something. The Minister of Public Works says the responsibility for Newfoundland Information Services has been transferred to the Executive Council, the President of the Council, the Government House Leader. It is no longer the responsibility of the Minister of



Public Works. Where is it, about? Could he tell me. Because he just told me it was not there. Well the Minister said it was not there a minute ago. I asked him and he said no, it is not there either. I am sorry it is not there. Now he is telling me it is there. So is'nt he glad that I raised this matter?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Okay, what number? 2.5.01. So, in fact, then the vote is not in Public Works and Services. The Minister is not responsible for it any longer in Public Works and Services. So can I ask the President of the Council to explain to this House why the operation of Newfoundland Information Services, which was in a Government Department Office, handled in a non-political way, as they tried to say, has been suddenly transferred to the Executive Council headed by the Government House Leader and therefore responsible to the Government House Leader. Why was that transfer made from Works and Services over to the Executive Council? I would be interested to hear the explanation and no doubt we will have some follow up questions to ask with respect to that operation.

So I guess my ten minutes is up, or whatever it was. So I will see what the response is, if there is any response.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
No, I hear some responses.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BAKER:  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I could I suppose go through with the details, but the Member asked for an explanation. I will not deal with the Premier's Office, I will let the Premier deal with that. I think that is only reasonable. I think what you will find is that within the Premier's Office we have managed to save, compared to two years ago, almost \$1 million a year in the operations of the Premier's Office, a fair amount of downsizing, but the Premier will outline in detail exactly what the staff is, including part-time, and people that are brought under contract, and what have you - temporary people.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
What is the (inaudible)?

MR. BAKER:  
If I remember correctly, the Premier has the exact amount, it is at least \$600,000 a year that has been saved. I will let him answer when he comes. He will be here. Under Executive Council there were a number of questions asked about supplies and purchase services. First of all, under the President of Executive Council, 2.2.01.(4) and (6): One is supply, and the other is purchase services. Last year \$3600 and \$3900 were budgeted, respectively, and it was spent.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Which one are you talking about?

MR. BAKER:

I am talking about 2.2.01.(4) and (6). That is President of Executive Council, Supplies and Purchase Services. Last year \$3600 and \$3900, respectively, were budgeted and was spent. This year you will find that both amounts have been put in as \$7500. It is a little over doubled.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Why?

MR. BAKER:  
We felt we needed an extra \$3000 Or \$4000 in there to simply provide the service that we need to provide. We ran out of money there before the end of the year, as was obvious, the total amount is spent, so we felt that rather than experience that situation in this coming fiscal year, that we put in an amount that we felt would be satisfactory, so we would not have to stop providing the services that we ordinarily provide, so that is about \$7500 there.

In terms of the big amount that was questioned under Executive Support 2.2.03.(5), Under Executive Support for the Cabinet Secretariat, the amount of professional services which was \$10,000 last year, which was spent, and this year that has suddenly become \$131,000 which is an increase of \$121,000. This has to do with the one time purchase of micro-computers and associated software packages to develop and implement a computerized document control system.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
A what?

MR. BAKER:  
A document control system. It is kind of important to have this

document control system because, as hon. Members know, one of the problems of Government is there are a lot of documents floating around all over the place, and papers which presented and so on, and they go through an awful lot of hands. It is kind of important, because some of these things are highly secret, so it is kind of important that we have a better document control system, and this will provide us with that.

Also included in this funding is money for training seminars provided by NLCS in terms of the use of this particular computer system we are implementing. So that is an unusual expenditure, a one-time expenditure for the implementation of this particular computerized document control system.

Now, then, the next question was 2.2.04.04. The item that was mentioned, supplies: Last year we had - I do not have my glasses. I think it is \$55,600. I cannot quite get far enough away.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
Yes, and we spent only \$11,600. This Head generally is for routine office supplies, including central stockroom items. I suppose what happened was we did not keep up our central stockroom items in this particular year; the ones you normally keep in supply, we let the level drop. We will still have the same amount of funding in there next year. Maybe we will need it, maybe we will not. Presumably we will probably need that amount to keep a constant supply. There was a fairly large supply there and we just let the supply drop, therefore we did not

need to purchase as much as we thought we would. That is the explanation of the dropped, low amount, but we probably will need close to the \$54,000 next year. It is a normal expenditure over the years, but we felt the level was kept too high so we had a one year savings of \$40,000 by letting the inventory drop, that is all.

The next item 2.2.05.05.

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please!

It being 5:00 p.m., I will leave the Chair and invite hon. Members to join me at 7:00 p.m.

MR. BAKER:  
No, the Committee rises and reports progress, doesn't it?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
No.

MR. BAKER:  
No. Okay, no motion.

MR. SIMMS:  
Mr. Chairman, could we stop the clock for a moment? I want to explain to my colleagues what has transpired here. Obviously the Government has decided, in its wisdom or lack thereof, that we will sit tonight. I believe, in consultation with the Government House Leader, we will be sitting several nights for the next couple of weeks. That is the Government's prerogative, of course, but obviously it puts the Opposition in a little bit of a difficult position and situation.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Why?

MR. SIMMS:  
A Member asks why. If I may be permitted, I will explain why

quite sincerely. For example, tonight, as a result of the fish aid announcement today, there are colleagues of mine who have meetings in their constituencies with their Concerned Citizens Committees and groups, which were all prearranged for tonight, and there are going to be quite a few of our Members who are not able to be here tonight.

All the Government House Leader indicated to me last week was that this is something he may be doing, but there was no specific times or dates. He did not tell me when they were going to start, so I am saying this more as an explanation to my own colleagues. I put it to the Government House Leader, if he was going to do it, could he give us a day's notice so that Members could properly plan their situation. I do not believe he is interested in doing that, so we have no choice. But it is unfortunate that it be done this way, without some kind of proper notice so that Members can properly organize and plan their itineraries and agendas.

Now, their responsibility is to the House of Assembly, they are elected to the House of Assembly. On the other hand, I would not fault one Member who was going to be participating in meetings with citizens groups and Concerned Citizens Committees in their respective communities tonight and over the next few days, dealing with this very serious situation.

So, if the Opposition is short-changed tonight in terms of numbers, I want it to be clearly understood that is the main reason for it, and that could be the case for the next three or four days.

I mean, it is up to the

Government. If they want to rush through the budgetary process by sitting nights, which obviously will be rushing through the budgetary process, well, that is their decision and they will have to explain why they wish to rush it through.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As Government House Leader I am responsible, I guess, for the proper scheduling of House activities and planning ahead and so on. We have a lot of legislation on the Order Paper now, with more to come. There are some items which are going to have to be dealt with this spring. To be quite candid with you, some items will have to be dealt with this spring, some items we are under, perhaps, some time limits to bring before the House and discuss. However, before we get to that we should deal with the Budget process. That also has to be dealt with.

I would prefer that we spend a couple of weeks having two or three nights a week sitting to deal with the matters. If we do not do that, then we have a lot of debate left, we have a lot of time left. I think all hon. Members feel they would rather not be here all summer. Part of the summer is fine, but they really would not want to be here all summer. To expedite matters and, in essence, in the final analysis to make it easier for everybody, it is probably better to continue our rather leisurely and thorough and full debate, and let us do it. There is no rush. There are a

full, I believe, twenty-four hours of debate which have to be dealt with. We are not rushing that. We are not asking that this be reduced to five hours or anything else, it is the full twenty-four hours. And we will have the same problems that the Opposition will have, there is no doubt about it.

Our Members have the same District type problems. There will be times when we will be a bit short on numbers as well, but I believe we will have to go on with this business. I don't think there is anything to be gained from dragging it out for the next three or four months. If we can do it in two months, I think we should.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman, if I could just make a final comment on it. Obviously there is no point in arguing or debating it, because the Government is not going to change its mind anyway, it intends to pursue the matter in the way the Government House Leader has outlined. I just say to him once again that in terms of it being a leisurely pace, what he is going to do over the next two weeks, night sittings and afternoon sittings, if that is not an indication of rush, I do not know what is. I can say to him quite categorically that Members on this side of the House were quite prepared to let the process follow the normal way that it would, and we may be here until July 1 and we may not be. But don't forget we get fairly well paid to do our jobs, and to do them in a proper fashion. My only concern, to be quite frank with you, because night sittings mean nothing to me,

my biggest concern is that because Members have commitments in their constituencies and the only time they can respond to requests from constituents for major meetings, particularly in this time of crisis with fishery, are evenings and nights, that precludes these Members, who have been duly elected to serve in the House of Assembly, from having the opportunity to come and ask questions, as well. That is the big point I want to make. But, as I say, the Government makes its decision and whatever it wants to do it can do. The fact that they will have trouble with numbers is really irrelevant, because they have the majority, they obviously have more than we do anyway.

Having said that, may I just indicate, as is our practice, that the Private Member's resolution for Wednesday will be the resolution put down by myself on the Ombudsman's Office. We will be calling that one on Wednesday, for the benefit of the House.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Are we going to be allowed to do that Wednesday, or will you disrupt that?

### Recess

U N E D I T E D

(R O U G H C O P Y)

The Committee resumed at 7:00 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please!

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Professional Services are showing increases. There is one item I am now trying to isolate here which has to do with Professional Services for Economic Research and Analysis. I believe the question that the Opposition House Leader had was that he was quite familiar with the \$417,000 that was done before. The modelling exercise that we are going through which I believe accounted for \$300,000, that amount previously. The amount of \$216,000 - his question was not why the decrease? Because he understood that. It was the \$216,000 going to be spent on?

The Professional Services relate to the ongoing design development estimation and updating of the econometric model? And the continual plugging in of the information into that model to use it, unlying computing, data storage charges, NCLS and the Conference Board of Canada, consulting charges relating to computer programs, use of the Conference Board of Canada's ERIC computer system for design work and testing of provincial econometric model so that the model is going to be tested by the Conference Board of Canada computer system.

I suppose all models at some point in time, in order to be sure that

they are perhaps doing what they want to do they have to go through a series of test and have to be tried with data and I suppose it will have to take a number of years before we really know if that model is exactly what it says it should be. Now using past data you can test, but the only time you know whether the model is really good is if you use projections into the future and then wait and see how that model performed based on the projections it has made into the future.

So anyway it is going to be tested by the Conference Board of Canada, Canada's Computer and assesses to the Conference Boards provincial and national forecasting models. So that is what the \$216,000 was for. I could probably, I do not have it here, but I could probably get an even further breakdown of that amount probably get an even further breakdown of that amount and find out exactly how much is going to each and how much the Conference Board of Canada, how we are going to pay them. So, if the Opposition House Leader wants to I could perhaps do a little more break down of that \$216,000. And I think, Mr. Chairman, these are the specific questions on that topic. I still have some questions yet unanswered and I will try to get back to these a little later on this evening.

MR. SIMMS:  
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. SIMMS:  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the President of the Council for supplying that limited bit of information. I will just briefly

run through quickly some of the other items that are still outstanding and make sure that we are on the same track here. I would like to have a run down on the Government House, the Lieutenant Governors establishment process that we were talking about, and I would also like - he has taken notice of the increase in the transportation for the Premier's office, both himself and the executive support. And also the purchase services for the Administration in the Premier's office. He has a note of that one.

I just want to return briefly to the supplies and purchase services for the President of the Council. The President of the Council indicated in his answer earlier today that there was both supplies and purchase services had an amount of \$3600 or \$3900 respectively and that was all spent, and that his answer to my question why both those items were increased by 100 per cent are in fact doubled, nearly doubled, why that happened. And his answer, if I heard him correctly was, 'to provide the services which are necessary under that vote.' Now that is a pretty broad answer and pretty vague. So, what I would really like to ask is what will the \$15,000 be spent on under supplies and purchase services for the President of the Council and why he would, last year, spend only \$7500 and now all of a sudden want twice as much, \$15,000. That is not frugal, that is 100 per cent increase, and I am surprised that the Minister of Finance let that slip by. So, I would like a bit more specific on that rather than just saying providing the services which are required under that vote. I would like to know what they are and what exactly he will be spending twice as much

money on this year under purchase, services and supplies. And just to follow up on his response to the macro -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Quiet!

MR. SIMMS:  
- the macroeconomic model that he referred to that was purchased last year by the Economic Research and Analysis Division of Executive Council I would indeed be more interested in a little more break down and more information. I recollect that there was supposed to be a test done by the Conference Board of Canada of the model that the Government Purchased. And indeed it was a model designed by the Conference Board of Canada, or recommended by the Conference Board of Canada certainly. And to test the model -

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please!

The conversation in the House is becoming quite loud. I would ask people to refrain from talking so much in the House. I am having difficulty in hearing the speaker. I am sorry for the -

MR. SIMMS:  
Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. That was a perfectly valid intervention and I appreciate it.

As I was saying, to test the macroeconomic model that was purchased by the economic research and analysis division of Executive Council at a cost of \$216,000 seems to me to be extremely high, but I am not a computer analyst nor an expert in the field, so perhaps there is a better explanation for it. So, I would appreciate it if the President of

the Council would attempt to get a bit more information on that particular vote. And does the \$216,000, in fact, cover simply the cost of having that model tested because it does seem like an awful lot of money.

But just to move along with a few more technical questions that I have before I get into some of the policy questions that I wish to raise throughout the course of the next twenty-two or twenty-three hours along with the assistance of some of my colleagues here. Under Cabinet secretariate 2.2.09, the Classification Appeals Board. I was rather intrigued to see such a sizable increase in 2.2.09.03, the transportation and communications vote for the Classification Appeals Board. Last year it spent \$10,000, and if my memory serves me correctly that is probably consistent with the past, and I am not absolute certain of that. But there is a sizable increase projected in the Estimates this year up to \$45,000, which is what 300 per cent or 350 per cent increase. And so I wonder if the President of the Council can tell us or the President of Treasury Board in this case can tell us why such a sizable increase in the Estimates for Transportation for the Classification Appeals Board would be necessary. The Classification Appeals Board, I suppose, would go to different parts of the Province from time to time, but not very frequently as I recollect it. And maybe there is some other reason here. Maybe it has to do with some Classification Appeal Program that the Government has initiated that we are not aware of, maybe a larger scale, I really do not know. And that is why I am asking the question aside from the fact that the increase is sizable, 350

per cent. So perhaps he could check that one for me. He has note of that.

Moving on to the next page, 2.2.10.06 - Purchased Services - under the Administration of the Offshore Fund. Last year while you had budgeted some money there was nothing spent in the last fiscal year at all for Purchased Services. This year however there is an estimate for \$41,000 provided in the Estimates for Purchased Services dealing with the Administration of the Offshore Fund. And I do not quite understand why, particularly, where there was nothing spent last year why there would be anything required and I particularly do not understand why there would be \$41,000 required not having the information. There may be a very straightforward and clear explanation. So I would like to know what it is for, specifically what the items are for?

Now if we move on under the Treasury Board Secretariat's Estimates 2.3.06.05 - Professional Services, under the Collective Bargaining Division of Treasury Board. You will see there under Professional Services an expenditure of \$92,000 last year, which I presume had something to do with the new HAY pay system. I presume it may have something to do with that. I am not absolutely sure. It may just have had to do with some professional help employed by the Collective Bargaining Division in its ongoing negotiations with the Public Service and the public servants that it negotiates with.

But why I am interested in this because there is a sizable increase there for Professional Services under Collective



Bargaining this year. It went from \$92,000 actually spent last year. This year estimated the \$200,000, which is over 100 per cent increase. Now that can tell you several things. I suppose one of the speculative reasons for it could be that the Government is anticipating a difficult year in the collective bargaining area. We all know there are a sizable number of contracts up for bargaining and particularly the Public Service represented by NAPE, General Service, teachers, groups and a whole pile of others is aware. So what are the professional services used by the Collective Bargaining Division. I thought that the Collective Bargaining Division are negotiators were professional people themselves. But are they intending to hire outside professional advisers? And if so, how many are they planning to hire with an increase of over 100 per cent in the Professional Services vote under Collective Bargaining from \$92,000 up to \$200,000?

AN HON. MEMBER:

What about the Arbitration Boards?

MR. SIMMS:

I am not sure of Arbitration Boards, or the cost of Arbitration Boards are covered under Purchased Services and Collective Bargaining.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They are.

MR. SIMMS:

They are, are they?

MR. WARREN:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Well it could be the answer. My friend for Torngat Mountains who is a very knowledgeable individual

with respect to collective bargaining and matters of that nature is probably more familiar than I. If that was the answer then obviously the Government expects and anticipates there would be twice as many arbitration hearings as they ever had before. So I am not sure that that is the only answer, and we will give the President of the Council the benefit of the doubt until he provides us with some information. Well, I guess my ten minutes are up now, the first ten minutes, so we will leave that much for now and see what the President of the Council has to say about those few little questions, and if he has any responses.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The items mentioned by the House Leader. I believe the first one was 2.2.09.03, the classification of appeal boards. It is simply that we expect those boards to be more active this year. I will get the exact note on it, but it is not very elucidating in terms of the notes I read. It simply says here \$45,000, travel and telephone related expenses, related to the Classification Appeal Boards. I suspect that we expect more activity this year. Again, I will check further and see, but as far as I know that is the explanation.

In terms of the offshore fund, Administration, Purchase Services, 31.2 budgeted last year and we spent 0, because it turned out that there was no need to spend any money. We now envision the development of some brochures and

so on so that \$41,600 has to do with the development of brochures related to the offshore fund, and the use of the offshore fund. I have not seen any mock-ups so I do not know exactly what the brochures are. In terms of the collective bargaining, professional services, 2.3.06.05, a jump from \$92,500 to \$200,000. Now, the professional services, the Member is quite right in the sense that - okay, that was another one - Government share the cost of negotiation conciliation interest and rights arbitration board hearings. That is the right to arbitration board hearings included there. And, there was a purchase of some micro-computers and associated software for use in that particular function. I think the real increase here has to do with what we project to be the cost of conciliation and so on. We are doing a lot more collective bargaining this year than what we have done in quite some time in any one given year, as the Member knows. All of the units are bargaining at almost exactly the same time. There were some things left over from previous years that we are now getting out of the way, like the Labrador benefits. We signed that package this morning, as a matter of fact, so that is out of the way. As the Member knows when we get into collective bargaining every time we have to call in a conciliation office, or go to conciliation boards, there is a lot of extra cost involved there, and I suspect the majority of that increase, up to \$200,000 has to do with that conciliation process, the expense of that. We predict that in terms of collective bargaining there will be need for a lot of conciliation. We do not expect that we will get through all of our collective bargaining episodes

without any conflict and without need for somebody to come in and talk the two parties separately, so we perceive there will be that need. I do not think we are foolish enough to presume that we will not need the services of these people because it is a time of conflict, as the Member realizes. Even the settlements that we have reached so far, the one that was signed this morning, the Labrador Benefits, ended the settlements that we have reached so far, ended up in conciliation. At some point a conciliation officer had to be brought in because you see it is a very, very difficult thing to get agreement of NAPE, CUPE, the Nurses Union and the Teachers and it goes on and on of all of these different union groups with some management people. To actually get all of these unions to come to an agreement that everybody is happy with, to get all of the management people, hospitals and what have you, to also agree, and to get everybody to sit down and reach an agreement on Labrador benefits, I think was a major accomplishment.

There were those who said that it could not be done. You cannot get all of these people to agree on anything. But I will tell you, Mr. Chairman, we have been very successful. Everybody is happy with the Labrador benefits with one exception, and that happens to be the policemen in Labrador West, I believe. But the policemen were there and they signed the agreement today. I believe that was the only unit that rejected it. The reason they rejected it, they thought that they might be able to do better on their own. I believe they were satisfied with what happened except they thought well maybe if we go it on our own, we might be able to get a better

deal. Because we had made a deal with the policeman not too long ago in terms of their pension and more take home pay and so on. They thought they could get a better deal on their own which is reasonable.

If every group thought they could get a better deal on their own then we would have no deal with anybody and everybody would have suffered. We as Government would have suffered, the unions would have suffered because they would have to, at all time, go through the process of negotiating these Labrador benefits separately, a lot of trouble, a lot expense.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am very, very proud that today we could sign an agreement on Labrador benefits with such a substantial amount of cooperation between unions that quite often are working at cross purposes. It was a major accomplishment of this Government and we are all very proud of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:  
I might say that within the next few days we will be signing the nurses agreement as well, and that is another one that we are very proud of.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:  
So, Mr. Chairman, the extra amount of money there is an anticipation of what we are going to have to go through in this year to reach satisfactory agreements with our employees. I am confident that we can reach satisfactory agreements with our employees.

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

MR. SIMMS:  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just so that we keep this whole process straight now, unless the Government House Leader somehow accuses us of not asking questions or anything like that, I want to make sure that he is on top of all the questions that we have asked, and the ones that he still owes us answers to and more information on, continuing off where we left off in the last segment. The Classification Appeals -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Pardon?

Yes. You never asked a question in your life. Not unless it was sensationalized.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Always provided answers.

The Classifications Appeals -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Well, I am the critic if the hon. Member for Exploits does not mind. I will carry the ball for a little while.

The Classification Appeals Board, I accept what he has said in terms of the explanation for it. There will be more appeals and, therefore, more travel by the Classification Appeals Board I

presume, which is what I was asking about because that sounded to me to be a bit strange for the Classification Appeals Board to be travelling all around the Province and to expect, or to get -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Pardon me?

Yes. But why would their transportation vote go up \$10,000 to \$45,000 that is the question. It has nothing to do with people coming in here to appear before the Board. It has nothing to do with it at all. But it appears as if the Classification Appeals Board is going to do a considerable amount of travelling and that to me sounds a bit strange. That is why more information is required on that item, as the Government House Leader said he would check it a bit further and try to find out a bit more for me.

I am a bit intrigued with his answer on the question that I raised about Purchased Services for the Offshore Fund. The Administration of the Offshore Fund, he says, I asked him, how come last year there was nothing spent. He said there was no need to spend anything. Now that is a pretty straightforward answer, no question about that, but it does not help provide much information to the Opposition or to the people of the Province. But, then, he went on to say, 'The reason, then, I asked why was \$41,000 provided for in Purchased Services for this year, if there was nothing spent last year?' And he said some vague answer, 'It is for the development of some brochures.' Now, development of some

brochures, \$41,000 for brochures. He said he did not have mock available, but could we leave that question in abeyance too, and could I ask the Minister if he would perhaps get more information on that item and ask what the \$41,000 is for, specifically, what kind of a brochure? What is the brochure intended to do? Who is the brochure going to be sent to? Is it a brochure to all householders in the Province, or what is the situation? A little more - much more detail is required to that answer before we would be satisfied to let that particular one go, and I think he indicated he would - well, no, he did not indicate he would get more information, he thought he had given the answer by saying it is for brochures; but that is not good enough, we need more information. So, the President of Treasury Board is listening to me, I know, and will attempt to get more information.

With respect to the increase in professional services under the Collective Bargaining Division, it is as we suspected, as my friend over here from Torngat Mountains mentioned. They expect to have more arbitrations and they expect to have more conciliation.

As I was saying that in my earlier comments, the Minister of Forestry was sitting back there saying, 'Oh, no, that is not the reason. We do not expect more conflict or a more difficult time.' But the President of Treasury Board has been very straightforward in his response and has indicated that they are not foolish enough to think they are going to go through the round of bargaining that is coming up in the next few months for senior groups in the public service without conflict. I am

glad to hear him being forthright with respect to that answer. It confirms our suspicion that we can expect more conflict in the collective bargaining process over the next number of months. But the Minister did say -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Well, I am just confirming what the President of Treasury Board said. He said he expects more conflict, so it confirms what we are saying.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
More (inaudible) you guys (inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
More than we had, yes. Well, with the exception of one major issue - I am sure that is the one you are thinking about - we had a considerable amount of success in agreements. We reached an agreement with the nurses two years ago. We reached an agreement with the NTA two years ago. - the Member for Exploits is quite familiar with it - a very good agreement, as a matter of fact, and lots of other groups like that. So the Minister of Finance need not try to just block out all of that and remember what happened four or five years ago with respect to the public service. And I would not be quite so cocky as he appears to be tonight, because the very same thing could happen to him, according to the remarks of the President of NAPE. I would not exactly be too confident that you might go through a settled period of negotiation with NAPE, believe me.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes. Well, I mean, he is using all the right words, at the moment, from his perspective, I guess, trying to let the Government know that they intend to be serious, and I have no doubt, from my own dealings with Fraser March in the past, that he is generally very serious.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, that explains the reason for more funds for professional services. They expect to have more arbitration, therefore, obviously, much more conflict in the days and months ahead. And I wish the Government well. I wish them success. I hope, for the sake of the people of the Province, they are able to successfully negotiate agreements with these large groups, the teachers, the public service and so on. Because, obviously, if you are not able to successfully negotiate an agreement, then the people of the Province are the ones who will suffer because these services will obviously not be available to them for the period of time that the conflict exists. So I sincerely wish the Government well in that regard. I am not quite so confident and certain that you are going to be able to do it, but I do hope that you will do it.

One of the reasons for it, by the way - I might as well mention it here; I was going to mention it a little later on as we got into policy - but I understand, in the Collective Bargaining Division of Treasury Board, there has been some enormous staff changeover over the last several months, I guess. A lot of the former people who were there, former negotiators for Treasury Board, very good

people, by the way, several of them.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

They are very good people. The Member for Placentia might laugh. I am sure the President of Treasury Board would agree that the negotiators that were there were very good people. Quite professional and under a lot of strain during a lot of times. But I know that some of them had left the public service to go on to other positions in the same field. One, I think, is left to go over with the University, one went on to the Liquer Corporation to replace the person who is now here as the Director, I guess, of Collective Bargaining Division, -

AN HON. MEMBER:

The former director retired.

MR. SIMMS:

And the former - Alan Andrews left the public service over the last year. So, there have been a lot of turn overs and change overs down there, and I do not know if that is causing any difficulty with respect to collective bargaining or not. Perhaps the Minister can elude to it. I would like to hear what he has to say because surely that must have created some difficulties for the Minister and for the Government.

2.3.07, the organization and management division - O and M as it is referred to by those in the public service that are familiar with it, I guess - has an increase of \$45,000 in its salary vote. Do we presume from that that there are a number of new positions created in the O and M division because it is an increase of

nearly twenty per cent, so obviously it is not the paltry wage increase that the Minister of Finance plans to give to his public servants who would not be represented by a twenty per cent increase. So, the only other thing I can think of is probably there must be some new people going into the organization and management division of Treasury Board, and perhaps he could tell me about that.

And in addition and along the same lines under the same vote, the same head, 2.3.07.05 professional services. Again, we see this professional services item coming up time and time again. And the answers so far have been very vague without any specifics. We do not know what it is for. And in that vote last year there was \$198,000 spent for O and M. This year there is nearly \$100,000 I suppose, \$283,000 allocated and estimated for purchase services under O and M. What do they use \$283,000 for in purchase services O and M? So that is the question straight forward, clear.

And along the same lines I would just jump ahead to 2.3.08, classification in pay.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. SIMMS:

Okay, Mr. Chairman. I will get back to it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You will have numerous opportunities to come back.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

By leave.

MR. SIMMS:

Well I will carry on with a few more, but I do not want to bog the Minister down with a whole pile of things. That is why I am trying to take a break. I will go for another few minutes and then I will break. I will see what kind of response I elicit from the forth coming President of Treasury Board.

As I was saying, classification in pay division. It has a sizable salary increase, over \$70,000 from \$700 so it is a ten per cent increase there. Is that new people in classification and pay or what I would like to know is it represents about a ten percent increase. Perhaps you could give me a break down and indicate to me what is in there for salary increases for the, you know, the normal salary increase, what percentage of the ten per cent is for salary increases and what is there for new people or new positions? There is a ten per cent increase there. What I am trying to get at is what is there for new people and what is just there for salary increase for public servants?

And moving on over to 2.3.10 - I will just finish this page for now - personnel policy. A twenty per cent increase in salaries there, 2.3.10.01 in salaries. Another twenty per cent increase. Is that more -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Well that is what I am asking. Perhaps the Minister of Social Services knows the answer. Is the twenty per cent increase in salaries, is that the salary increase they are giving to the

public servants in personnel policy division of Treasury Board? Is it? I did not think the Minister had the answer. I think he was just playing with me, toying with me.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) I cannot take another Minister's department.

MR. SIMMS:

No, okay. You cannot take another Minister's department and answer the questions. Well, the President of Treasury Board I am sure will be very forth coming and tell me why the twenty per cent increase in salaries. Is it more staff? Is that the salary increase being offered to the public servants or what is the situation? That is what we are trying to -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, the Minister of Finance will not tell me either because he wants to go to the President of Treasury Board. Okay.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) just Treasury Board.

MR. SIMMS:

Just Treasury Board gets the twenty per cent. So, the Minister of Finance knew nothing about this. Aha! Perhaps the President of Treasury Board will respond to the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance wants to know the answer to that question too I say to the Government House Leader, and so does the Minister of Social Services. How come his staff get a twenty per cent increase and the poor Minister of Finance's staff are only going to get a paltry 4 per cent or

something like that? Is that right?

2.3. 11 - the Human Resource Mangement Systems Development. The only question I have there is with respect to Professional Services - 05 - it is gone form \$475,000 last year to \$545,000; \$475,000 last year, I presume, I am not quite sure, maybe he can answer it for me, was the HAY system, a continuation of the HAY system, under that vote, I wonder. What was the \$475,000 for last year, perhaps he can tell me that? Then tell me why it is increased by another \$90,000, which again is a 20 per cent increase, under Professional Services - under Human Resource Mangement. An extra \$100,000 for Provisional Services. If it is the right answer, we support it fully and wholeheartedly. Because there is no more important aspect I guess of developing public service than through Human Resource Development.

And finally just a technical question on pay equity, but I mean we will obviously get into some more discussion on it later on when we get to the policy area. But under 2.3.12 - the next item - Pay Equity Review Implementation - I am going to finish with this one for now so I can get some answers. I do not want to get too far ahead. He has in there under Purchased Services an expenditure last year of \$20,000 as opposed to what he budgeted \$21,000. But this year he is estimating \$50,000 in Purchased Services and there it is again - Purchased Services, a sizable increase in the vote of Purchased Services. So we would like - and we obviously have no information, have no idea what it is for and we are simply asking the President of the Council to

explain to us why that is there? What it is for? And why the sizable increase of over - well about 150 per cent in Purchased Services vote for the Pay Equity Review Implementation? What would they use Purchased Services for? The Pay Equity Review Implementation? There is a group in the Treasury Board Secretariat that is dealing with that issue. So I would like him to answer that.

Perhaps I will just clue up with those because I got a fair number there yet, and I want to get some responses before I proceed.

MR. BAKER:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Some to them can be dealt with rather quickly. The question on 2.3.07.01 - Organization and Mangement Salaries - what you see reflected there is that during the past year there have been two or three positions that have been vacant and not been filled during the year.

MR. SIMMS:  
I am sorry, the (inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
Okay Organization and Mangement, you are asking about the increase and so on. Last year we budgeted for \$310, 000 on Salaries, but there are two or three positions there - let me see how many now, there are a couple of positions that have been vacant and possibly will be filled in the coming year. So if we fill the vacant positions then we will spend the



\$305,000, if we do not we will still be back to \$206,000 - no one position we may not fill, right, that pays about \$40,000 a year.

MR. SIMMS:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
And this one position may or may not be filled it depends on the type of individual we can get.

MR. SIMMS:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
Under the Classification and Pay -

MR. SIMMS:  
You left out Professional Services.

MR. BAKER:  
Oh, Professional Services. Yes, that is right. Just a second now.

We have started in the last number of months, indeed since we formed the Government, but we are just now getting into a little more detail on it. We have started Departmental Program and Operational Reviews - and as any good managers, we from time to time have to look at all the operations, and I believe we explained to or the Opposition House Leader mentioned something have elimination of a division in Treasury Board, two or three employees were doing a job and we have now eliminated that division and put it with another one, dropped a job in the process and now we are performing the same functions with fewer people. Every good manager every now and then looks at the program delivery, the effective program delivery, and the organization associated with it, so that extra amount is primarily for NLCS, their input into consulting

services, some selected departmental program and operational reviews, that is what that money is mainly for, NLCS.

MR. SIMMS:  
What departments (inaudible)?

MR. BAKER:  
We probably have money in for a couple of departments but it is an ongoing process and we have not been doing it. I do not know which ones we are going to get to next. It is largely up to that division. It is a normal thing.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Is that like the ones we did with Social Services?

MR. BAKER:  
Probably. You went outside to do that one, did you not? This is internal in the sense that NLCS are providing us with people to do analysis and so on of programs and program deliveries. So, it is not the same kind of thing, where we hire consultants. This is not for hiring consultants. This is for use of an NLCS.

MR. SIMMS:  
Perhaps, when you get a chance, you could tell me what departments?

MR. BAKER:  
I do not know right now.

MR. SIMMS:  
I understand that. What Departments are going to be reviewed.

MR. BAKER:  
It may not be simply a department. We are also taking the approach that, let us look at the program delivery to single parents, for instance. Now, that cuts across a lot of departments so we have to do an analysis of

things in all departments relating to single parents and that requires some help from NLCS as well. There are several areas we are doing like that, whole program areas that cut across departments. I could give you a bit more information on that later.

MR. SIMMS:

The public would like to know, I am sure.

MR. BAKER:

You have to realize, that as President of Treasury Board, I am a little more reluctant to go public with things and so on. I can't shy away from publicity and so on so maybe you are right, maybe I should become more forthcoming. We signed this Labrador Agreement today and maybe I should have made a big deal of it and had the press in and all this kind of thing.

MR. SIMMS:

You do not have to.

MR. BAKER:

I did not, no.

MR. SIMMS:

That whole process was started a couple of years ago.

MR. BAKER:

But, in the last year they reached an agreement.

MR. SIMMS:

I am glad to hear it.

MR. BAKER:

I believe you hired Gar Pinn to do a study first.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes.

MR. BAKER:

And that is where it started. It

is admirable, certainly. But, also, do not forget that we have now reached an agreement.

MR. SIMMS:

What other departments are you going to review? That is what I want to know.

MR. BAKER:

I will check into it and get back to you. I know we have asked for a review of single parents, particularly, and there are a couple of other areas.

The next question had to do with personnel policy salaries, no, classification and pay.

MR. SIMMS:

There is a 10 per cent increase in salaries. I am trying to find out what that is. Is it the wage (inaudible)?

MR. BAKER:

No. I believe it is -- just let me check the amount for a second.

MR. SIMMS:

Seventy-two thousand dollars.

MR. BAKER:

There are three vacant positions that amount to about \$100,000. This year, I think, we plan to fill a couple of those vacant positions, so, again, I will look into it. That is what it looks like on the surface. The amount seems to check out to about \$70,000 and that would be two of them. The same thing applies to personnel policy. I believe we hope to fill one vacant position in there.

The Human Resources Management -- Mr. Chairman, I wish I had --

MR. SIMMS:

What happened to the Personnel

Policy one?

MR. BAKER:

Oh, we hope to fill one vacant position there.

MR. SIMMS:

One?

MR. BAKER:

Yes. And I suppose in all those figures there is a gestimate of salary increase built in there as well.

The Resource Mangement - the Opposition House Leader had a bit to say about that and he showed that he had some understanding of what goes on there. This is perhaps an area of Government that we have neglected. Now I am not saying that as a comment on the the past Government. I am saying we have in the civil service a lot of expertise, we have people who are very knowledge and good at their jobs. Unfortunately civil service being as large as it is, these people are sort of not identified in any one place. We have become compartmentalized in Government, we have become overcompartmentalized. And I believe that we have wasted a lot of the talent that we have in the civil service. We have jobs that need to be done, we have people all ready working for us who are very expert in these areas and can do the job and yet we do not know about them. So we have to make better use of our people. We have to make better use of moving people around, second them from one area to another, to make sure that we are getting the best people to do the job that we need done.

And, by and large, this amount of \$545,000 is Consulting Services from NLCS, again as far as I know

that total amount is NLCS, and it relates to assisting and development implementation, this Human Resource Mangement Information System, and it is coming along beautifully. It is something that must be done if we are to make better use of the expertise we have in the public service of this Province.

So I am pleased with what is happening there and if the Opposition Members want sometime in the next day or two I could give a full report as to progress in that particular area of identifying people and making sure that on the computer system that we can plug into the expertize we have.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The hon. Minister's time is up.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman, I would have given the President of Treasury Board to finish that page, if he wishes to.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Okay, by leave!

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Pay Equity Review Implementation.

Again a little later if you want I could give a complete review of the pay equity and when we get to

the policy area, the complete review of the progress that is being made in the Pay Equity. Where we have gone, including where the previous Government went and where we have gone since then and where we are headed in the future. I can give a complete review of that. But in actual fact the jump from \$20,000 to \$50,000 has to do with a production of videos, development, and putting up posters, pamphlets and newsletters related to getting to getting to the stage where we are ready to implement pay equity in certain sectors of the public service and just to explain what it is all about and do a proper job on explaining what it is all about. So the increase there, the \$30,000 relates to that type of thing; production of video; of information pamphlets and so on on Pay Equity, so that everybody understands.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

I must say I was feeling fairly good for a while with the answers I was getting at the beginning from the President of Treasury Board, but as we have gone on now for the last hour, the answers have become vaguer and vaguer and more vague and more vague, most vague as a matter of fact over the last little while. But responses like - I mean I am asking some fairly simple questions. I would have expected the President of Treasury Board to be much better prepared than he is or he appears to be. And that just counters all of the criticism that we in the Opposition can get from time to

time from Members of the Government when we they say you are not asking any questions. But clearly we are asking lots of questions, but here are the answers that we get from the President of Treasury Board. As far as I know, I think we intend to fill, I am not quite sure, a little later on I will provide you with, in a day or two I will give a complete review. Now I mean, Mr. Chairman, those responses seem to be fairly vague and I realize that the President of Treasury Board is a busy person and has a lot on his table and so on, but I would have expected him to be able to give pretty straightforward answers to these simple questions I have been asking, because they are fairly simple and straightforward and, if he has his briefing book, as all Ministers do when they appear before the Estimates Committees, generally speaking the bureaucrats and the officials of the Department give you the answers right there on a piece of paper; and sometimes the answers are not very detailed, as he has pointed out from quoting from his briefing notes. But, in the past, I, as a Minister - I am sure Ministers opposite do the same thing, I am sure the Minister of Fisheries does, having been around for awhile. You go through your briefing book well before you appear before the Estimates Committees, with your staff, and when you see a little short answer there that says, 'This is for this,' I mean, obviously, you can anticipate the question might request a bit more detail, so you ask your officials to give you more detailed answers so you have more detailed answers in your briefing book.

I would hope the President of Treasury Board will call Mr. White

and his ADMs into his office tomorrow morning at 6:00 or 6:15 and sit down with them and say, you know, 'Gentleman, I am getting a lot of questions looking for detail, and I was stuck up there last night because I did not have the detail to provide, I had to keep saying, I will defer it until the next day or two, or as far as I know, and I had to do a lot of guessing. So please prepare some more detail for me for the next twenty-two hours or twenty-four hours of discussion on the Estimates' for his Department.

I hope he will take that to heart. I am half facetious, but I am serious about it, because a lot of the things I have asked, have been deferred. A whole pile of things I have asked have been deferred. I am prepared to be fairly responsive to the Minister's dilemma and situation, but I am not going to stand for it all night and all day tomorrow and all the next day. I mean, somewhere along the line, we have to get answers.

With respect to the pay equity issue, I intend to raise questions.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The Minister of Finance (inaudible) after the House closes.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes. Now, there, Mr. Speaker, is the most telling answer of all. Members opposite might be interested to hear what the Minister of Finance just said in response to my question about getting answers, the most telling answer of all, and he can be quoted, it will be in Hansard, I am certain, said, 'You will get the answer after the House closes.' Now we see what is transpiring. Now we see fully why

the Government is pushing to have these Estimates rushed through the House instead of following the normal pattern and the normal procedure. He has put his foot in his mouth again. He has opened his mouth again once too many times. Why does the Government House Leader not tell the Minister of Finance to go down in his office and do some reading or research, or something? Perhaps even if he went down and studied the payroll tax, he might be able to tell us what it is all about. But now, we know what his policy is, and I hope the President of Treasury Board is tearing strips off him right now.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The Premier would.

MR. SIMMS:

The Premier would, you can be sure of that. He has opened his mouth, he has confessed, he has admitted what his response is to questions in the House. Do not ever accuse us again of not asking questions, because it does not matter. The Minister of Finance has stated, I presume, Government policy. 'If they ask questions, let us wait until the House closes, and that is when we will provide the answers,' as he did, of course, with his infamous payroll tax, did not have the political courage to come to the House and face the elected representatives of the people. He had to wait until the House closed for Easter and then not have a press conference, by the way, where he could be questioned, slip out a little press release as to who is going to have to pay the payroll tax, which he could have told us, I suspect, before the House closed.

So now, let the word go out, Mr. Speaker, let the word go out to

the people of the Province, the Minister of Finance says, 'Ask all the questions you want, but you are not going to get any answers until the House closes.' That is his answer, Mr. Speaker. And, as funny as it might seem to some people, I can tell you, that is a pretty serious remark to make. I hope that remark is carried in newspapers from here to Vancouver, British Columbia, as were some of his other previous infamous remarks on another issue.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

'Aw, go 'way, boy!' He is getting mad now! He does not like it when he is reminded of these things that have burnt the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I did not want to be sidetracked. I thought we were carrying on in a sensible fashion. I hope the President of Treasury Board has told the Minister of Finance to keep his trap shut, to keep his gob closed, and if he cannot restrain himself, go out in the common room, boy, and have a cup of coffee, or something like that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I was so rudely interrupted by the Minister of Finance I want to move on to a couple of other issues. Under the under Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat of which the Premier of the Province is the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, if you can believe that for a moment, a person who has just about turned off every Government in Canada, the Leaders of all the Governments in Canada. He just about turned off every single one of them, the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs. Of all people to be the Minister of Intergovernmental

Affairs, a portfolio that is meant to foster good relationships between governments and meant to assist in negotiating cost-shared agreements and things like that. Now, the only other person I can think of that might be worse in that portfolio would be the Minister of Finance, with his attitude towards some of the Governments of Canada and some of the other provinces. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, under that particular head 2.4.01 we have professional services again. Under the executive support area \$60,000 up to \$96,000, an increase of over 50 per cent for professional services. Under Grants and Subsidies, I would like him to tell us what grants and subsidies are all about here in this head for the executive and administrative support. Last year you spent \$154,000, which was precisely what your budget was, so the grants and subsidies must be fixed. This year it is \$190,000, as he can see, so I would like him to explain to me why the increase, and more specifically, what it is for?

Now, the other item I see is under Native Policy 2.4.02 where there is a considerable increase in the salary vote. In 2.4.02.01 he will see salaries last year \$150,000 and this year \$257,000, an additional \$107,000, about an 80 or 90 per cent increase in the salary vote under the Native Policy under the Native Policy Division of Intergovernmental Affairs. Is that more people going into that area to work with the Government? What is it? All the answers he has given me on the questions I have asked about the salary differences, he has not once mentioned what portion of that is thrown in there for increases, for the normal wage

increases that public servants might be expected to get. He has not once given that kind of information, or alluded to it. What had you estimated? This is only an estimate. In all the questions I have asked about salary votes, and I have asked several on various where there have been increases, his answers have always been, there were some vacancies, we think we may, I think we might, we might be filling one or we might be filling two, or whatever, but nowhere in any of his answers under the questions related to salary vote has he said, there is a 20 per cent increase here and 10 per cent of that is for normal salary wage increases for public servants, and the other 10 per cent is for one or two positions. That is the kind of specific answer I would like to get and that is what I am asking the President of Treasury Board. In his research in the next day or so, perhaps when he comes back, he could be a bit more forthcoming. We all realize, including the public service, so he need not be fearful of that, that you have to put an estimate in your Budget, so it is only an estimate and you may be estimating on the basis of the CPI, or whatever, 4 or 5 per cent, whatever the case might be. That is what we fully expect would be in there but I would like for him to confirm for me because he has not said in any of his responses on the salary vote that a portion of this is for, or a portion for that. He says, oh, there maybe one position. There used to be three vacancies and we might be filling one, as far as I know but I am not sure, all of that stuff. He can understand where I am coming from. I am not totally satisfied with those kind of answers.

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all I would like to comment on the Opposition House Leader's comments concerning what I have said about salary so far. I would like to point out to the Opposition House Leader that I am by nature a very cautious person, very conservative, and in giving the answers I want to give the answers as accurately as I possibly can. When I say there may possibly be two vacant positions filled in a certain area I deliberately do not say there will be because we are not in the game of filling positions for the sake of filling positions. I know that is difficult for the Member for Grand Falls to understand. Maybe I should have said we are going to try to fill some of these positions. Maybe that would have been better because there are jobs that need to be done and we are not going to simply grab people and shove them into jobs simply because there are some people looking for work and there are jobs to be done. We have to make sure there is a proper match. We are not into the - So, I cannot say that we are definitely going to fill the position, but we intend to and hopefully we will and so on. That is why I had to be tentative about these. I try to be as absolutely accurate as I possibly can being a very honest and gentle person by nature.

Also I would like to comment on the fact that there is some

concern been expressed that, you know, what figure do we have in there for regular salary increases. All I can say about that, Mr. Chairman, is that we have made allowances for salary increases. We have not said zero and zero, we have not legislated that, we have not made a decision in Cabinet and then gone out and told the unions, 'you are getting zero next year.' Although Fraser March has made the comment in response to questions from the Press that there is nothing wrong with zero as long as it is a negotiated zero. We believe in the collective bargaining process very deeply, very strongly believe in the collective bargaining process. And all I can say to Members Opposite is we do have money in this budget for increases for our workers, but I am not going to get into the game of saying that it is one per cent or two per cent. I am not going to get into that game because then that interferes with the collective bargaining process. The workers will get what they end up bargaining collectively at the end of the process. That is what they will get. That is what our employees will get that are in unions. It is as simple as that. The nurses will get what they have bargained for, and in the first year it will cost Government about 7.2 per cent and in the second year it will cost Government about 8.4 per cent. That cost is in there. They will be paid because they are our employees and we have contracted to pay them.

In terms of the rest of our collective agreement and the collective agreements that are coming to you, I would be seriously remiss, Mr. Chairman, in my duty if I did not point out something at this stage of the

games because it relates to the collective bargaining process and it relates to the difficult time that we are now going through, and the problems we may run into in our collective bargaining process.

I believe that certain groups of workers in the past, and I guess the teachers are a prime example, have been given certain impressions in the past that are not quite true and it is causing difficulty now and will cause difficulty in the future. I am talking about their pension plan. The teachers in the Province have assumed for a number of years that they have a funded pension plan. They do not have a funded pension plan. That is the impression that Government has given that group of workers, that they have a funded pension plan. The pension plan started to be funded in 1981.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
I understand that. I am talking about the teachers in the Province. They assume the plan has been funded. In actual fact there has been a tremendous problem building it up. It has been getting worse, and worse, and worse. We go through the Estimates like this and we see amount figures for salaries and numbers of employees and all this kind of thing, and the Opposition asks all kinds of questions about it. The real story about so many things is not told by going through these Estimates. The real story of the Pension Fund, I am sure the Minister of Finance will tell in the very near future the real story of the Pension Fund. These kinds of things that have a tremendous impact on what we are doing here tonight and will be



doing in the future. So I really have to mention that when you talk about salary increases being built in and so on, there is a lot more to collective bargaining than simply salary increases. A lot more to it than that, and I take that responsibility seriously.

Now the Opposition House Leader spent so much of his time getting sidetracked that he did not really outline a number of questions (inaudible). I should say I was very pleased with the number of questions. He asked a lot of questions. He asked for detail. I was very pleased with it. I was starting to get a little bit worried a few minutes ago when he started getting political again, and went after the Minister of Finance and all of that. So I would not like to see us get into too much of that kind of thing. It is alright every now and then I suppose. But I just want to make the point that there were not a lot of questions asked in his last little foray into this debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

That is a reasonable observation by the President of Treasury Board. But I am sure he knows full well why. It was because of the provocative statements from the Minister of Finance. One cannot be expected to stand in this House and take that kind of nonsense from the Minister of Finance who has had a habit of putting his foot in his mouth time and time again. So that is the reason I was detracted.

But I say to the President of

Treasury Board, who I know is listening, that indeed I did ask some questions. I asked questions about the increases in the professional services vote, and the grants and subsidies vote to the Executive Administrative Support under Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Native Policy Support salary vote under Intergovernmental Affairs. But I say to the Government House Leader that he got so carried away in the last ten minute exchange that he neglected to answer my question at all. Not even with his normal and usual answer of: as far as I know, I think, I maybe, I am not quite sure, a little later, in another day or two. Even if he had answered that way he would be providing something. But he did not even answer those two little questions that I put. So, I am hesitant to raise too many questions in a ten minute segment. I am trying to keep them limited. I do not want to boggle the Minister's mind, so he will remember those two questions. I am sure he will try to answer them as time goes on.

But now, see, he has provoked me again in carrying on with my agenda here and the questions I want to ask by making all kinds of other comments, which I have to respond to. For example, he tried to defend his answer with respect to filling positions in the public service by saying, I cannot say we are going to do it. We are going to try to do it. In other words, we intend to do it. I would accept that, if that was his answer. But his answer was, I think we intend to fill one. That is my point. If he was more assertive in his answers and said, we will be, we intend to fill one of those vacant positions, we then that is the end of it. But he

keeps trying to wiggle his way around it. So we will wait to see what his final answer is.

I do want to ask him another serious question though. We have referenced several times now the elimination of that particular Division in Treasury Board, that used to put together the papers for Ministers on Treasury Board - I am not sure if the Minister can hear me? - this Division. I would like to know in the Estimates, usually you show what the cost was for last year compared to the budgeted figure. Then you show the estimated cost. Well, in the Division that has been eliminated I see no reference here to that Division. So what was the cost of that Division's operations last year? Where is it identified in the Estimates and the budgeted figures? It has to be shown somewhere. Perhaps, he could tell me that because I would like to know what the savings were, for example. Or, if there were any savings? Which I suspect there were not. Because he merely put the two or three people in other divisions down in his Department, but he likes to make it look they have eliminated the division and there are savings, but I tell you there are no savings, I bet. But anyway, and you cannot even compare it because they have eliminated that subhead. Now I do not know if that is legal. I do not know if you can do that. You have to show the revised figure in the Budget document for that division. Where is it? So the Government House Leader can tell me that. Secondly or thirdly, he mentioned about, I have been asking what the regular salary increase estimate is for the public service? in all of my questions. Well I only say to him he reason I have asked the

question is because, when I have asked the question about the increase in the salary vote for a particular division? In answering my question he simply said, oh, I think we intend to fill one vacant position or we might or I am not quite sure. But nowhere in any of his answers has he said we have allowed for a portion of that is allowed for the normal wage -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

No, he did not say it until the last time he got on his feet, because I provoked him enough and asked the questions enough. The only way to get the answer.

Now the next thing he has to do is tell us what percentage is in there of the increase? That is all we are asking. What have you budgeted for? What have you estimated for? 5 per cent? Is it 5 per cent to CPI or what? The inflation rate? What percentage have you estimated in your Budget? Now we know full well you might negotiated 20 per cent, and the public service will know, but I just want to know what portion is in there for salary increases?

And finally I will comment before I get to my questions on the teacher pension fund issue. And I just say to the President of Treasury Board that we on this side, certainly those of us who were in the previous Administration are well aware of the situation with the teachers pensions fund. As a matter of fact, sometime in the last couple of years, and the Minister of Labour would be aware of this for sure, we started a process of sitting down with the NFA to discuss -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
You did?

MR. SIMMS:

Oh, yes we did. - to discuss this situation that exists. And we are in the process I think it is fair to say of trying to get the parties together, form a joint committee to try to find a way to overcome this very serious problem of the teachers pension fund. Now why the teachers out there would have any impression that the fund was fully funded I do not know where that would have come from, because it certainly did not come from the previous Administration. As a matter of fact, I remember my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl when he was Minister of Finance about two years ago publicly making some statements about it that got everybody up in arms as I recollect. So I say to the President of Treasury Board it certainly did not come from the previous Administration, if anything we were accused of being too heavy handed in trying to resolve the matter.

But I do know that at least a couple of years ago and the Minister of Labour then was involved with the NTA in an executive position, I am not sure if she was president then or past president, but she would remember some meetings down in the Treasury Board Room where a whole group of people came together, the NTA, Treasury Board people, and Finance people, and we started a process of trying to find a way through a committee structure of some sort to see if this problem cannot be resolved. And I say to the President of Treasury Board I am personally convinced that this matter can be resolved. It is not an insurmountable problem. It is a big problem, but it is not an

insurmountable problem. And you know I think the problem can be solved. I think the NTA Executive is quite prepared to try to work out a formula. I mean it became a very dicey issue for us when we were negotiating the last round with the NTA in reaching an agreement on the thirty-and-out provision. I mean that was an agreement that we reached knowing full well that the pension fund issue was still a big problem. We knew that. But we felt that the teachers' demands at that time for the thirty-and-out provision was a reasonable demand and that is how we finally reached an agreement, by agreeing that it was reasonable demand.

So I say to the President of Treasury Board, you know, this matter is not much of a secret; the Minister of Finance is going to make it all public. But I mean it has been made public at least two years ago, I remember the previous Minister of Finance, one of them, the Member for Mount Pearl made a public statement with respect to the unfunded liability of the pension plan. So it is not new, but again not insurmountable.

If I can quickly move on to a couple of more items on the next page. I want to get through some of the detailed questions before we get into policy. But in addition to those answers I am expecting from the other couple of questions that he forgot to answer the last time up. The Regional Development Programs under Intergovernmental Affairs - 2.4.05 - in that whole subhead there are a number of items there - Salaries - I will quickly rundown through them, Salaries - a considerable increase from \$241,000 to \$337,000, almost \$100,000; almost 33 per cent increase. Regional

Development Programs - further down Transportation, it is increased from \$28,000 expenditure last year to \$123,000 this year, for Regional Development Programs for the staff, I guess, in that division. A sizable increase from \$28,000 up to \$123,000. Then you have Professional Services and it begs the question obviously, last year you spent \$4,800 and this year you have budgeted \$255,000. Surely that demands a full explanation of what that would be for? Professional Services, that kind of an increase.

And then right underneath that again under the infamous Purchased Services vote you have nothing spent last year, by that division, not a cent, this year they have estimated \$200,000, nearly \$250,000. So there has to be answers provided for those kinds of questions and I am sure the President of Treasury Board will endeavour to do it straightforwardly.

Moving down to the last two items on that page, the Hibernia Project, Monitoring and Implementation - we will get into to some discussion on that whole development as it we go on. But under the Professional Services head again, you will see last year \$950,000 spent after budgeting \$344,000. So it is a sizable increase over what was budgeted last year, \$344,000 up to \$950,000 as he will see, and that is a very serious question to be asked, why did it run over what you budgeted, what you estimated last year? Sizable \$344,000 up to \$950,000. And this year it is only \$200,000. I would assume there is not as much work to be done on the monitoring and implementation of the Hibernia project. But I would have thought there might be more.

So maybe he can do an explanation of that particular vote 2.4.07.05.

And finally the last item on that page, under Intergovernmental Affairs is the Constitutional Affairs Division of Intergovernmental Affairs. This is a brand new vote. There is nothing in there before. So obviously we need an explanation of the breakdown of that vote; \$167,000 in Salary. And my recollection of a public statement by the Premier was that he hired a constitutional adviser, Deborah Coyne and is her salary vote here or is her salary voted somewhere else in the Premier's Office? If not, whose salaries does \$167,000 cover, new salaries, because this is a new division, so presumably it is new people, I do not know. That is what we are asking.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

And this whole vote \$216,000 representing nearly a \$250,000 in a new vote on Constitutional Affairs. Does this cover solely the Meech Lake projected expenditures in this fiscal year? Is that what this vote is there for to cover a lot of the cost on the Meech Lake debate that the Premier is undertaking? And does the \$250,000 is that the only amount that is provided for expenses for the Meech Lake issue, for the Premier to bang the Meech Lake issue across this country from one end to the other? Or is Deborah Coyne's salary voted somewhere else so that therefore we have to add another \$60,000 or \$70,000. The Premier's Travel for Meech Lake travelling all across the country, where does his travel expenses for that, where are they located? Is it just under the

Premier's Travel vote? I mean those are the kinds of questions I would like for him to address when he gets to that particular subhead. And I intend to pursue that matter as we go on, obviously, as does the Leader of the Opposition. And others will have a lot of questions to ask on that particular topic. I think we will leave it at that for now and see what kind of response I can elicit from the Government House Leader on those few simple questions for now. I am trying to keep them fairly simple because he does not seem to be to prepared for detailed answers.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Chairman:

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The last will be first. I will start with the last question first. It had to do with the Constitutional Affairs Division newly created head in the budget. The salary figure quoted there \$167,900 includes one vacant position for about \$44,000 that we hope to fill, but we may not. It includes some temporary employees. The salary of temporary employees I believe to the tune of about \$15,000. It includes the salary of Deborah Coyne and is not \$70,000 or anything like that. Well, it is not even \$60,000. It is in the fifties, \$58,000 it will be next year. And it includes some more temporary help, about \$13,000. So that is that salary vote. So, the total expenses associated with the constitutional affairs is there.

The Premier's travel, it is

difficult to separate out Premier's travel simply because when he goes to the First Minister's Conference — is that regular travel related to other things or is it only to Meech Lake? These are questions that can be asked. All of the Premier's travel comes out of the Premier's travel is the answer to that question.

In terms of Hiberia monitoring there was an amount of \$344,500 budgeted originally. Things happened a little more expeditiously than we had planned last year. This amount in terms of professional services relates to consulting services, advised Government as to matters relating to offshore royalty regulation review. The proposed fiscal regime under the Atlantic Accord, offshore related corporate income tax, retail sales tax, other tax issues and that kind of thing many of which got resolved during the last fiscal year. And, as you know, we have now brought legislation into the House based upon that and soon, hopefully by the end of this spring session this legislation will be passed by the hon. House. So, that means that our needs next year then drop back a bit because the rush was on to get the financial things straightened out and now that that has been done and the legislation is prepared for the House, and now there is not as much demand in the coming year because a lot of the work has been done. So that is why it drops back to \$200,000.

In terms of the recent development programs under intergovernmental affairs secretariate, most of what you see there comes from the comprehensive Labrador agreement that I had the very distinct pleasure of signing part of it

some time ago. And you will see their Federal revenue offsetting the over \$900,000 to be spent, which means the net expenditure is higher, because of this comprehensive Labrador agreement, the Provincial expenditure is a fair amount higher. The salaries increase would be related to that, the administering of the programs, and the \$255,000 is entirely related to that. The \$200,000 is also something that - it is an estimate as to the amount of publishing and this kind of thing required under the Labrador agreement information brochures and that kind of thing. So, that is something that was envisioned under the comprehensive Labrador agreement and it is simply put in place.

There were a couple of other questions. I can easily answer them, but I am kind of - see, this comes directly under the Premier and I would want to give him an opportunity to talk about the intergovernmental affairs secretariate. It is his direct responsibility. Maybe I will just touch briefly on a couple of things that the Member mentioned.

First of all the difference between what was budgeted last year and what was spent, an amount of some \$60,000, relates to, again, some vacant positions that were kept vacant. However, we are hoping to fill these, and there was another one we did not plan to fill during the past year that was still listed as a position, I believe it was Director of Research Analysis and Native Policy, that hopefully we will fill during this coming year. That salary is about \$38,000, so again some vacant positions that have been kept on the books and we are now filling.

With regards to the Grants and Subsidies section, the grants and subsidies that come under Executive and Administrative Support, \$190,000 is a lot of money, relates to the Province's contribution to the operation of the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat, the New England Governors Eastern Canadian Premiers Secretariat, the Conference of Atlantic Premiers, and the Montagnais Project in Labrador.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Could you repeat those?

MR. BAKER:  
Okay. The Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs Conference Secretariat, that is the Ministers of the provinces, the New England Governors Eastern Canadian Premiers Secretariat, and the Conference for Atlantic Premiers.

MR. SIMMS:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
But we go to it and I am assuming there is going to be, or there must be going to be the Council of Atlantic Premiers.

MR. SIMMS:  
What is the cost on that particular item?

MR. BAKER:  
I do not have it broken down to items. I can find it out for the Member. And the Montagnais Project Group, the contribution there to the continuing existence of the Montagnais Group. We provide the salary money for support staff and stuff like that. This is not the basic funding for the Montagnais Group that has been provided by the

Federal Government. Professional Services, there is an increase of \$36,000 there and IGA intends to acquire some professional services related to some projects that they have in mind. They spend \$60,000 last year and they intend to spend \$96,000 this year. It is a normal kind of thing. They have certain projects in mind that they intend to do and they put aside a certain amount of money to do it. There is an increase in, I guess, the activity they planned to carry out.

MR. SIMMS:

Do you know what projects they intend to do?

MR. BAKER:

No. This is why I say that the IGA comes directly under the Premier and I am sure the Premier will be able to fill in the details on that one.

I think that is as much as I can answer concerning what you have already asked. As I say there are a number of policy questions I am very anxious to get into.

MR. SIMMS:

Pardon!

MR. BAKER:

There are a number of policy questions I am very anxious to get into, and maybe some of the details that the Opposition House Leader feels are missing will come out in the policy discussion.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WARREN:

Adjourn debate?

MR. SIMMS:

No, Mr. Chairman, I am not adjourning the debate, we are just getting started. I would like to pick up on the answer he provided under the Grants and Subsidies, the Executive Division of the Intergovernmental Affairs Department, and specifically ask him for the cost of being a participant, or a part of, the Council of Atlantic Premiers, which I did not even know existed? Perhaps the Government House Leader has let something out of the bag here, I am not quite sure. I recall the Premier decided he was going to attend the Council of Maritime Premiers meetings, but I was not aware that it was going to be a new Council of Atlantic Provinces Premiers, so I am not so sure if it was announced several times. Perhaps, I did miss it. Nevertheless when you ask the Premier to come to the House to respond to some of these questions that is one we would like him to elaborate on.

Secondly, under the question of Professional Services and the projects that IGA intends to undertake, I think, is the way he put it. Rather than be vague and say, this is a normal thing that goes on all the time and that kind of stuff, we would appreciate getting some specific answers to the questions. Because we would like to know, and I am sure the people of the Province would like to know, what kinds of projects Intergovernmental Affairs intend to pursue where they would need nearly a 50 per cent increase in funding from last year to hire people to do professional work for them? Maybe there is another Meech Lake project hidden under the rock somewhere that we are not aware of? Who knows? If we do not ask the questions and do not

get the answers, nobody will every know unless the Government wants to make him aware of it through NIS or something like that. So I would like him to ask the Premier to be forthcoming on those answers because we have twenty-odd hours left. If we do not get the answers, we will keep raising the question. Eventually, maybe somebody will pick up on it. Indeed, maybe we may be able to obtain the answer sometime, you never know.

Now, Mr. Chairman, just to follow up on some of the other answers he has given me. I want to get back to the vote on the Constitutional Affairs Division. He very kindly said, I think I have him correct, that total vote under salaries of \$167,000, not the total vote for the Division that is \$216,000, of which \$58,000 is for Deborah Coyne, or will be this year.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, that is a nice small salary, sixty grand.

In addition to that, I am not getting as much as the Minister is getting I can tell him that, but I deserve it.

Mr. Chairman, he also said -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
No, I am not. Oh, no. This is old, with your per diems and all this kind of stuff, but I do not get the per diems the same as the Members opposite. I get the \$18,000 or whatever it is or half the Minister's salary and that is it. I get no car. No car

allowance, no additional perks like that. Occasionally, I bump into the Member for Exploits and he is kind enough to buy me something when I see him on the road.

Anyway, not to be sidetracted again, \$167,000 for salaries of which he said \$58,000 is Deborah Coyne's. He said \$15,000 is in there for temporary employees, and then a little further down he said there is another \$13,000 for temporary employees. So I gather that to be \$28,000 or something for temporaries.

MR. BAKER:  
No, no. Vacant.

MR. SIMMS:  
Well, let me get it straight now. You did say \$58,000 for Deborah Coyne?

MR. BAKER:  
Yes.

MR. SIMMS:  
\$28,000 for temporary employees in total?

MR. BAKER:  
Yes, for temporary help.

MR. SIMMS:  
That adds up to \$86,000, right?

MR. BAKER:  
About there, yes.

MR. SIMMS:  
Then he said, and there is one vacant post which we now intend to try to fill. I think that is the way he puts it. Is that correct? I want to give the Minister an opportunity now to confirm or deny.

So that means that the vacant post, if that is what is left



there to be filled, is an \$81,000 position.

MR. BAKER:  
No.

MR. SIMMS:  
No. Well, then he has not given me all the information. Would he admit to that?

MR. BAKER:  
Yes.

MR. SIMMS:  
He would admit that he has not given me all the information. Well, in that case I will leave it and you will give me the information.

MR. BAKER:  
Something overlooked.

MR. SIMMS:  
There was something that you overlooked.

MR. BAKER:  
The vacant position is about \$45,000.

MR. SIMMS:  
Okay, so there is another \$40,000 or \$35,000.

MR. BAKER:  
It is \$37,000.

MR. SIMMS:  
Now \$37,000 for somebody else or something else? Another vacant position. So there are two vacant positions?

MR. BAKER:  
Yes.

MR. SIMMS:  
Okay.

Now, I ask him this question. This is a brand new Division,

never in existence before. How can there be two vacant positions that were not filled in a brand new Division?

MR. BAKER:  
That are not filled now and, obviously, the money is set aside to fill them sometime during the year.

MR. SIMMS:  
So they are new positions? Not vacant positions. They are two new positions that you intend to put into the Constitutional Affairs Division of Intergovernmental Affairs? Two brand new positions.

MR. BAKER:  
Actually, there are three in total of new positions that have been created. In IGA, I believe two of them are put in there and one somewhere else. They have not been filled. They have been advertised for but I do not believe they are going to be filled.

MR. SIMMS:  
The point I am getting at is under the Constitutional Affairs Division, which never existed before, and deals mainly with Meech Lake, no doubt, there now is two more new positions in addition to this Deborah Coyne, or whatever her name is, Deborah Coyne I think it is.

MR. BAKER:  
Yes, Deborah Coyne.

MR. SIMMS:  
In addition to her, there are two more new positions to fill out nearly \$250,000 in expenditure on this Meech Lake issue for the coming year. That is what it looks like. And that was my question, and that is my point. I

presume that is the answer. So I have the answer now and I thank the Minister for that.

Can I ask him also to fill in the missing blanks on the questions that I asked him earlier under Regional Development Programs; under Professional Services \$255,000, he will recall. There was \$4,800 last year now it is \$255,000, under Regional Development.

MR. BAKER:  
That is the Labrador Agreement.

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, but I want to specifically ask him a question on that? Those Professional Services expenditures, as well as the Professional Services expenditure of \$200,000 under the Hibernia Project Implementation and Monitoring. Under those two, which he answered, were for further studies or further work to be done and all that kind of stuff. I would like for him to provide me with, if he can do it, who has been contracted to do - which firms have been contracted to do any outside work associated under that vote?

MR. BAKER:  
I believe it is a firm in Alberta - Lougheed's law firm is one of them.

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, I would just like him to - Premier Lougheed's law firm, he is one of them.

MR. BAKER:  
They have been on the payroll for a number of years, you will remember.

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, but I am surprised to hear

that they are still on the payroll.

MR. BAKER:  
So am I.

MR. SIMMS:  
Maybe we are getting at something here. (Inaudible). Well I would like to pursue this now, since the Minister has raised it. It is very interesting when you consider the heat and the criticism that we took from that hon. crowd opposite.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
About what?

MR. SIMMS:  
About the employment of Peter Lougheed's firm to assist in the implementation and monitoring of the Hibernia project and that kind of thing. And the heat that we took, and the criticism we took and the attacks that were made on it by Members opposite. And now to hear from the President of Treasury Board, finally we have gotten one interesting answer. I asked him who are these contracts payable to for all of this professional service? And he now tells me that Peter Lougheed's law firm is still employed by the Government doing some of the fine work -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
A lifetime contract.

MR. SIMMS:  
Pardon?

MR. BAKER:  
I will answer it when you are finished.

MR. SIMMS:  
He did say it, did he not?

MR. BAKER:  
I will answer when you are ready.

MR. SIMMS:

I am not asking the question now, because I understood you answered it for me.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

But I do not want to get myself into any kind of a trap here. Did he say that part of that is going to Mr. Lougheed law firm? I am having no problem with that. But I mean he did say that? Hansard will I presume will record that he did say it. And he wants to comment on it further.

But what we have now discovered - and remember all of the criticism that we got from the hon. crowd opposite, the heat and the attacks for employing a firm that is renowned in this kind of work as we used to always say in our answers and explanation and they used to attack us and criticize us and condemn us. And it was Professional Services for the Hibernia Project Implementation and Monitoring. And I assumed, as did everybody else in the Province, I assumed that as soon as they came into power, Power Lougheed's law firm was kicked out. That is what we assumed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They are still not on retainer are they?

MR. SIMMS:

Well I asked - I was trying to get, you know, how hard it is to get an answer from the President of Treasury Board. I was probing a bit deeper and deeper and asked for more specifics, and finally I said who is getting the funding for these Professional Services contracts? And he said, 'It was a bunch of firms'. And I said,

'yes, but are they outside?' 'Peter Lougheed's law firm is one of them', he said. Well I must say I was taken aback and I am sure we will pursue it. I have to continue to ask some more burning questions now because you never know what else we might dig up. You do not know what might be under that rock, right. And not only is the Minister of Finance now one that is known to let the odd thing slip out. The President of Treasury Board is fitting into the same category, which are appreciative, of course, he is very forthcoming. I am not absolutely certain he intended to be. But I guess when I asked him to table the list of the contracts, he finally said, well I guess there is no way of, you know, keeping this information quiet.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Is he going to table the list?

MR. SIMMS:

I would ask him to talk to the Premier about tabling the list because his latest defense is that really this is Intergovernmental Affairs and the Premier is responsible. So he will be answering some of these questions. So I have asked him if he will break down these questions for the Premier? Table down these questions for the Premier. Table a list of a professional services contracts under Hibernia project and under the regional development programs those professional services expenditures. Oh, that is a disappointment, but we will get back to there. My colleague, the Leader of the Opposition may want to have a few words on this too depending on how forthcoming the President of Treasury Board is.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I might say to hon. Members Opposite that maybe the House Leader there needs a little bit of help and maybe if you did get in and help out a little bit his voice is starting to falter a little bit.

With regards to the professional services and a number of other items there, I am sure Members Opposite appreciate the fact that we perceive a need in certain areas for legal advice and for advice on complicated matters. And when the Opposition House Leader asked who is going to get this I said Peter Lougheed's firm, and we had a great laugh about that. And under the devastating cross examination that the Opposition House Leader is capable of doing the topic of Peter Lougheed did, in fact, come up. And Members Opposite know exactly what they did. They paid Peter Lougheed a sum of money personally.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How much? Half a million dollars I think. About half a million in the life of the contract.

MR. BAKER:

In the life of the contract. I do not know how much they paid him personally. I know that every quarter - Peter Lougheed, was it \$40,000 a quarter.

AN HON. MEMBER:

\$40,000 for the year.

MR. BAKER:

For the year? Oh my goodness!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Plus expenses.

MR. BAKER:

Plus expenses, \$40,000. I believe we were told, as a matter of fact, they were going to get a report on

his activities and so on, but we never did get any such report.

In addition to paying Peter Lougheed, who badly needed a bit of money I suppose. He retired as Premier of Alberta, he badly needed the money. In addition to that they retained Peter's Law Firm. The Law Firm he was working in. I suppose he was getting some income out of the Law Firm as well. I do not know how lawyers operate. They are very mysterious creatures to me, but I assume that he took some money out of the firm as part of his contribution to making sure that they got this contract for the Newfoundland Government. And hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps millions of dollars, over three or four years went in that direction towards Peter Lougheed and Peter Lougheed's Law Firm.

Then the telling statement comes, the Opposition House Leader says, 'I thought as soon as you fellows got in they would get kicked out.' Now, Mr. Chairman, that is unfair. That is totally unfair. We do not operate that way. We continued to make not as much use as the Members opposite made, but we continued to make some limited use of the expertise that was available there, and we made some use of local lawyers too. The Minister of Health made reference to the garden type of variety of lawyers, and I believe the comment was made at that time that there were lots of the garden type variety of lawyers in Newfoundland, but you could not get anything beyond the ordinary common garden variety of lawyers around here. And we had to go to Alberta to find something that was above - I do not know. What kind of a lawyer would that be?

AN HON. MEMBER:

A cultivated lawyer.

MR. BAKER:

Would that be a green house lawyer as opposed to the common garden variety? A cultivated green house lawyer.

But, Mr. Chairman, when we took over the Government, we did not automatically cancel everything that was associated with this Government. That is not right. You cannot do that. We still made use of expertise if it was there, but not as much use as Members Opposite made. And what I am getting around to is this, that I cannot now and the Premier cannot now, and no Member of this Government or no Member of the civil service can now say who is going to get the money that is allocated for professional services. That would indicate that we have our minds made up and that we just grab the money and shove it over to somebody. We do not do it that way. A lot of professional services you have to go and see who can provide it. We have to estimate at the beginning of the year how much we are going to spend on these purchase services and so on, but we have to see who can provide it first. We do not automatically say, 'we got some buddies out there that need a few hundred thousand dollars so we are going to give to them and then put it in.' What we do is we decide what need is there and then we go and see who can fulfill that need. Not only that but we will try and do it cheaper than what we have in here. So, I quite honestly, cannot provide you with detailed lists of who is going to get all that money, because an awful lot of it has yet to be put out into the private sector to determine who can do the best

job. If you want to go back and delve into last year I am sure I could very easily provide you with a list of who got the money from last year, but I cannot tell you who is going to get it for next year. That is a next to impossible task. Unless the Opposition House Leader, or one of the hon. Members is going to fill in for him for awhile, and get all irate about not being able to have that list provided and so on, I just want to tell you up front we cannot provide, in most cases, lists of people who are going to get that money, because we do not know who is going to get it. It is as simple as that. Some of it are cases where proposals are invited, some of it goes out on tender, and all this kind of thing. Things will be revealed in due course, and I can guarantee you that the money will be spent in the most efficient and most productive manner that we can spend that money in. We will make mistakes. I do not say we will be infallible but by and large that money will be spent in the best way possible to get the job done.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

What is the Member for Carbonear complaining about now, Mr. Chairman? Does he want to say a few words? If he does he can stand, either now or when I am finished, and talk about contracts, people's names, or whatever he is saying. We cannot make any sense out of it anyway, Mr. Chairman.

First I want to say a few words about the estimates that we are debating here tonight, and the process we are using to debate them. The Government, Mr. Chairman, has made up its mind that they will do whatever it is they have to do to get this House closed as quickly as possible. This is the first time since the rules of this House were revised in 1979 that we have had Estimates Debates by having night sessions, as far as I know, and look what is happening. Look up over me in the press gallery tonight. The strategy behind this, Mr. Chairman, is to try and get those estimates debated without there being any reporting of the estimates, Mr. Chairman. That is what the Government is up to. You can ah, moan, groan, and do all you like, but that is what the Government is up to, Mr. Chairman. There is one person up there at the moment and there are others out browsing around. The press have been up there three hours already today. I came to Fisheries Estimates the other night and there were two people here, I believe, and from talking to my colleagues that is the way it goes. Now, this will get worse because it is not just one night, tonight. What the Government House Leader has decided to do is three nights a week now, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday night. The Government House Leader is determined to hold three hour sittings and that is a deliberate attempt by the Government -

AN HON. MEMBER:

It may be Friday afternoon.

MR. RIDEOUT:

It may be Friday afternoon. I remember back in the old days with Alec Hickman who managed the House so badly that he used to have to

meet in the morning, the afternoon and the night, four days a week, Mr. Chairman. This comes down to House management and the Government House Leader had badly managed the time of this House, Mr. Chairman. Now, what he is attempting to do, and they can try to shout and groan all they like but it is going to come out.

Mr. Chairman, I distinctly heard the word 'liar' and I would ask you to ask the Member to withdraw it. Mr. Chairman, if the rules are going to apply they apply on both sides of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I did not hear it.

MR. RIDEOUT:

The Member knows who it was, Mr. Chairman.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Mr. Chairman, there was a reference to the fact that the previous speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, had used the phrase and called a Member of this House a liar on the evening news cast. That was the reference, and no reference to him as being a liar in his comments.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Okay. Because I have already, Mr. Chairman, been the recipient of the same term from the individual that I called it to tonight, outside the House, not in the House, outside the House. I have already been called a liar by that same individual, Mr. Chairman, so I have no apologies to make because I think what I said outside the House I cannot say in the House but I think what I said outside the House was the absolute truth. I believe it was the absolute truth. I have already been the recipient of that,

Mr. Speaker, from that same person. So, Mr. Premier, put it in your pipe and smoke it, Sir, I would say to you.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to come back to the process of what we are doing here now. This is the first time since the rules were revised or reformed in 1979 that there has been a concentrated effort to do Estimates during the nights. The first time, no Member of the present Government who were in Opposition, can get up and recall us doing Estimates during the night in Committee of the Whole. The last time I remember, Mr. Speaker, was in the period between 1975 and 1979.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

I will tell you what you crowd, as the hon. Minister says, used to do, Mr. Speaker, we stuck it out until they were done. We stuck it out in our seats in the regular sitting of the House until they were done in the broad light of day with the press here, Mr. Speaker. All of them up there for their three hour period.

This Government, Mr. Speaker, does not have the backbone to do it. The House is never opened. It had to be opened to do the Budgets and pass the Estimates. And it was, Mr. Speaker. And we stayed here until the Estimates were done without a night sitting, Mr. Speaker. Without one, Mr. Speaker. And, this Government is so lacking in the backbone, this House Leader - Mr. Speaker, you can shout all you like, I have the mike and I will be heard. Mr. Speaker, this Government, when they were in Opposition knew that we stayed here in our seats and

did the Estimates in the broad light of day, are now trying to ram Estimates through this House because they want to get it closed before the end of May. They want to get the House closed before the end of May. This hon. crowd, Mr. Speaker, who preached so much about openness and having the House open, this hon. crowd now wants the House closed.

Can you imagine after one year in Office, after one year in Office the Government House Leader came to us today without any notice and said we are going to start three nights a week now debating those Estimates. Starting tonight. Twenty-four hours now, Mr. Speaker, nine hours a week, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Nine hours this week, nine hours next week, eighteen hours. The press will be worn down they will not be interested, they will not be reporting what the Government House Leader got on here with tonight, do not know the answers, cannot give the response. They will not report, Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy contained in the Government House Leader's response tonight that Peter Lougheed's Firm is still on the Government payroll. They probably will not report that Mr. Speaker. They are too tired to listen to the revelation coming from the Government House Leader. That is the purpose, Mr. Speaker, of those eighteen hours this week and next week to try to do it under the covers. To try to do it in the dark, Mr. Speaker. It has never been done since the rules of this House were revised to send Estimates to the Committee stage in 1979. Not one hon. gentlemen over there, who were over here from 1979 to 1989 can say that it was done.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:  
We did the whole House in 1979.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:  
What rules? Mr. Speaker, will somebody cool the hon. gentleman down. The rules to reform the rules of this House and to put Estimates to Committee were introduced in 1979. You were here by a previous Administration. You were here.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Pardon?

MR. SIMMS:  
No, you did not. Mr. Jamieson agreed.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Mr. Jamieson agreed, it was unanimous.

MR. SIMMS:  
It was unanimous.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
I tell you the one person who objected -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

MR. RIDEOUT:  
- was the former Member for LaPoile. And the hon. gentleman for Windsor - Buchans was in this House then, in the Liberal caucus and he did not object, Mr. Speaker. I was here in the

Liberal caucus in 1979, and I did not object, Mr. Chairman. And neither did - well we are the only two, I guess, well Mr. Hodder, the Member for Port au Port. He was here in 1979. He did not object. Mr. Chairman, was here in 1979, and he did not object. It was done unanimously with the except of the former Member for LaPoile. So the Minister of Forestry, Mr. Speaker, has struck out again. He totally struck out again because he supported it.

MR. SIMMS:  
The Minister of Finance is rubbing off on them all, open their mouths and (inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:  
And what we agreed at that time, Mr. Chairman, and it is now in our rules, in the Standing Orders, is that the Estimates would go out for fifteen sitting days and then they would come back and Executive Council and Treasury Board and a couple of others would be done here like we are doing them now. That was the agreement. That is what the rules contained. And every year since that, Mr. Chairman, they were done in a normal sitting day of the House. Every day they were done in a normal sitting day of the House. But this year, Mr. Chairman, because the Government House Leader cannot manage properly the time of the House he has to try to wear down the press. He has to try and do it, Mr. Chairman, in extra sitting hours.

MR. EFFORD:  
Wear down the press! You will never wear down the press that way. They are alive.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
They survived you in Opposition. So that is true. There is a lot



to be said for that. Because they survived your night crawling. They survived your wandering around in the dark. They survived your crawling around in the buildings down in Pleasantville, and then turning up at the stations one and two o'clock in the morning. The Member ought to know, Mr. Chairman, of what he speaks, because he is an expert at it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. RIDEOUT:

He is an expert at it, Mr. Chairman. A real expert.

MR. SIMMS:

The old night crawler himself.

MR. RIDEOUT:

The point I am making, Mr. Chairman, is that the Government House Leader has departed from what is the norm in this Legislature over the last ten years.

MR. SIMMS:

Absolutely! Absolutely!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, he admits it. And he has done it, Mr. Chairman, for a reason. And the reason is he is not prepared, him and his colleagues are not prepared to sit in their seats until the middle of June or the last of June or the first week in July if that is what it takes to do those estimates. They want to get out of here. Well the Government House Leader has made it clear, why else are we going to do nine sitting hours extra this week and nine sitting hours extra next week. Why are we going to do it? Sure there is lots of work to do and we will do the work. But can't we do it on a

regular, normal routine day? That is the way it has been done for the last ten years, Mr. Chairman, but that is the way it has been done. And the Government House Leader cannot manage the time of the House.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What do you call a regular day?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Oh, I call a regular day anywhere from six o'clock in the morning to eleven o'clock or twelve o'clock at night, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order!

MR. RIDEOUT:

But a regular day for this House is from two o'clock in the afternoon until five.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is elapsed.

MR. RIDEOUT:

With full press gallery here, Mr. Chairman. With the public galleries here if they want to be. This is cover up. This is to try to get out of here, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SIMMS:

Camouflage.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. BAKER:

Just a couple of very brief comments, Mr. Chairman, on the speech by the Leader of the Opposition. It is quite a change from what we have been experiencing from the last couple of hours. First of all, what we heard was the Leader of the Opposition complaining about the House being open. And he is referring to what is normally done and what is normally being done during the last ten years. And I agree this is a change, a departure from what normally been done during the last ten years. And I will inform him -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

- that there are many other changes in store as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

One of them - one of the changes is that we have been in office for a twelve month period. We have been in office for a twelve month period. During that twelve month period we have dealt with so far in this House forty pieces of legislation. We have another forty-eight pieces on the Order Paper at the present time and the House has been open more in that twelve month period than in any other twelve month period in the last ten years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Now, Mr. Chairman. We have heard an awful lot of talk from the Leader of the Opposition and some other Members Opposite about

hidden motives. Hidden motives that we are doing things for a reason, I mean on simple little matters. He talked about our hidden motives for having these night sittings, and the motive is simply that we would like to get the budget finished to get on with this legislative program. And we have a lot of House sitting to be done yet before we can close in the spring session, and we will have lot of sitting to be done in the fall to get finished before Christmas. My job is to manage the affairs of this House so that we can get through these things, and I intend to do that. And the reason that it has never had to be done before is that there has never been the legislative program before that is here now. Never, never ever been the legislative program before this House that is here now.

Mr. Chairman, I know they do not like it. Obviously they do not like it, and that is understandable. Any departure from what they have been doing for seventeen years they do not like. It is as simple as that. And they try to put us into their mold. Some simple little things, you know, attributing motives. It was on Friday and I stood up and wished them the best of luck in their meeting over the weekend. And right away the comment came back, that this was some kind of a snide remark and I meant all kinds of innuendoes by saying that. And I assured hon. Members Opposite that I was sincere, I did wish them the best of luck because I see the value - I sat there for four years - I see the value to the democratic process of an Opposition. I see that value and I did wish you the best of luck over the weekend. And there was no alterier motive, it was

sincerely meant. And every single time that we try to do something like that, and this is an example, all of a sudden they start looking for motives. I say to Members Opposite, why don't you come out of the fog you are in and look at things in a new light.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
(Inaudible).

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Say that again with a smile.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Say that again.

MR. BAKER:  
It is a nice smile. So, come out of the fog. Realize what we are here for. We have a lot of things to do, let's get on and do them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
Absolutely. I agree that we will stay here until we have them done. We certainly will. It is really amazing. This is coming from Members who sat over here and would have a few days in the spring and no session in the fall and would try to get this place - would not open the House until pretty close to the end of March, then there would be a big rush on for interim supply. They could never get their interim supply bill in until maybe a day or two before the end of the month. You know, that is the kind of thing we experienced. And then, of course, we would be until the middle of the summer before we closed, but when we closed we would be closed for a long, long time. That is not going to happen anymore. We are having spring and fall sittings, we are going to keep the House open a lot, we are going to

carry on the business of this Province in a orderly manner and we are going to have some night sittings. I do not mind them, I do not know why you are complaining about them. We are going to have some night sittings. It is our duty to do these things, to make sure that the legislation has ample discussion. We are the ones who brought in the Legislative Review Committee so that Members of the Opposition could have adequate time to look at legislation and so on, and to add to the debate a bit more than I was able to do when I was sitting opposite. If we make a change they say, oh, we recommended that. It is funny, they recommended all these things in their last one month in office and did not have time to bring them in. They were not there long enough. In their last month in office they recommended all those marvelous changes and never brought them in. They did not have time. It is amazing the amount of foresight that was over there, the amount of knowledge, the amount of sensibleness that was over there, it is absolutely amazing. Hindsight is twenty/twenty is it not? Mr. Chairman, we have a long time left for the estimates and we will continue until we get an adequate examination done. I repeat again that I was pleased with what was happening. We are getting questions asked, and I did not like some of the questions, maybe. We are getting answers given and the Member opposite did not like some of the answers, that is fine, and as time goes on there will be more specific answers given, but I hate to see it degenerate into just a simple political chemozzle.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think I would be remiss in my responsibilities if I did not address some of the stuff that the Government House Leader threw up over the last few moments, material that is absolute rubbish and totally misleading. I am sure when he has time to sleep on it tonight he will probably apologize or something because that is his approach to things. To suggest, for example, that this House did not sit very often. I have the statistics for him if he wants them. The reality is that their Legislature, there was a quirk in 1989, nobody is denying that, we did not open for awhile because of the Leadership Convention and all that kind of thing, but prior to that, up until that point in time, basically, the Newfoundland Legislature sat more days than any other Legislature in Atlantic Canada, point number one. If you are going to compare fairly you compare to Atlantic Canada. That is the normal comparison. The Minister of Finance would not know but, I think, most other people would. Comparatively speaking, for the last few years before 1989, this Legislature sat more days than other Legislatures in Atlantic Canada, so it is not an unreasonable comparison. Prior to 1985, up to 1984, I think it was, from 1979 to 1984, perhaps it was later.

AN HON. MEMBER:

While Leo Barry was Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, when Mr. Barry was Leader of

the Opposition, up until that time, whatever time that was. Does anybody remember? Up until 1986, anyway, this Legislature, under our administration, had spring and fall sessions for seven or eight years in a row, started in 1979 and brought in by then Premier Brian Peckford as part of his program. We had fall sittings in the fall, and in the spring we had spring sittings, obviously, for seven or eight years, until an occasion arose sometime in 1986, or whatever it was, when the then Leader of the Opposition kicked up a big stink and delayed the House proceedings, forced the House to sit all night or something, as I recollect, because they were not contributing anything at all to the debates that were going on, or anything of that nature, and a decision was then taken that fall sittings were not going to be held for another while. So, to give the impression there never was is not accurate. It was this former administration, in fact, that brought in fall sittings. That is point number two. Point number one was the fact that we do sit and we did sit longer than other Atlantic Canadian jurisdictions, and indeed longer than some of the other provinces outside of Atlantic Canada, I might add. I might also say that the legislative program that this administration, the previous administration use to bring in was quite a bit more comprehensive than the forty pieces of legislation that the Government House Leader brags about that they brought in in their first year. I mean, he even has to laugh at it. The forty pieces of legislation brought in last year, I mean was to change the Department of Public Works to the Department of Works, Services and Transportation. That was a

major one. That was a major item. I can go through some more. To change the Department of Environment to the Department of Environment and Lands; to change the Department of Municipal Affairs to the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, I mean that is three out of the forty right off the bat, Forestry changed to Forestry and Agriculture. There are all kinds of little kinds of odds and ends. But out of the forty pieces of legislation brought in, I doubt if they put them all in the House in one day, we could have passed them all in one day as a matter of fact, there was that much meat in them.

I know the Government House Leader is trying to spur his troops on and try to get them built up and ready to yell and cheer and all that kind of stuff when they get attacked and that is part of his responsibility too as the House Leader. He has to spur the troops on, build up their spirits, keep up their spirits, because I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, I do not think there is one person on that side of the House who wants to sit either but this is a forced matter obviously by those who make the decisions in that caucus and that Government. We all know who that is. I should not say those who make the decisions, the person who makes the decisions in that Government and caucus. So, let us forget all that nonsense, do not try to mislead the public and the press into thinking something else other than what the facts are. If you want to take us on on the facts that is fine, that is fair ball, but none of that kind of stuff because it is not fair, it is not reasonable.

What the Leader of the Opposition

was pointing out, is that there never has been an opportunity such as the one that the Government has put forth today, when the Estimates of Government Departments that were not referred out to the Estimates Committee were dealt with in the House in night sittings, forced night sittings. That is what we are talking about, not by agreement, these are forced night sittings. We have not agreed to them at all. That has never occurred before.

Now the only difference we have, Mr. Chairman, is that in the past because of the number of Departments in the past and the number of Departments now, there is a difference of, I think it is, six hours. It used to be about forty-five hours allocated for Departments that were sent out to the Estimates Committees, and now because there are less Departments that amount has dropped down to thirty-nine or something. Thirty-nine, the Government House Leader confirms it. So there is a difference of six hours. So we have six more hours than we had before in any other year, in the past, to deal with Department's Estimates in the House that always were covered in the House, six hours difference. No more, no less.

Because we properly managed our legislative agenda and the House program for the Government in our days, we did not have to have night sittings. So for the sake of an extra six hours the Government House Leader is trying somehow to suggest that all of this time is left over and we have to do it. That is not true. It is not fair. It is a deliberate decision by the Government for whatever their reasoning is, the

Leader of the Opposition suggests one reason there may be others. But I can say to him I do not really think that by doing this, forcing Members of the House to sit six nights, three hours a night for next two weeks, depriving them of their opportunities to meet with their constituents on very serious matters, I might add, particularly the fishery crisis at the moment. It deprives the Members of their opportunities to be in the House and ask questions, it deprives them of that opportunity because they have to attend to constituency matters which most Members would do in the evenings and on weekends. So it deprives Members of that opportunity. And, I think that is wrong. I think it wrong and unfair to Members who are elected to represent people in this House. But, unfortunately, that is what the Government has decided. I think it is unfortunate because I do not think this little maneuver, this little strategic maneuver will make one iota of difference as to the length or duration of this particular spring legislative session. It will go on until Members of the House have decided they are satisfied with the amount of debate that has gone on and they are prepared to get back to their constituencies. But by sitting six nights, for three hours a night is not going to make one bit of difference to that decision. I can assure the Government House Leader of that.

The point is, Members are being deprived of their opportunity to be in the House, because many Members have commitments with their constituents, many Members and that is unfortunate, particularly, when you are running through budgetary estimates.

Now, Mr. Chairman, do I have some time a couple of minutes or what?

MR. SPEAKER:  
Three minutes.

MR. SIMMS:  
I wanted to raise once again the issue of Newfoundland Information Services. I wanted to specifically ask a couple of detailed questions and then I want to talk about policy. Under the Newfoundland Information Services on page 24, you have an increase in the salaries from \$101,000 up to \$146,000, okay. You have an increase in Transportation from \$1,800 up to \$25,000; and you have an increase in Professional Services again from \$4,500 up to \$30,000; and you have an increase in Purchased Services from \$60,000 up to \$120,000; an overall increase in the vote for Information Services from \$168,000 up to this year \$335,000, approximately a 100 per cent increase in the cost of operation for Newfoundland Information Services. And that comes from a group of people who for years on this side of the House launched vicious attacks on this Government, attack this Government consistently, because of the use of Newfoundland Information Services. And employed, if they did not say, and I am not sure they did not say it, I would not be surprised that they have said it, if you research Hansard, you will probably find somebody over there who said, they should get rid of it, get rid of it. But they certainly applied that we should get rid of it. But what have they done?

Not only have they not gotten rid of it to fulfill commitments made by Members opposite from time to time, they have doubled the cost

of Newfoundland Information Services. So that is one point and those questions that I asked about the increase in votes, I would like for the President of the Council to respond to when he gets a chance to respond, the specific reasons for the increases.

There is also a new additional person hired, her position approved, a publication officer position I believe is the position that was never there before. So there is another position added to Newfoundland Information Services. And all of this I say from a Government who used to criticize us for it.

Secondly, and the other important point that I want to raise again, I asked the Minister about it earlier. I did not get a respond on it. But I would like to know why Newfoundland Information Services and the operation of it was transferred from the Department of Public Works, a non-partisan department, to the most political arm of Government obviously, well the most politically arm of Government is the Executive Council, everybody knows that. It is the Premier and Judy Foote, the Press Officer, whatever she is called. I mean that is the Executive Council. So I said why -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Pardon?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
The Premier's Office is under the Executive Council.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Oh, oh!

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. SIMMS:  
The President of the Council says, the Premier's Office is not the Executive Council. I submit to him that the Premier's Office is the Executive Council. And he knows what I am saying. I mean the Premier runs the Government. The Executive Council services the Premier, as well as the Government. The Premier is the head of the Government. So do not say Executive Council has nothing to do with the Premier or not the Premier, that is silliness.

So NIS was transferred from Public Works, a Government Department to the most political arm of Government which is Executive Council. It is the Government. Executive Council is the Cabinet and the head of the Cabinet and the head of the Government is the Premier. So now the Premier has his finger on the button as it relates to Newfoundland Information Services. The same arm that he criticizes us for and accused us of abusing in the past in a political fashion.

Now I wonder why they have made that transfer? I wonder why? I asked the Minister about that earlier? He did not respond. He did not give me an answer. He may try to get up now and I predict he will get up and say, he will use the terms that he has been used to saying all night long in answering all my other questions, as far as I know, or I think we intend, or I am not quite sure, or a little later, or in a day or two I will

provide you, those kinds of answers what I have been getting all night and I will be interesting in hearing what the answer is in respect to my question on Newfoundland Information Services. I have run over my time, so I will see what the response is.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
The hon. Opposition House Leader.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
No you do not have to have an intervening speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:  
Go back over to your office, boy! Go back over to the office. Go check out the blackheaded budworms.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
He gave everybody a chance, and nobody stood.

MR. SIMMS:  
Well he should take out the gum from his mouth, and he should sit in his own seat if he is going to intervene and interject, because if he is not going to do all that stuff, then he should go into the common room, take the Minister of Finance with him and have a cup of coffee, because the two of them would make a great conversation piece, I would say.

MS COWAN:  
You are very touchy now and then, aren't you?

MR. SIMMS:

Oh, I am very touchy.

MS COWAN:  
The leader upstaged you (inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
The leader upstaged me (inaudible), yes. Yes, boys, the leader took away everything. Shockin' isn't it? Isn't that terrible?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Scandalous, isn't it?

MR. SIMMS:  
Now, this is leader number one, right?

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Yes, and leader number two.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible) results of their (inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
What results? There were no results.

Mr. Chairman, I say to you, there is only one party in this Province that has a problem with leadership, I can tell you, and it ain't sitting on this side of the House!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:  
You will not hear about any knives.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible) three to four years.

MR. SIMMS:  
We will see, Mr. Chairman, as time goes on. We have seen it all before. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, I confess, we were part of all of it before, responding



exactly the same way as they are responding now, howling and yowling and yelling and interjecting, feeling pretty cocky, pretty confident. But how soon it can change, let me tell the Members opposite! How quickly it can change!

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible)!

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, exactly.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
I just said, if the Member was listening, that I know full well, we all know very well how quickly the tide can turn. So I just mention that to Members.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, and the Member opposite, his party had twenty-three years in power, so I do not know why he jabbars on.

MR. BAKER:  
On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:  
A brief point of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please! Order, please!

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:  
My understanding is that there really should have been an intervening speaker, but by leave

in the usual spirit of co-operation, we do not mind. I just want to make the point that I believe that is what should have been, but, by leave, the Member can go on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Oh, oh!

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
Order, please! Order, please!

When nobody on the Government Members' side rose then, of course, we had to go to the speaker on the other side. Standing Orders do call for an intervening speaker.

MR. BAKER:  
Yes.

MR. SIMMS:  
Yes, I understand that.

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

MR. SIMMS:  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

That is right, Mr. Chairman. I mean, the point was that when the time came, the ten minutes - normal rules of debate call for an intervening speaker. These are not normal rules of debate, obviously, but, if nobody stands on the Government side to speak, then the Chair recognizes whoever stood. So, I mean, it is a very moot point, but you would almost believe that the Government House Leader has been sitting too close to the Premier, getting caught up in all this -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible) regular debate, too.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) if nobody else stands.

MR. SIMMS:

That is right, if nobody else stands, obviously, somebody on this side will stand. Anyway, that is too silly a point to talk about. The hon. the President of the Council obviously interjected on a point of order to take me off track just when I was getting into full flight, getting ready to move. He said, 'The only way to stop him now from this devastating attack is to get up on a point of order,' and a silly point of order it was! 'There has to be an intervening speaker. I want to tell the Member there should be an intervening speaker.' Well, there was no intervening speaker, because nobody on that side is prepared to stand and respond to or answer questions that are put to them tonight in the Estimates debate. That is what is wrong.

I would love to hear the Minister of Forestry get up. Perhaps he would like to get up, would he? I would be happy to sit down and let him get up for ten minutes.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Oh, yes, when the time comes, in twenty-four hours time, I suppose.

MR. DECKER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Well, boy, if there is anyone who would know that, it is an expert like yourself, on how to make fools.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Health, now, can settle down and relax and I will stand as long as I want and speak for as long as I

want, and interjections and interruptions are not going to make one little bit of difference, particularly from a small-minded person like the Minister of Health. It is not going to make one bit of difference.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

I want the Government House Leader again, as I said, to explain to us why the Newfoundland Information Services system was moved from the Department of Public Works to Executive Council.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Well, that is what I was about to get up for, and that is the reason I got up again. I do not understand why the Minister would even respond to that question, along with the other questions that are still on hold. Why would he not stand and respond to that kind of question, a straightforward, clearly put, succinctly put question? Why did you transfer Newfoundland Information Services from Public Works to the Executive Council, the political arm of Government? And why has the budget for Newfoundland Information Services, that same operation which you criticized so frequently and which you attacked so frequently in the past when you were in Opposition, why did you double its budget from \$168,000 to \$335,000? That is the question. I do not want to confuse it, I do not want to change it, I do not want to cloud it, I do not want to camouflage it anymore by asking more questions. I want to get an answer to that question I say to the President of

Treasury Board, and I hope he will provide us with a straight forward answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN:  
1.1.01 carried?

MR. SIMMS:  
No, Mr. Chairman, not a chance.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Mr. Chairman, if the President of Treasury Board is going to sit over there and sweat and sulk and not get into his seat and provide information that my colleague is asking for, then no. The head whatever it is is not going to pass. Not a change, Mr. Chairman.

Now, for two ten minute sessions consecutively the Government House Leader has sat there and has not attempted to answer the question that has been posed to him by my colleague on Newfoundland Information Services in particular and a couple of other issues -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Mr. Loughheed's law firm.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
- the Loughheed law firm, that he has been raising. Now, first of all, Mr. Chairman, let me say this. The Opposition House Leader is our spokesperson for Treasury Board, and the President of Executive Council. And the vast majority of the estimates that we will be discussing over the next twenty something hours will fall under the direct responsibility of the President of Treasury Board, or in his other capacity as President of the Executive Council, or in his other capacity as Minister responsible for the

status of women. And my colleague, who is shadow in Treasury Board, and is shadow in the President of the Council will have all the time he wants, Mr. Chairman, without anybody over here attempting to upstage him or take away time from him. He can have the whole twenty-four hours, or to muzzle him, Mr. Chairman. We have every confidence, Mr. Chairman, in our House Leader, the Member for Grand Falls. We do not have to try to prop him up like you got to do with the Minister of Finance. We do not have to try to slip him notes and say talk about this or talk about something else. He has the competence, Mr. Chairman, and the experience to talk about anything. And he has proven it, Mr. Chairman, he has proven it again tonight, and he will continue -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible) should not be Leader number two, he should be Leader number one.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Maybe he will be leader number one, Mr. Chairman, who knows. I can tell you who will never be Leader number one, Mr. Chairman, and that is the Minister of Social Services. It might be the President of Treasury Board who came second the last time. Unfortunately in a Leadership race Leader number two over there, Mr. Chairman - Unfortunately in a leadership race somebody got to be leader number two, but the Minister of Social Services will never be leader number three or number four or number five or number six. He will never lead anything, Mr. Chairman, but leader number two on the Government's side might. Now, leader number two on the Government's side knows all about disposing leaders, so I

hope my friend here, the Opposition House Leader doesn't speak to often to the Government House Leader behind the curtain because it is then I might start to get suspicious.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He tried to pass me a knife the other day.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I have to go to my District on Thursday night. And the last time I recall an Opposition leader having to go away on public business - when he went to Boston I happened to be down there as Minister of Fisheries at the time. He went away on public business and when he came back he did not have anything to lead. So the present Government House Leader knows all about those coups. He knows how to engineer them, he knows how to put them together.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The ring leader over there, wasn't it the Minister of Health?

MR. RIDEOUT:

The Minister of Health was the ring leader.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The ring leader, yes.

MR. RIDEOUT:

The Minister of Social Services was one of the ring leaders, the present Minister of Development, the present Minister of Fisheries, they were all in it together as I understand it. As a matter of fact I should be fair to the President of Treasury Board. I believe he was the last recruit. And if he had not come on board -

AN HON. MEMBER:

He was not sure if he was going to

run for leadership I suppose.

MR. RIDEOUT:

That is right. If he had not come on board, I have been told by people who were inside of the caucus at the time, that they don't think the coup would have worked. He was the key to bringing it off. He was the key to putting it together.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

(Inaudible).

AN HON. MEMBER:

How are you Brutus? They used to call him B.T. Baker, now we call him Brutus Baker.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Let the Minister of Social Services continue to wait and we will see, Mr. Chairman. I do not care who is after me. That is the difference between me and the Minister of Social Services. I do not care. Leo did care though, Mr. Chairman. You should have heard some of the choice words, Mr. Chairman, and some of them were said on the public record and they are still there. Mr. Justice Barry, I should call him, I suppose, certainly did care. I want it to be known, I do not care. If the party do not want me I do not want to be here, Mr. Chairman. It is just as simple as that.

MR. SIMMS:

If I were on that side I would not want to appear before Mr. Justice Barry.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I would advise no Member over there, particularly those who were here during the coup, to ever appear before Mr. Justice Barry or it will be justice undone, or maybe justice finally done, I

would say, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DECKER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
You will never go for sure.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
No, the Minister of Health will never. I happened to run into Mr. Justice Barry at a social function a few nights ago, a week or so ago.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
In Marystown.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
No, it was not in Marystown. As a judge he would not be allowed to attend. I feel that he would be more comfortable attending one of our functions right now than he would be attending a function on the other side of the House, but the point is, I do not care. I could not care less, Mr. Chairman. I am comfortable. The caucus is solid, the party is solid, and if that changes tomorrow, and I am saying this in a public forum, if that changes tomorrow I could not care less. I have been here for fifteen years and by the time the next election rolls around I will have been here, if we go three or four years, I will have been here for seventeen or eighteen years. I hope I have made some kind of a contribution to public life in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:  
I have served in two political parties. I make no bones about that. That is a public fact. I rose through the ranks of the party I am presently in to become Leader of the party and the

Premier of the Province. I have no more ambition. I do not care. I really do not. If the party does not want me that is fine with me, Mr. Chairman. I want to be Premier again. I fully expect I will be Premier again and I fully intend to lead the party into the next election but if the party does not want it, Mr. Chairman, over the howls of the other crowd, if the party does not want it, I do not care. I am a happy soldier. I have done what is right and I will go away from this place having enjoyed the time I spent here. It is as simple as that and that is the pragmatic level that I am at now after fifteen years. I could not care less. I will face any challenge. I will do what I can as Leader of the party and Leader of the Opposition, but if the party decides differently then I could not care less.

MR. EFFORD:  
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Well, that might be so. The hon. Minister of Social Services may know more than I know. He might be still crawling around in the night, but I say to the hon. gentleman with every bit of sincerity that is in me, if he is right and I am wrong, then that is fine, but I could not care less. End of discussion.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
What an attitude to have, Mr. Chairman.

MR. RIDEOUT:  
That is the right attitude to have, Mr. Chairman. I have all the freedom in the world now, and I am enjoying this role, quite frankly, enjoying it very much. I enjoy looking across the House day

after day and seeing those people now squirm and skate who were over here when we were the Government. I tell you frankly, Mr. Chairman, I am enjoying it. I am enjoying putting the same questions to the Minister of Fisheries, myself or our Opposition critic, that he used to put to us.

MR. EFFORD:

You have not asked me yet.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I never said the Minister of Social Services. I have no intention of deliberately putting Christina on television, none whatsoever. I have no intention of deliberately putting the Minister of Social Services on television. When the time comes and there must be a question asked he will be asked but we are not going to plan Question Period every day to deliberately put the Minister of Social Services on television, or the Minister of Health on television. But every day that I can I will try to put the Minister of Finance on television. That is how I plan our Question Period. Every day that I can I will try to put the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations on television. Everyday that I can I will try to put the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation on television or the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs on television, or the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture on television, Mr. Speaker. Every day that we can we will plan to do that, Mr. Speaker, because I have no intention whatsoever of giving any forum to the Minister of Social Services. None, Mr. Speaker, he does not deserve it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

And that you did.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Services -

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has elapsed.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I will have to wait for an intervening speaker because he should not even be in the Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, if he had an honor.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I realize there have been a few speakers since I was last on my feet. I am very pleased to hear that the Leader of the Opposition has confidence in this House. I am glad to hear that. But aside from that, there was not a great deal in what he said.

There is one question outstanding that I felt I should deal with in a couple of minutes. I would like to point out to Members opposite that as long as questions keep coming I will get up and give answers but, if there are no questions or few questions then I will wait until there are a number of questions to get up and answer them. That is normal. I do not have to get up every time somebody on the opposite side gets up and I do not intend to.

The question had to do with Newfoundland Information Services, that Members opposite wanted dealt with. They are quite right when they say that in Opposition, I was

one of the ones who suggested the abolishing Newfoundland Information Services. I held the same view after the last election. I was of the same opinion. However, I believe that saner heads prevailed and Newfoundland Information Services was not done away with. I believe that we are making an honest attempt to make that a vehicle for Government information. I know it is dangerous when you say, Government information. It is very dangerous. Because right away you picture Cabinet Ministers trying to get their own name in the press all the time, or you picture kind of a brain washing operation, that is the danger of using terms like that.

I believe that we are giving it a fair try as a method of getting out Government information, programmed information and so on. I think here is a need that I believe was not being properly fulfilled. There is a need to get information out to the media in the Province concerning Government programs and details of Government programs. I was persuaded because, as I say, I make no bones about it, I thought we should dismantle the whole thing because I disliked the way I perceived it was operating. As an Opposition Member I had certain perceptions about it. To make no bones about it, I wanted to disband the whole thing but I believe that we are having a fair shot at making it work properly.

There is a large increase in the funding for NIS in this year and that is part of the attempt to make it properly function. I could go down through for instance, in the salary budget there are five positions: a director, a publications officer,

the one that the Opposition House Leader mentioned was a new position, I believe, he said, but that has not been filled yet but presumably it will during the year, but it is in there. There is a public relations specialists and a couple of clerk typists. So that is what is in the salary budget. We even have \$1,000 stuck in their for overtime in case it is needed. That is the salary budget.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
Pardon?

I could go down through the salaries, there is one for approximately \$45,000, another one for \$27,000, another one for \$29,000 and two clerk typist at around \$20,000. So that adds up to the salary. I am pointing out what the positions are. I believe there is one extra position, she pointed out. But that has not been filled yet.

MS VERGE:  
Why is there such a big increase from the revised for last year?

MR. BAKER:  
Pardon?

MS VERGE:  
Why is there such a large increase of \$45,000 from the revised figure (inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
Well one of them is that new job that the Member referred to. Then there was an allowance put in there for overtime, okay? And I guess there was an increase in salaries over last year that the Member referred to before. Salary adjustments. So these things were

put in there and they add up to \$45, 000.

The other amounts - there is an amount in there under Purchased Services. It has increased a fair amount, and it is photocopier; funding for existing wire services and printing of various publications. So a part of this has to do with printing of some publications.

MR. SIMMS:

From \$60,000 to \$120,000.

MR. BAKER:

There is Transportation and Communications; Travel Telephone and FAX related expenses. There is a FAX machine in there now. So these are the items. But I would say to -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. BAKER:

To try to make this a disseminator of program information. It will become very useful in terms of explaining what pay equity is. It will become useful in terms of explaining some of the Federal/Provincial programs and so on. So we are trying to concentrate on the dissemination of information, of program information from Government Departments.

If Opposition Members see that we are abusing it, then I expect them to point it out. If they see that we are using it simply as a vehicle for self-aggrandizement, then I expect them to point it out. I really do. That is one of the functions of an Opposition. We hope to make it a very useful of getting proper information out about Government services and that is the way we wanted to operate.

So I believe that is the only outstanding question. I know that a part of this heading comes under the Premier, under a couple of things I am leaving for him to handle, having to do with the salary allocations in his particular Department. So I think that just about finishes up the questions that are outstanding. I dealt with all of the others.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, that was the only matter that I dealt with the last intervention because I raised it twice and the Minister would not get up to answer it. So I just kept raising it because I wanted to get a specific answer to that particular question because it is an important item. I am still not sure I got the explanation as to why it was transferred from Public Works to Executive Council. In fact, I did not get the answer. So he is going to do it the next time, and perhaps if we are lucky enough we might be able to drag it out until ten o'clock when he will not have to give the answer at all. Until we can get a chance to talk to somebody who will provide him with a good answer to give.

Nevertheless so I know he will answer that sometime soon. He also did not answer my other questions related to Newfoundland Information Services to my satisfaction. The Purchased Services vote went from an expenditure last year of \$60,000



to an expenditure this year of \$120,000. Exactly a 100 per cent increase in Purchase Services from Newfoundland Information Services. Now he sloughed it off by reading a few notes that he had there, this is for that, and this is for that, and a few brochures to print now. I mean \$60,000 would pay for a fair number of brochures, I would say. So I would like for him to be a bit more explicit, a bit more forthcoming in providing me the answer: What is the reason for the increase of 100 per cent in Purchased Services from \$60,000 to \$120,000 for a small agency like Newfoundland Information Services? Which this Government when it was in Opposition did not even want. Now they are giving him all kinds of money, doubling their budgets, and all the rest of it. So that is a question that I would like him to be a bit more forthcoming with? In addition to answering why the service was transferred from Public Works to Executive Council? I have asked it about four times now and I cannot seem to get an answer. And he keeps saying I will give him an answer, but he has not given the answer.

Perhaps I could pose the question, why don't I pose the question to the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation? I will pose the question to him if, indeed, he is allowed to answer.

MR. GILBERT:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
I see. The answer is you are not allowed to answer the question, so it is of no use for me to ask you the question.

MR. GILBERT:

Every time you ask me a question, I give you an answer.

MR. SIMMS:

No, you don't. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation is one of the worst Ministers here, one of the worst.

DR. KITCHEN:

He is (inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

That is some compliment, coming from you, the Minister of Finance, who will not answer a question. Here is the difference between the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, the Minister of Finance won't answer a question, and the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation gives the shortest answers - no, no, but never yes.

MS VERGE:

Ask the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation when they are going to start four-laning the highway between Corner Brook and Steady Brook.

MR. SIMMS:

Didn't he answer that?

MS VERGE:

I asked it. He wouldn't answer for me, but he might answer for you.

MR. SIMMS:

He probably said, Yes, is due course', no doubt.

I can assure you if the Minister wouldn't answer for you, I have a strong feeling he will never answer for me. That is the funny feeling I have about that particular Minister.

Let me ask the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, since I cannot seem to get anywhere with the President of Treasury Board, can the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation explain to the House and to the people why Newfoundland Information Services was moved to Executive Council from his Department? Can he explain it?

The other point I want to make is this: The President of Treasury Board, in trying to get up and talk about Newfoundland Information Services, as is he wont tried to be low-key and tried not to raise any eyebrows, or anything like that, and he said 'We have given them more money because we want to be sure it works.' Well, could he table for the House the rules and guidelines under which Newfoundland Information Services work? There are written rules and guidelines.

I would also like to see, for my own information - I am not sure I have a copy of the regulations which were in existence before, because there were regulations or guidelines for people putting out press releases, and I can assure Members opposite, by the way, that Newfoundland Information Services came to Members of the Government quite frequently with releases they had to go out over the wire which they would not approve - quite frequently. So I want to know what the big difference is. Why the big change in opinion? Why the big change in the attitude of the Government with respect to Newfoundland Information Services?

MS VERGE:

Now that they all have Fax machines, why are they increasing it? You would think they would be needed a lot less than before Fax

machines.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, you would. Maybe the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation will be a bit more forthcoming and will tell us the answer to that question. But, specifically, would he table for the House a copy of the regulations and guidelines used by Newfoundland Information Services, both the current regulations and the previous ones, under our Administration? I would like to see both of them together to see what the big difference or the big change is in guidelines and regulations. Because I was not aware, quite frankly, that there were any major changes. As a matter of fact, we hardly use Information Services, because it is really not applicable, it does not work the same for Opposition Members, I find. But Ministers use it quite frequently.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Is that right?

MR. SIMMS:

Yes. We have a copy of the wire service. The Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs can fill up a basket every day, I would say, the press releases coming out of his office, and rightly so. He has about 25,000 portfolios over there. Now, that might be a slight exaggeration, but my point is all the little releases which come out from the Sports Federation, all these kinds of things, paying tribute to the Minister who spoke at our luncheon, and the Minister who presented a spoon to the winner here tonight. There is a press release goes out over the wire for that kind of stuff from the Minister's office.

Now I have to confess quite publicly, before somebody gets up and attacks me, that when I was a Minister in the previous Administration I certainly availed of the privileges of Newfoundland Information Services quite frequently, no matter what portfolio I was in, because I thought it was important for information to get out to the public.

MR. BAKER:  
I haven't used it.

MR. SIMMS:  
Well, if the President of Treasury Board has not used it, that is not my fault. Don't attack me because you haven't used it. I mean, don't jump on Newfoundland Information Services as being no good because you have not used it. Why don't you use it? Why don't you put a little release out tomorrow morning about the agreement you signed, boy, get a bit of credit for it? When you are a politician, people expect that to happen.

We are not going to be so so careful and sinister we are going to think, ah, you are doing too much politically, and that stuff. I mean, the kind of criticism that came from you hon. crowd before, when you were on this side of the House, was nothing but absolute nonsense and paranoia. That is all it was. Put out whatever you want on Newfoundland Information Services, we don't care. All I want to know is why all of a sudden you changed your minds? How come, all of a sudden, you have changed your minds? And not only have you changed your minds and kept it in service, you doubled the vote, doubled the budget for the operation.

MR. GILBERT:  
To make it functional and do the job it was set up for.

MR. SIMMS:  
How would the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation know whether it was functional or not?

MR. GILBERT:  
You thought it was political, when it was not.

MR. SIMMS:  
I didn't think it was political.

MR. GILBERT:  
You just said it was.

MR. SIMMS:  
I didn't say it was political.

MR. GILBERT:  
Yes, you did.

MR. SIMMS:  
No, I did not.

MR. FLIGHT:  
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:  
Well, I will now ask the Government House Leader, since the Minister of Forestry has once again put his foot in his mouth. I have asked him for a copy of the regulations now, and the ones that were there before, and I bet you will find there is not one regulation that says, the Opposition cannot use this service. That is nonsense, paranoia on the part of the Members opposite when they were in Opposition, and may know now it was paranoia because not only have they kept it, they have doubled the Budget and increased it by \$160,000, so you talk about hypocrisy, an absolute example of hypocrisy. I am asking why did you have to change an attitude?

Why did you keep it? But more importantly, why did you take it from the Minister of Public Works, why did you take it from his Department, and put it into the political wing of Government, the Executive Council? One of these days, sometime within the next twenty-four hours, the Minister of Treasury Board is going to answer that question, I hope, because I can assure him we are not going to stop asking. I am going to stop now because I do not want the time to run out so that the Minister can get up and talk about all kinds of other things and then say, oh, time has run out and I will give you the answer tomorrow. That will give him time to get some advice from his colleague the Minister of Forestry, or somebody, as to how to answer his question. I am going to try once more now to see if the Minister will try and answer those questions straightforward.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

There are a number of aspects to what the Opposition House Leader is asking. First of all he keeps harping on why did they change their minds and all that kind of thing. I really believe I have dealt with that. I have told you why I changed my mind. I have already explained that and I think there is nothing wrong with one changing one's mind. I have never, ever in my lifetime made any claims to infallibility. I am always willing to listen to the other side and always willing to change my mind if I am convinced. There is nothing inherently bad

about a person changing his mind. Get that clear first, accept that principle that quite often it is good for a person to have an open mind. I explained a few moments ago that I was one of the ones, in Opposition I believe I called for the disbanding of the NIS, or at least during estimates I called for the disbanding of NIS, and I explained why. My perception was that this particular agency was used almost entirely politically.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is unfair.

MR. BAKER:

Well, that was my perception and I may have been wrong, but that is what I was seeing. And after we formed the Government -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:

- I expressed that same opinion. I was still of the same opinion, let us get rid of NIS. However, and I said fortunately, I believe that calmer opinions prevailed and that NIS has now had its budget increased. We want to make sure that it is a proper arm of Government. Not politically, but an arm of the Government Departments to make sure that information about Government programs receives the exposure it should get.

It was moved from Public Works to Executive Council. It is rather interesting to hear in his lead up the Opposition Leader saying, from the totally unpolitical Department of Public Works. I do not know if Haig Young would agree with that, the totally unpolitical Department of Public Works to Executive Council. Now you might say that Executive Council is also

political.

What I am saying to you --

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
Oh, Public Works was nonpartisan, is that what you are saying?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Yes. Oh, oh!

MR. BAKER:  
That is beside the point, anyway the present Minister of Public Works now is the Minister of Public Works as well as the Minister of Transportation. He has --

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
I am explaining now.

The Minister has what were two whole departments to handle right now, a tremendous number of employees and so on, and as part of the reorganization that one section was taken. Because it really has nothing to do with Transportation or Public Works, we thought that we would move it there to Executive Council as it is providing a general service for Government and really has nothing to do with Public Works or Transportation. It was better there and it was less thing that was under the wing of the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation. So the move was made as part of the reorganization. There was no nefarious scheme here. I keep pointing out that you find nefarious schemes in everything. I really pity you. You cannot go through life always looking for

nefarious schemes.

There was one other item that kind of slipped my mind now because I am trying to listen to the interjections at the same time.

So the move from Public Works to Executive Council, the increase in funding, because I have changed my mind, maybe other Members have changed their minds, and we are trying to make it work as an information arm of the departments in terms of the programs and so on that Government offers. And there was a third point. I believe the Member for Humber East --

MS VERGE:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
No, something you mentioned a little earlier.

MS VERGE:  
All the departments have fax machines now, (inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
Right, thank you very much. At first glance I thought that could be of benefit, the departments having fax machines. In Treasury Board I have a fax machine that I use and there is one that the department uses. The thing with Newfoundland Information Services is that there are going to be two people over there who are specialists in terms of public relations people and writing and so on. The civil service does not necessarily have that expertise, people in the civil service. So, --

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:  
Okay, so these people who are departmental people who are not

ministerial office staff, but departmental people are going to work with NIS. But the point is when a department wants to get something out, it will be done professionally. Many departments -

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:

Yes, well this is what I am saying to you. Many departments do not have an information office, never will have. For instance in Treasury Board and Executive Council I will not have one of these people because I do not have a volume to justify it in the departments. So, anything that the Treasury Board Executive Council needs done will be handled by the other people who are there. I will not have one myself in my department. There will not be as many of these individuals as there are departments. There are departments left over, five or six or seven left over. So, what I am saying to you is this, number one, even if we had all of these PR people within the departments, even if we did we do not have them anymore. There are only some departments that will have them.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:

You are absolutely right. There are some departments who do, but we do not all have them. But even if we all had them the use of fax machines is simply not practical. Well, what you have to go through the fax machine is not perfected to the stage where you can send a release to eight or ten sources at the same time. You have to go through a process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

(Inaudible).

MR. BAKER:

The ones I have are not. And also not every source that you want to get to has a fax machine either. And maybe at sometime when communications get better to the extent that we can use the fax machines we will. Right now, the previous Government had put the terminals in the news outlets and they already exist, and it is very easy and very quick almost instantaneous, it is an instantaneous kind of thing to get it to all of those outlets at the same time. And that is important in terms of using the NIF. But I will tell you that maybe a year down the road we will decide it is not worth it. And I will tell you this, that if a year down the road we decide it is not working, it will be gone. Because we are willing to change our minds. We are willing to change our minds.

It is ten o'clock. Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Bellevue.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered the matters to them referred and has directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

On motion, report received and adopted, Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 2:00 p.m.