



Province of Newfoundland

FORTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND

Volume XLI

Second Session

Number 80

PRELIMINARY REPORT
(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Tuesday

20 November 1990

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker (Lush): Order, please!

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take an opportunity for a moment if I could, to pay tribute to one of the great pioneers, I guess, of the community of Grand Falls, who happened to have been born in Glenwood originally. I refer to a gentleman who passed away over the weekend at eighty-six years of age, and I am talking about Michael Blackmore, who was the co-founder of four community newspapers in Newfoundland and the Blackmore Printing Company.

He and his brother established the Grand Falls Advertiser back in 1936 and The Packet in Clarendville, The Beacon in Gander and The Pilot in Lewisporte, eventually. He and his wife were the first editors of the Grand Falls Advertiser and indeed his wife Laura, was instrumental I think in starting the Humber Log over in the Corner Brook area. His whole family has set very high standards for the publishing industry.

He was retired of course at the time and very active in parish affairs of the Roman Catholic Church and indeed in 1988, he was presented with the highest honour bestowed by the Vatican. I do not know if I can pronounce it very well, but I think it is the Benemerenti Papal medal in recognition of faithful service in the spiritual development of the parish and I would like to ask the House, if they would send condolences to his wife Laura, his daughters Joan and Anne, sons

Michael and Bryan and his brother Jed who resides in Toronto, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Ministers

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Development.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform my colleagues in the House today that Sunnyland Juice (1990) Limited, a local company supported by NLDC, has successfully begun operating a juice manufacturing plant in Donovan's Industrial Park.

In October, NLDC, soon to be named Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador, provided \$250,000 in equity financing that would provide working capital to enable the company to purchase raw concentrate material and expand its juice manufacturing operation.

Mr. Speaker, over the years we have been importing numerous juice concentrates to this Province which are manufactured by companies located outside. A number of these juices are blended with water from Lake Ontario, Lake Erie and Lake Michigan or similar water sources in the United States.

This juice company saw an opportunity and approached this Government for support. The company is now successfully bringing in top quality concentrate from around the world and blending it with pure Newfoundland water to create an improved product for the consumer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Furey: I should also add, Mr. Speaker, that this company is now employing fifteen Newfoundlanders full-time, with expertise in food technology and quality control. Product sales are substantially above the initial projection. Besides manufacturing its own juice concentrate, "Drink n'Fresh" labels, Sunnyland is now manufacturing, in-house labels, private label brands for Central Dairies and Dominion Stores.

Mr. Speaker, these companies were manufacturing their labels outside the Province, shipping them to Newfoundland, and selling them without any economic benefit to the Province. Sunnyland will continue its efforts to negotiate for the manufacturing of other private labels which are still produced outside the Province, yet sold within our borders.

Sunnyland is attracting the attention and interest of many Newfoundlanders. Already 500 students with their teachers from as far away as Carbonear and Tors Cove have toured the plant. As well, myself and the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs toured the plant last Friday, and were taken around by the principals who were kind enough to do so. I recommend to all Members to go out and have a look at this fascinating operation.

The company's products are being distributed by numerous wholesalers throughout the Province. The manufacturing plant is a federally approved facility which means that Newfoundland does not have to be their only market place. Federally approved facilities can ship to the shelves of retail outlets outside the Province.

Mr. Speaker, years ago, during the Smallwood Administration, Mr. Smallwood was criticized for having the idea of setting up a juice manufacturing company in this Province to service the local market. Maybe his idea was a little ahead of its time and maybe we did not have the necessary transportation infrastructure for distribution. But today, Mr. Speaker, thanks to the hard work of the principals of this company, for the Government support, this idea has become a reality, not just for the domestic marketplace, but hopefully for the export outside to other markets as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the principals have come today to share in this announcement and to participate here in the House of Assembly, and they have left some cases of juice in both Common Rooms for members to sample - the Newfoundland water married to this concentrate. I believe they left some for the press too. So I thank them for coming.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

Mr. Windsor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, we certainly welcome this announcement and we want to offer our congratulations to the principals of this company who are primarily responsible for the success of this enterprise. I say with due respect to the Minister this company has been operating now for many months, I am glad to see that he has finally gotten involved and provided some operating capital through The Equity Funding Program of NLDC.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Windsor: Let me emphasize that it was through NLDC, not Newfoundland -

Mr. R. Aylward: NewCorp.

Mr. Windsor: Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador or the Economic Recovery Commission or anything else. It is the ongoing Equity Program of NLDC funded primarily through the Newfoundland Stock Savings Plan which was cancelled last week as a result of legislation brought through by this Government.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is a prime example of how Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can invest in these types of industries here in Newfoundland and Labrador and should be given every opportunity. It is also a prime example of how young entrepreneurs like these people have been able to do things in our Province to displace products which have been imported thus far. And this is a prime example of: why have we not done it before? It takes somebody like the principals of this company to take an idea and to run with it and there are so many other opportunities.

A very important point here was made in this press release: that has now been substituted for private brand names brought in here by some of the large retailers who are, in fact, also acting as wholesalers. They buy very little through our wholesale market. They leave very little in our Province. In fact, the big supermarket chains are now bringing in most of their product in their own transport trucks, out of their own central office operations, leaving very little

with wholesalers and other distributors in the Province.

Here is an operation I might add, Mr. Speaker, in the great historic District of Mount Pearl which is employing fifteen Newfoundlanders, which is a Newfoundland product, which has tremendous potential for export. I just came back late last night from a trade show in Quebec looking at a whole range of new products, the Minister should have been there, I would have encouraged him to go and see the range of products that the Province of Quebec have to offer and the type of trade show that has been put together there to give companies such as this one an opportunity to display their wares. One of the products that was most prevalent there was distilled water, spring water. I spoke with one of the gentlemen who was marketing it and he wanted me to get interested in bringing it to Newfoundland. I said, I am sorry, the water we have coming out of our taps tastes a hell of a lot better than this stuff does.

And that is precisely why a product such as this has so much potential and why I would encourage the principals to get into the export market. There is a huge market out there. And this particular product, I have had an opportunity to taste it, it is a superb product, one that we should all be very proud of, and we should be very proud of these entrepreneurs, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

Mr. Warren: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Development. Is the Minister aware of a severe situation that exists in the community of Hopedale in a Government owned store, with respect to a health hazard?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Development.

Mr. Furey: No, Mr. Speaker, I have not been made aware of any of that. But if the hon. Member has some information of a health hazard, I would be grateful if he would provide me with it so that we could correct it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

Mr. Warren: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Is the Minister of Health aware that the Grenfell Regional Health Services Hospital nurse in Hopedale has issued protective masks to the employees of the Government owned store in Hopedale so that they can serve the customers, and at the same time the staff are serving fresh fruits and vegetables that could be contaminated?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: No, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that. But there are officials in the Department whose job it is to follow through on such matters and who are no doubt in the process of doing that now.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

Mr. Warren: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. My final supplementary. I should say to the Minister of Health that the Government store was closed on Friday because of this condition and I say to the Minister of Health in my last supplementary, would the Minister of Health today immediately quarantine the Government owned store in Hopedale so that his officials can go into the community and determine the cause of this health hazard?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, I will take it as notice. And if there is any reason to quarantine the shop it will be quarantined.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Mr. Decker: If there is no reason, Mr. Speaker, it will not be quarantined. I will take the question as notice.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker the Minister of Education was in Sheshatshit on Friday November 9 to meet with the Innu band council. And following that meeting the Innu band council told the media - and listening to the Minister I can only assume that the Minister would agree - that the Minister had assured those people that they would have their own school board for that community within the next two year period. So I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Mr.

Speaker, whether or not he can confirm that that was in fact the commitment that he made to the Innu band council on behalf of the Government?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, I did have an extended meeting in Sheshatshit with the Innu community. And in fact they told me it was the first time that a Minister of Education had come to the community to discuss directly with the people the educational problems that they have.

An Hon. Member: Hear hear!

Dr. Warren: I am not confirming that, but I did have a very interesting meeting. And I indicated the Government's sensitivity to the wishes of the Innu community to have greater control over their educational system. I did indicate the Government's sensitivity to that. But I did not at that point in time promise that the Government would appoint a separate school board. What we did indicate to the community was that we would consider various options for greater control, including the option of appointing such a board. That we would establish a committee to examine the various models for greater control, and that committee would involve the Innu community in the process. And perhaps over the next year or two we could decide on the kind of arrangement that would give the community greater control over education and similar matters.

But there was no commitment to a separate school board. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we talked about various models for control

including private schools and a separate school board and other models that might be examined in the next year or two.

Mr. Rideout: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education might be interested in knowing that the Member for Humber East, when she was Minister of Education, was in Sheshatshit meeting with the Band Council.

An Hon. Member: Northwest River it was called then.

Mr. Rideout: Northwest River.

Mr. Speaker, coming back to the Minister of Education again, the Minister of Education must be the only one who attended that meeting who would come away and say that no commitment was made, because the Innu Band Council are certainly giving the impression that they have a commitment from the Minister.

Now, I want to ask the Minister, if there was no commitment made to establish that school board within that community within the next two years, will the Minister tell the House exactly what commitment he did make?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, if you could contain the Minister of Social Services, it is the Minister of Education I am interested in in Question Period this afternoon.

Will the Innu have control of the

hiring and employment of teachers, for example? Was that a commitment that was made? Will the Innu control the budget for the school? Will they have control of the curriculum or any aspects of the curriculum? Exactly what kind of commitments did the Minister make to the Innu Band Council, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Whereas there was no commitment to a separate school board there was an understanding that that is one of the options that would be examined.

Certainly, as a Minister - and I want to consult more fully with all of my colleagues in this process - I believe that the Innu should have greater control over the educational system for their children. Parents have the prior rights in education, and I believe that the Innu community should have greater control over curriculum decision making, over the appointment of staff, over some aspects of budgeting. But how it is to be done, Mr. Speaker - I want some time to work out the details in consultation with the community, and that is the commitment that I made. I did commit to greater control, yes, but I also committed to establishing a mechanism so that we could work out the details in consultation with the community. In fact I have a letter prepared today to write to the chief asking for nominees to a provincial committee that would examine these issues.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Education tell the House exactly how much self government in the field of education did the Minister agree that he would be prepared to discuss the transfer of to the Inuit Band Council at Sheshatshit?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. Member is aware that in Conne River we have a comparable situation although the Indians have a different kind of community - status Indians. But in that community the Band Council has total control over the education of the students.

Certainly, we are prepared to examine greater control of all aspects of education. I think it is important that the people of the Innu community have built into their educational system a better understanding of their history, their culture, their unique life-style. And we will be examining greater control of curriculum, the appointment of teachers, budgeting, scheduling and other matters over the next year or two so that we can meet the demands of the people, the request of the people for that control.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition on a supplementary.

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while the Minister is going through this exercise with the Innu Band Council at Sheshatshit, is he prepared at the same time to go through the same kind of exercise with the native

people of Davis Inlet and the Inuit people of the Northern communities of Coastal Labrador?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, I was requested to meet with the Innu community in Sheshatshit. They had locked the school doors. I met with them and we arranged to have the schools opened, for education to continue in that community. I think they are satisfied with the arrangement that we have in place to deal with their problems. If we have a request from Davis Inlet I am sure we will deal with that request when it is forthcoming. I have not as yet, to my knowledge, heard from the Davis Inlet community requesting discussions on this kind of issue.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, I want to switch gears but ask questions to the same Minister, the Minister of Education. I want to refer him to Hansard, November 9, Page R4. On Friday, November 9, the Premier said in this House that the Government asked the Department of Education to trim 10,000 substitute teaching days because 'he felt it was being used excessively.' Does the Minister agree with the Premier's statement?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, I would like to see the exact context of that statement before I respond to that. Certainly the Government is interested in ensuring that the monies used for substitute teachers are used efficiently, and

we felt this year we could use these dollars more efficiently than in the past.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister. Has the Minister been advised by the Exploits Valley school board, for example, that workshops for the new primary art program introduced by his own Department have now been postponed, and that primary and elementary music workshops for teachers employed by the board have been cancelled, and indeed that the NTA art council fall workshop has been cancelled, among other things, all because of these cutbacks? Are these the kind of examples of excessive use of substitute teachers that the Premier was talking about.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, without reference to the Premier's comments I regret to say that some school boards have cancelled workshops this year. We asked the school boards this year, and they were notified, I think, in March or April -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat what I said. In March or April we notified school boards that we were going to downsize the budget in substitute teachers this year and we asked for their co-operation. We have had some cancellations of workshops and I regret that very much. What we did this year, Mr. Speaker, was reduce the overall number of substitute days from 90,000 used last year, 90,000 for

all kinds of leave, to 82,000 this year. We felt they could reduce that number without doing dramatic damage to the in-service program. In some cases in-service programs have been cancelled. Mr. Speaker, I might add one very important point, the school boards have co-operated by and large with the Government in this regard. I want to pay tribute to the superintendents who have said, let us look at this issue, let us examine the issue and see if we can meet the Government's request without cancelling many of the workshops. Mr. Speaker, some school boards are finding innovative ways to continue their in-service without doing damage to the education of children.

Mr. Winsor: St. Matthew's cancelled on Monday.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I can assure the Minister there is a considerable difference of opinion between he and teachers and boards about when they were told and what they were told, I can assure him of that.

But let me switch to another quote of the Premier's, since he really did not know about the first one, he wanted to read it, let me refer him to Hansard of November 13, more recent, page R6. Now let me ask him this question: Does the Minister agree with the Premier's charge that school boards are using pressure tactics to browbeat Government into providing unlimited substitute teacher days? And does he agree with the Premier's threat to reduce it even further?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the

Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: I do not think, being the kind of person I am and the excellent department that we have, I do not think that school boards would browbeat us in any way. School boards and others are certainly protesting some of the decisions we made with respect to substitute teachers. But most of them are working closely with us in trying to live within the request that they reduce the substitute teacher days by about 8 per cent this year, I think it was. Most of them I think are going to live within that.

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

Mr. Hearn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the same Minister, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister confirm that the Department of Education officials met with school board superintendents on the 7th., 8th., and 9th. of November to present the Department's Budget reduction plan for 1991-92? And will he confirm that school boards were given just seven days to prepare impact statements for the Department?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of this kind of question, I did some preparation, because I have these leaks from the hon. Member's office and I know when he is going to ask this kind of question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dr. Warren: Anyhow, certainly we met the 7th., 8th., and 9th. of

November with school board chairpersons and business managers and superintendents and representatives from School Tax Authorities, and parents. We met in St. John's. We had an excellent meeting with them. We met in Corner Brook, and I think the third meeting was in Gander.

An Hon. Member: What did they have for supper, boy?

Dr. Warren: But well before that, Mr. Speaker, I had been meeting with the trustees. The first meeting to deal with the Budget was October 10. Then I had another meeting October 12, another one October 18 with the trustees; and another one on October 24 to discuss this issue.

Mr. Simms: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Dr. Warren: I met with the Denominational Education Council on October 19, October 24. I met with the NTA on -

Mr. Rideout: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

I would ask the Minister please to avoid some of the details and try to get to the essence of the question?

Dr. Warren: May I start over again, Mr. Speaker, and try to crystallize it?

Some Hon. Members: No.

An Hon. Member: You may not.

Dr. Warren: I have been meeting with trustees, I have been meeting with the NTA officials, I have

been meeting with the superintendents, I have been meeting with all of these groups for the past month or more to discuss the impact of a possible freeze in expenditures, and that is what was discussed at the meeting also on November 7th., 8th., and 9th., Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hearn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We will see if my sources from the Minister's Department are as good as his from mine. The Minister failed to answer the part, by the way: if he gave the board seven days to respond. I will ask the Minister, will he confirm that the budget reduction plans presented to the superintendents in three regional meetings across the Province included the following - staff reductions for teachers, programme co-ordinators, assistant superintendents, administrative support staff, as well as further reductions in the number of substitute teaching days?

Some Hon. Members: Answer that now!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

An Hon. Member: Get your skates on.

Mr. Simms: Can you confirm that?

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, we had excellent meetings with all of the groups. We did not present a plan.

Mr. Simms: You didn't?

Dr. Warren: We presented some

options for their reaction. The assumption: If, next year, the Education budget is frozen at \$775 million, including the total -

Mr. Efford: Seven hundred and seventy-five million dollars?

Dr. Warren: It was very substantially increased in the last two years. But if it is frozen, what are the impacts on programmes, personnel, any efficiencies that might be introduced, any new sources of revenues? All these questions were discussed and what we did was ask the boards once they got back to their offices, if they had additional comments to make, to write us. And I am pleased to say that many school boards and many Boards of Governors of colleges have written us in the past few days indicating their reactions to the various options that were put forth to them at these meetings, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hearn: Mr. Speaker, let me say to the Minister they have also written us. Will the Minister confirm, then, that the budget reduction plan presented to the superintendents also included a freeze in operating grants, cancellations or reduction in the Energy Conservation Grant and the decline in Enrollment Adjustment Grant, as well as a decrease of 10 per cent in the subsidy for board-operated student transportation systems?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member had asked me a few weeks ago for a copy of all the

documents we distributed I could have provided him with them. You have them, I am sure. We put on the table, Mr. Speaker, all the options. We had an excellent discussion with school boards. They certainly understand the financial problems the Government faces. They need more funding. Education is underfunded in this Province, Mr. Speaker. This Government believes Education must be a priority. And I assure the people of the Province, Mr. Speaker, that we might have a little bit of a lull for the next two or three years, but after that I can assure you we will move education into the 21st century.

We will continue to expand education after, perhaps, a lull over the next two or three years. But all of these options were discussed and the boards were very helpful, the superintendents, in helping us arrive at decisions.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Hearn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A final supplementary to the Minister. Will the Minister confirm that the budget reduction plan includes the following new revenue measures - an increase of revenues from School Tax Authorities; user fees for student transportation; increased charges for high school textbooks; rental fees for textbooks in primary and elementary grades; increased fees for services administered by the Department of Education, such as public exams and teacher certificates? The Minister said he would put it all on the table. Mr. Speaker, let me put it on the table, the Budget consultations as passed out to the boards, and I

will ask the Minister to answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, all of these options were discussed and, I might say to the hon. member, other things were discussed, too. He has missed this question of increased sharing among the denominational school systems in the Province. I am pleased to say that coming from these meetings is a desire on the part of many school boards to share, co-operate, and provide better bang for the buck, more scholar for the dollar, so that we can provide the best educational system for our students. So a lot of other options were discussed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

Mr. Woodford: Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Education. Memorial University has been told that its operating Budget for 1991 will be frozen at the funding level for the current year. According to the University's Vice-President of Finance, this will mean a shortfall of \$10 to \$13 million. Will the Minister confirm that the university will have to pay the cost of recently negotiated salary increases, and the operating costs of new facilities in St. John's and Corner Brook with the same Budget amount in 1991-92 as in 1990-91?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: I would like to correct the hon. member's preface. Memorial University has

not been told that their Budget will be frozen. No institution has been told yet what their Budget is going to be.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Dr. Warren: May I repeat, Mr. Speaker? No educational institution or agency has been told yet precisely what their Budget will be for 1991-92. They have been asked the question, if next year your dollar figure was frozen at last year's figure, what would be the implications for your programs and for your funding for next year? Mr. Speaker, Memorial University has seriously considered that question. We have had meetings with the new President and members of his staff, and we are continuing consultations before we make any final decisions as to what the impact of a possible frozen Budget will be for 1991-92.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

Mr. Woodford: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister. Will the Minister confirm, then, that on November 15 the University was alerted to the fact that they should not expect any increases in the level of funding for operating this year, and will the Minister confirm that the combination of Budget reduction and higher costs will force the University to lay off faculty and staff and raise additional revenues from higher tuition fees and increased board and lodging for students living on campus?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, I want to be direct with the member and

try to answer his questions directly. Certainly, there may have to be program reductions. In the past two years, we have put a lot of money into education. I will not review these figures right now, but this year, 1991-1992, there may have to be what I have called a lull. Because of the serious financial situation the Province finds itself, we may not be able to continue the kind of increase we gave in 1989 and 1990. So there may have to be some programme and staff reductions. But no decisions have been made on that or on any fee increases. These decisions will be made in due course, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

Mr. Woodford: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The University has said that it may have to restrict enrollment for the first time ever. What does the Minister think of that as a Liberal policy or legacy, especially for a province where post-secondary participation remains below the national average?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to using marks or any other means to restrict entrance to post-secondary education. I reject what is done in province after province in this country, where universities in the past have said we are going to have a cut-off of 80 per cent or 75 per cent. And I can name the universities. And you know people are going to other provinces to attend university.

Mr. Warren: Answer the question.

Dr. Warren: They are going to other provinces. I reject that. Now the university may have to do it. Certainly it will have to consider it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Dr. Warren: It may have to. But as a Minister in a Province where we have to increase participation in post-secondary, I reject that and we will do everything possible to ensure that we do not have to restrict entrance to post-secondary education in this Province, that those who are qualified to attend will have every opportunity to attend.

Mr. Rideout: What is the university cannot afford to take them, because you have been skinning them alive?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern.

Mr. Parsons: My question is to the same Minister. Surprise! Look how surprised the Minister is.

Until this fall, Mr. Speaker, school children from the Woodlands area housing development, in the city of St. John's, were bused to schools in the city by buses that served Wedgewood Park. Because of overcrowding and the increase in population in the Woodlands area, these children now have no means of public transportation to attend school. The area is not served by the metrobus. My question to the Minister is this: Did the Avalon Consolidated School Board ask the Minister for permission and for funding to put an additional bus on the route to accommodate the children from Woodlands. If so, what was the Minister's response?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the

Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: I am delighted, Mr. Speaker, to answer that question. I think there are two buses used on that route. Last week, as soon as we heard of the problem, we authorized an extra run for one of the buses. Since the problem was brought to our attention, an extra run is on and we are monitoring that.

The number of students, I am told, on that extra run is very limited. But we are going to monitor it over the next few days, and if there is a need for extra service because of the nature of the community, we will ensure that the service is provided.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern.

Mr. Parsons: I mean, if the Minister does not know, I will tell him how many children are involved. There are 129. That is how many children are involved there.

Mr. Warren: More than one bus load.

Mr. Parsons: So that is the number.

Mr. Parsons: I get calls from the district hourly saying there is an ad hoc system there now on a day-to-day basis, that is all. They do not know but in the morning their children will not have a busing system provided for them. I want to ask the minister, will he confirm that in the past arrangements have been made with the City of St. John's to permit the use of school buses in areas of the city which are not served by metrobus?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, going back to his comment about 129, my information is that since the extra run went on, very few if any children are using it.

An Hon. Member: That is because they do not know what is going on.

Dr. Warren: Everybody is aware of it, Mr. Speaker. We have had conversations with the people in the area. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think a meeting has been arranged for later this week to officially discuss all of these problems. So we did react immediately to the request. An extra run has been on for the last few days. As soon as we assess the situation more fully, we will determine whether a further contract must be awarded. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we do provide service to areas of the city which are not served by metrobus, as long as the students are outside of the required, I think it is a one mile limit for transportation.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern.

Mr. Parsons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to say to the minister, why the children are not using the bus is because the parents really do not know, as I told you in the first instance, from day to day if there is a bus going to be available to take their children, and they are driving them themselves and every other way possible. So, that is the reason why.

Now, you almost answered my last supplementary by saying there are areas in the city which are served on a special agreement with the City of St. John's. What the

people want to know and what I want to know is if these situations did occur and were all straightened out, why didn't Woodlands receive the same treatment? Why were they discriminated against?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Dr. Warren: It was my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that they were not discriminated against. They were taken on other buses, that were coming from Wedgewood Park, and they were all accommodated on those other buses.

Mr. Speaker, I will admit to one thing, though. As a minister, I have been concerned about the inconsistencies in the transportation policies in certain parts of this Province and I have asked my officials to look at the whole St. John's - Mount Pearl area. There is quite a distinct difference between Mount Pearl and St. John's, as the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl knows. So we are taking a good look at school transportation in the whole St. John's area so that we can eliminate some of these inconsistencies, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for mentioning it.

Mr. Speaker: Question Period has expired.

Petitions

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

Mr. Warren: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition, signed by ninety-three residents from the community of Postville in

the District of Torngat Mountains.

The prayer of the petition, Mr. Speaker, reads: we, the concerned citizens of Postville, are concerned with the health care we are presently receiving. We are particularly concerned that we have a nurse only on a part-time basis.

The last part of the petition, Mr. Speaker, is very interesting. It says, 'We therefore request a nurse be dispatched on a full-time basis to the community of Postville, and we furthermore request that the Minister of Health visit our community and meet with the concerned citizens on this very important issue, as soon as possible.'

Mr. Speaker, during the last number of weeks and months, I have brought to the attention of the Minister of Health the treatment of the people in Postville through having a nurse only on a part-time basis. As of today, a nurse has been in there now for the last eight days; she will be there for the next four or five days but, then, I understand she will be going on vacation, which will be for a month, or thereabouts. So, Postville, again, after the next couple of days, and during the Christmas period, will be without a nurse.

I am surprised, Mr. Speaker, on presenting this petition, that the Minister of Health and the Minister of Development today were not aware of a dangerous health condition in the community of Hopedale. We have a Government store in Hopedale, run by this Government, which had to be closed because of unsanitary conditions, because staff and customers were getting sick. In two instances,

Mr. Speaker, individuals were forced to hurry outside and throw up, they were so sick from the smell in the store of fruit and vegetables and other perishables.

Mr. Murphy: How did you find out?

Mr. Efford: How long did you know it?

Mr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, I tell my hon. colleague, I found out in the last twenty-four hours. I have talked to the manager of the store, I have talked to the mayor of the town, I have talked to individuals in the Minister's department, I have talked to individuals in the Department of Health, and they all have passed the word along to their supervisors. That is the problem.

Mr. Murphy: Why didn't (inaudible), if you knew?

Mr. Warren: Yes. There are two things the Minister can do. Number one, the Minister of Development can close the store today, and number two, the Minister of Health can get health inspectors into the community right away. Those are the two things that can be done. I say, what this Government is doing is completely ignoring the health of the people on the Labrador coast, in Postville, in Hopedale, in Rigolet, in Charlottetown, in Black Tickle, everywhere along the coast. And there is one basic reason: it is because, for some reason, this Government is in bed with the Executive Director of the regional Grenfell Health Services. That is the whole problem, the crux of the matter. The Director of the regional Grenfell Health Services is telling this Government what to do.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the Minister of Health, get into Postville as fast as he can, get into Hopedale as fast as he can, and, for the sake of the health of the people in Hopedale, quarantine that store immediately until you determine what the cause of this health hazard is to the community of Hopedale. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Development.

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, since Question Period, I have had a chance to make a phone call to my department to find out what is happening in Hopedale. I feel very badly that the hon. member has known about this, he says, for twenty-four hours and he did not call me this morning.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Furey: I feel badly that the hon. member has known about it for the last twenty-four hours.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Warren: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains, on a point of order.

Mr. Warren: I say to my colleague, the Minister of Development, I have known about it during the past twenty-four hours - during the past twenty-four hours.

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Development.

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, I feel badly that the hon. member has known about this during the last twenty-four hours.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, I have been in my office since 8:00 a.m. and I have not received any phone calls from the hon. Member from Torngat Mountains.

An Hon. Member: You should be ashamed. Resign, boy, resign!

Mr. Furey: I can tell you that there has been a sewer backup problem at the store; I can tell you that corrective measures were tried on two separate occasions; I can tell you that we tried to get an engineer in there yesterday but we could not get the engineer in there because of weather; and I can tell you that we are trying to get that engineer in as soon as possible today - pending weather.

But I feel badly that the hon. Member has known about this for some time and did not draw it to my attention.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Furey: Because he had two choices.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: The Minister should be ashamed not to know about it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

The Chair has on many occasions reminded hon. Members that there is only a short period with the presentation of petitions. The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains has presented his petition, and hon. Members now should extend the courtesy to the Minister of Development to speak to the petition.

The Minister for Development.

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the hon. member had two choices as I see it. The first choice was to make it known to the Minister at the earliest opportunity, because it is obviously a serious problem. And I believe the hon. member has the best intentions of his constituents at heart, and I should admit to the House, Mr. Speaker, that it was this Minister who has visited those stores on two separate occasions in the last twelve months. That is how much concern I have for those stores. On one occasion I took the hon. member with me, and helped pay the cost and that, and asked him to join me on the helicopter to visit the five stores.

Mr. Warren: I advised (inaudible).

Mr. Furey: Nor did this Minister go fishing. This Minister visited the outfitters. This Minister does not fish.

Mr. Simms: What is wrong with fishing?

Mr. Furey: This Minister has never had the time nor the opportunity, when he was a young fellow, to fish. However, that is not to preclude my retirement.

But there were two choices as I see it, Mr. Speaker. One was, if

it was that important, and it is that important, to bring it to the Minister's attention. The second choice was to bring it to the House and to play political games with it.

Some Hon. Members: That's true.

Mr. Furey: And I feel even more badly that the hon. Member who has such a good reputation and has his constituents at heart, chose to take the second option, which is to play political games with a very serious problem. That is too bad, and that is more a reflection on the hon. member than on the Government.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few moments to support the prayer of the petition presented by my colleague from Torngat Mountains, and to make some response to the comments made by the Minister of Development, speaking on behalf of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, when a Minister of the Crown gets up to speak on a petition or to speak on any matter of public urgency in this Province, I think it really ill behooves that Minister to try to defend his lack of action and the lack of action of the Government by trying to personally attack and reflect on some other Member of this House. It is not -

Mr. Hogan: Well, what do you do?

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, if you could contain the hon. gentleman from Placentia, then I might be able to get on with my remarks.

The Minister is speaking in his capacity as a Minister of the Crown, Mr. Speaker. It does not matter whether or not he likes the way a Member raises an issue or presents a petition or brings an issue to this House, it is his responsibility as a Minister of the Crown to respond to the Government's action or the lack of Government action, Mr. Speaker.

To get up and to question motives is not the Minister's responsibility. That, Mr. Speaker, is the reaction of a person who does not have any firm ground to stand on; that is the reaction, Mr. Speaker, of a Minister who is a failure and does not know what his Department and his responsibilities are all about.

Mr. Simms: Hear, hear! Resign, resign!

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, the Minister of Development, responsible for those stores on the Labrador coast, officials in his Department knew about this health problem since Friday. It was reported up through the supervision of the Department, and if it did not get to the Minister, then the Minister should be more intent on finding out why it did not get to him than he should be in a personal character assassination of the Member who is doing his job.

Mr. Simms: Right.

Mr. Rideout: The fact of the matter is, officials of the Minister of Health knew about this matter since Friday, and if the minister had not been made aware of it by today, then he ought to have some officials in his department, in his office and on

the carpet explaining why it was not done.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that the hon. gentleman representing the District received a phone call at about five after eleven this morning, while we were in caucus, making him aware of this particular situation, a situation that had been gradually getting worse since last Friday. And the Minister of Development gets up here in a fit and puke then today, trying to spill across the House political bile. I say to the minister, shame on you! Go out and do something about it. It is your responsibility. It is the responsibility of the Minister of Health. It is the responsibility of the Government. You could have had health officials in that town between Friday and today. Today is the only day, as I understand it, that weather conditions are such that you could not get in there. And that is really not an excuse, because Coast Guard officials have emergency equipment in Goose Bay that can get into Hopedale today, if the minister and the Government had the determination to do it. Get off your rear and do something. That is what you were elected to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present. I was hoping the Minister of Municipal Affairs might be within hearing distance. I would be interested in hearing his response to the petition, if he so desires. The last time I presented a similar petition the Premier would not let him get up;

the Premier wanted to respond to it. Maybe this time the minister might have some comments to make. It is similar to one I presented before, with respect to the amalgamation commitment made to the towns of Grand Falls and Windsor, and the ongoing controversy about what has transpired.

The prayer of the petition is 'We, the undersigned, hereby express our total dissatisfaction with the Minister of Municipal Affairs' latest interpretation of the September 25 amalgamation agreement of the towns of Grand Falls and Windsor, and we demand the minister to reinstate the original interpretation of the amalgamation agreement.'

So it is the same as the last petition; seventy-six names on this particular one, Mr. Speaker. I know, in fact, that the last one had 275, and it was downplayed and piddley-poddled by a couple of people on the other side. But I can assure them there are more coming. That is all irrelevant.

This petition was not solicited, Mr. Speaker. This petition was presented to me by people in the two towns who are interested and concerned. Most of these are from Grand Falls, by the way. There are some from Windsor.

But I want to get to the two issues again, and I want the minister to try to explain again what has transpired and to give us the reason why. And I understand, by the way, the Premier said there was not going to be any kind of a special deal made for Grand Falls and Windsor in order to encourage them to amalgamate the two communities. That is fair ball - no kind of a special deal.

At the moment, the town of Windsor receives forty-five cents on the allotted tax revenue, forty-five cents on all of their tax revenue - all of it. The Government pays it to them now, and would presumably pay it over the next number of years if there was no amalgamation. The town of Grand Falls, of course, gets the normal formula applied to it.

Mr. Baker: Forty-five cents (inaudible).

Mr. Simms: No, no! It is forty-five on the first \$2 million and twenty under \$2 million. That is what is on the Grand Falls side of it. I would ask the President of Treasury Board just to listen now. At the present time, Windsor gets forty-five cents on every tax dollar. On every tax dollar, forty-five cents is paid by the Province to the town of Windsor. The Commissioner's report recommended, and I went back to check the Commissioner's report, that that forty-five cents being now paid to the town of Windsor on all of its tax revenue continue in place until 1993 - stay in place. That was the Commissioner's -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: No, the Commissioner did not recommend a sliding scale. The Commissioner recommended that it stay in place until 1993. So what the Province is paying to the town of Windsor now would stay in place for the next three years. But what the Government did was say, no, we are not going to do that. We are going to reduce the amount that we now pay to Windsor, and they will get forty-five cents the first year, thirty-five cents the second year and twenty-five cents the third year. Now that is what the

Government said, correct? The minister is nodding.

Now, how is that a special deal? How can one be accused of looking for a special deal if all they were looking for, the two towns and the Commissioner, was that the formula that is in place now for the Windsor section of that new town stay in place for the next three years? How was that a special deal, I ask the Premier? It is not a special deal. In fact, what has happened is they have reduced what they are now paying. They reduced what they are now paying. And the special deal is in place for the Province. Because it is the Province that will benefit and save. Now the Premier shakes his head. Now how in the name of God can he shake his head at it? You are now paying them forty-five cents for all their tax revenue. That is what you are now paying them. And if you kept it up you would be paying them forty-five cents next year, the year after and the year after that.

But you did not. You are not keeping it up. You are cutting it back over the next three years - forty-five, thirty-five, twenty-five. That is what you are doing. And then you accuse the two towns of looking for a special deal. I mean it does not make any sense whatsoever. So I hope the Minister will address that particular question because it is still a question in dispute. And I know that he is going to hopefully meet with the new council when it is ready, to try to resolve this particular problem. But it is a question in dispute. Time does not permit me to address the other particular issue on the capital grant one, but suffice it to say that the

commissioners' report in that particular instance too recommended that the capital grant be paid up until the year 1993. That is the commissioners' report. So what has happened is that the Government on both instances changed the commissioners' report, did not accept the recommendations of the commissioners, and did not accept the recommendations of the two towns.

That is in essence what has happened, and I hope that the Minister will see fit to correct that mistake and that error because I am sure it could only have been done by mistake.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

Mr. Gullage: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure who is initiating these petitions but it is very very misleading to the people of Grand Falls - Windsor. Because clearly the Government's decision was to phase in the forty-five, thirty-five, twenty-five -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

An Hon. Member: Wait now, be quiet now.

Mr. Gullage: - based on the fact that it is better for the two towns put together. It is a better scenario than having forty-five cents and then twenty cents beyond \$2 million of revenue. And if you work out the calculations both ways, and what I clearly said to the two towns in my meeting of September 25, was work out the calculations both ways and whichever is better we will apply that particular formula. But it was never

intended to have them pay any more than twenty cents above the \$2 million mark. Which would be clearly giving them something that had never been in place in the first place.

Mr. Simms: What was the commissioners' recommendation?

Mr. Gullage: The commissioners' recommendation - obviously I had the advantage of that before I met with Cabinet and before I went to Grand Falls for that meeting.

Mr. Simms: You ignored it!

An Hon. Member: Keep quiet!

Mr. Gullage: No I did not ignore it!

Mr. Simms: You did ignore it!

Mr. Gullage: The decision of Government was to have a phase in forty-five, thirty-five, twenty-five.

Mr. Simms: Contrary to the commissioners' recommendations.

An Hon. Member: Oh yes.

Mr. Gullage: Well, Government had no obligation to follow the commissioner's recommendation, as you know.

Mr. Simms: Of course it does not, but at least it (inaudible)!

An Hon. Member: Mr. Speaker!

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

I ask the hon. Member for Grand Falls to allow the Minister time to answer the question. I think he presented his petition and as far as I know he was not interfered with, and again I ask

hon. members to -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I ask the Opposition to extend the same courtesy to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Simms: Alright, Mr. Speaker, (inaudible).

Mr. Gullage: The point is clear, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister's obligation was to make a recommendation to Cabinet, having the advantage of the commissioners' reports, input from officials and others that the Minister would consult with. But a recommendation to Government and an eventual Government decision might bear no resemblance at all to the commissioners' report. They are helpful but certainly they do not have to be accepted verbatim by any Government. And in this case the Government decided that the phase-in would be forty-five, thirty-five, twenty-five, clearly to the advantage of both towns, and the forty-five cents on the dollar, faced off against Windsor and against Grand Falls on the portion that applies, is clearly to their advantage, and the towns accepted that at the time.

I see no reason why the Member continues to bring in irrelevant petitions based on very much a minority of the people of the area, of the new town of Grand Falls - Windsor. Trying to excite the people where we already have an amalgamation taking place, an agreement in place. Why he persists on petitions that are totally irrelevant, beside the point, because Government has made a decision, it has been conveyed

to the towns, and accepted by the towns.

An Hon. Member: That is right. Exactly. Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I stand to support the petition presented by my colleague, the Member for Grand Falls. And you know, Mr. Speaker, why the Minister can get up and say all of this for the last two or three minutes, but the question has to be asked and it begs an answer, why did he have commissioners if he totally ignored the advice of the commissioners? What is the sense of setting up a commission when the Minister totally ignored the advice of the commission?

Mr. Gullage: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs on a point of order.

Mr. Gullage: I did not say I totally ignored the advice of the commissioners. I said I had the advantage of having that advice by way of a commissioner's report, but I made it clear that Government is never bound to the advice of a commissioner's report or any other report. It is helpful advice, but to say I ignored it entirely is ridiculous. Most of the points and recommendations of the commissioner were in fact accepted by Government and subsequently accepted by the town.

Mr. Speaker: I will entertain the argument.

Mr. Simms: Obviously, the Member

has struck a sore point with the Minister. The Member accused him of ignoring the commissioner's report, and in the case of these two items he did absolutely ignore the Commissioner's Report. There is no point of order, as usual.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

There is no point of order, the Minister took advantage of the point of order to make a point of clarification.

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Minister totally ignored what the commissioners had to say regarding the report on the Grand Falls - Windsor amalgamation.

An Hon. Member: He never had any intention of listening to them.

Mr. Tobin: I am not so sure that the Minister was the person. I think the Minister went out there in good faith on September 25 and I think what he said to the councils is what he meant, but when he came back, Mr. Speaker, old slash, the Premier, got at that, the same as he did with everything else. I can hear him now, Eric, you must be crazy. You can almost hear the Premier now, Mr. Speaker. That is what is happening, and poor old Eric, or the hon. Member, Mr. Speaker, had to take backwater based on the dictatorial attitude of the Premier, because none of them over there are in a position to resign from the dictatorial dictatorship that is in this Province. The Minister had to take backwater and go out and try to skate around it the best he could. Now, that is what happened, it is the Premier, and there is one other reason, the

Member for Windsor - Buchans has to be the weakest member of that Cabinet because nobody representing a group of constituents could stand idly by and see all of this happening. He had to be in Cabinet. The Minister had to be in Cabinet when the Premier changed the decision of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, because no doubt that is where it was done. Where was the Member for Windsor - Buchans, Mr. Speaker? He is an absolute failure. He has not had the courage to stand up for the people he represents and he should do the honorable thing and resign. If a Minister of the Crown were to make such a commitment to my constituents, or to anybody who is concerned about their constituents, I would never stand by and see it scuttled away like the Member for Windsor - Buchans has done. I do not blame the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Obviously, the Minister of Municipal Affairs did not have any support in Cabinet from the Member for Windsor - Buchans.

Mr. Simms: He just sat there and said, yes, Premier, yes, Premier.

Mr. Tobin: We all know if there is a shuffle we will never see the Member for Windsor - Buchans. The Premier's debt will soon be paid to the Member for Windsor - Buchans, Mr. Speaker, for giving him a seat in the House, and then the incompetency we have seen in the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture for the past eighteen months will no longer exist, hopefully. Hopefully, someone like the Member for Placentia will be in Cabinet. That is what is going to happen. The Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs is not to blame for what has happened there, it is the

Premier. The Member for Gander dwells on parochialism and has no time for the Grand Falls - Exploits area, because that is the man who stopped the college from going to Central Newfoundland. It was recommended that it go out in the Exploits - Grand Falls area and the Member for Windsor said, no way. That is what happened, and again, Mr. Speaker, we had the weakling for Windsor - Buchans in Cabinet.

Mr. Simms: The Member for Exploits, by the way, did not -

Mr. Tobin: Oh, the Member for Exploits was too busy driving. Why did the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs make a commitment to the people of Windsor - Buchans and fail to fulfill it? Why? How does the Minister expect the people from Windsor - Buchans, or anywhere else in this Province, to trust him anymore on amalgamation? How can he be trusted?

An Hon. Member: It is not the deal he promised.

Mr. Tobin: It is not the deal he promised. It is the deal that the Premier changed in Cabinet, Mr. Speaker. That is what took place here. The Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs has now been compromised by the Premier, and the councils in this Province no longer trust him, and that is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hogan: It is all lies.

Mr. Tobin: It is not lies. I tell the Member for Placentia it is not lies. I cannot get away with it like you. That is what is going on in this Legislature. As a matter of fact I ask the Minister of Municipal and

Provincial Affairs to go back to his original commitment to the people of Grand Falls - Windsor. Tell the Premier you have made a commitment, you do not feel you should be compromised, and for the Premier to keep his nose clean and let you go on and run the Municipal and Provincial Affairs Department.

Orders of the Day

Mr. Speaker: Motion 3.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Revise And Consolidate The Law Respecting Juries," carried. (Bill No. 68)

On motion, Bill No. 68, read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

Mr. Baker: Order, 33, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order 33. Is this one a first time or have we adjourned debate on this one?

An Hon. Member: No, it is the first time. It has not been introduced.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, 1988" (Bill No.48).

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand and move the second reading of this Bill because it is making some rather progressive changes in amendments to the Highway Traffic Act and I will go through them so that hon. Members will be

enlightened by the clauses that are to be changed, and I am sure that they will have nothing to do but agree wholeheartedly with all the changes that are reflected, the progressive changes we are making in the Highway Traffic Act with this Bill. So, the first one is: Clause one, and it is the renewal of drivers licences and vehicle registrations at banks. Now, this was done to improve the services to the public -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Gilbert: - and I know Members over there will say that it had something to do with the closing of the Motor Registration Vehicle Centres in Wabush and Clarenville, but it did not. This Bill was introduced last year as one of the overall improvements that we, on this side of the House, since we took over the Government, was looking at so that we could improve the service to the general public in all of Newfoundland.

It will facilitate renewals in remote areas and will be a convenience for all the drivers in Newfoundland. It is going to reduce the line-ups at the Motor Registration offices and the public will be able to pay for the renewal fees and outstanding fines at the bank in the same way that they currently pay their phone bills or light bills, so it is nothing new what we are doing.

It is just that it is one of the amendments we are making to this Act to make it more convenient for the people of Newfoundland and this is one of the aims of this Government, Mr. Speaker. Renewals will be processed the next day at the Motor Registration, so that is clause one; that is what that is going to do.

The next thing that we are doing in this bill is Clause two. We are saying that we are having Park Wardens designated as Peace Officers and this will allow the Highway Traffic Act to be used inside the National Parks and to allow assessment of points against drivers convicted of offences within the park boundaries. Currently they are charged under the National Parks Act.

Clauses four, six, seven, eight, nine and ten: These are changes to the criminal code related to the operation of motor vehicles, such as impaired driving, negligent driving, dangerous driving, manslaughter by use of a vehicle and failure to remain at the scene of an accident.

Clause five, is impaired driving under the National Defence Act and it is necessary to be consistent with the provincial policy and legislation in other provinces. It provides for the suspension of driving privileges, if an individual is convicted of impaired driving under the National Defence Act, in other words, servicemen who were convicted somewhere else and they were transferred here. Military personnel and their dependents currently cannot be suspended for impaired driving if they are charged inside a military base. But again a protection to the public for those people who are convicted this way.

Clauses 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, demerit point system, now this is an interesting one, Mr. Speaker, because we have heard the former Premier when he was announcing, one of the reasons that he decided he was going to resign is that he could not get the concurrence of his Cabinet to bring in the

demerit point system.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have had the demerit point system in since June 1 of this year. And do you know something, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the trend will continue, but in the time when we introduced the bill and introduced the demerit point system June 1, the fatalities on the highway are down by thirteen people, thirteen people less. Now we hope that it was because of the demerit point system. We feel sorry that the previous Government did not have the will to make this change that is so beneficial to Newfoundland. So all those changes are covered there.

Now clause 17 is offences under the National Safety Code and they are regulations respecting the National Safety Code under section 195 of the Highways Traffic Act, currently we have no penalty provision and cannot create offences, they are thus unenforceable for the majority of the public, in effect they are for information purposes. This amendment will allow the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to improve fines and penalties allowing appropriate penalties for specific offenses, allow the proper enforcement of these regulations and approve the efficiency of the highway enforcement staff. The regulations are currently enforced by means of a warning ticket by placing vehicles and drivers out of service until the violation is corrected. So this is again progressive legislation.

Now clause 18 - this is the amendment establishing the minimum penalty for first and subsequent offences making the general penalty under a ticketable

offence, again carried on from clause 19.

The next thing is clause 19, and this is the average balance on outstanding fines related to traffic tickets is between \$4 million and \$5 million. Now to encourage the prompt payment and reduce the cost there are going to be penalties inflicted for late payments, and late payment is sixty days after convictions the fines are going to range: from one dollar to fifty dollars the penalty is five dollars; for fines ranging from fifty-one to one hundred dollars the penalty is ten dollars; and for fines ranging over one hundred dollars the penalty is ten dollars plus ten dollars per hundred or part thereof. So in other words, we are trying to collect some of the money that is outstanding in traffic offences, and by putting in this penalty we hope to accelerate the collection.

Clause 20: The Highway Traffic Act currently makes the owner of a vehicle responsible for fines for moving offences committed in their vehicles. Fines incurred by another must be paid by the owner of the vehicle, and frequently causing considerable frustrations in trying to have his licence renewed and being an innocent victim. So this amendment will make the person committing the moving violation responsible for the fines. The owner will continue to be responsible for non-moving violations. The fines for speeding will be the responsibility of the person speeding, but parking tickets or tickets for other non-moving violations such as a broken taillight will remain the responsibility of the vehicle owner. Again a very progressive

amendment and a change that is going to improve the services for all Newfoundlanders.

Then clause 21 is a Schedule of Penalties which is replaced with a consolidated schedule.

So basically, Mr. Speaker, this bill is, as I have stated, some very fine amendments, I might add, to The Traffic Act, and ones that I feel that all members will welcome and I am sure that they will have very little trouble accepting the amendments that we are recommending in this Act. So if they have a few comments to make I will be only too happy to listen, if there are any questions I can answer for them concerning the amendments I will. So I move second reading.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

Mr. Doyle: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a few words to say on this Bill, Bill 48, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act. The minister said he would be happy to answer any questions. Well, I suggest he can sit back for a few hours, because I am sure there will be many, many questions on this particular Bill he is bringing in here today.

This Bill is not as routine as the minister would lead us to believe it is. At the same time, now, it does contain a number of technical type amendments, which are relatively minor amendments relating to traffic control and safety and what have you. There are a few technical amendments in there, as well, on making number changes to the Criminal Code of Canada, to make this legislation conform to the Criminal Code of Canada.

So, there are a few technical amendments, as the minister says there is, but, as well, I would like to point out to him that there are some amendments in this Bill which will likely generate a little bit of public interests. I am sure there is a number of amendments in here which are going to create a little bit of controversy and create a little bit of public interest, as well, so I would suggest to the minister that he make notes on what we are going to be saying, and try to answer some of the questions that are going to be coming up on this Bill.

Some of the amendments which will, as I said, generate a little bit of public interest, are Clause 1, Subsection (1), Clause 2, Clause 3, and Clause sixteen. Now, these are sections of the Act which I have identified as having some concern about, and would like the minister to answer a few questions on. Clause 1, Subsection (1), Clauses 2, 3 and 16, allow a person to pay fees for renewal of a driver's licence or motor vehicle registration at a chartered bank. That is a new clause, as the minister correctly pointed out, and the banks will now be able to validate extension of current licence registration for a period of thirty days from the date of the payment at the bank. That is one, which I will get back to in a few minutes, that I have some concerns about.

Clause 1 (2) extends the definition of a peace officer to include a park warden appointed under The Public Employment of Canada Act. And the next amendment, which I am sure a number of people in the Province will undoubtedly have a great deal of concern about, would be the

amendment to the schedule of penalties for Traffic Act violations, which includes the maximum and the minimum at the back of the Act, I believe on page twenty, violations which increase maximum and minimum penalties for approximately 300 violations. These are increased anywhere from fifty to sixty per cent.

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Doyle: The minister can say no all he wants. I have the old Act. I looked at the old Act and I have compared it with the new Act. I have the schedule of fines written next to the new fines the minister is bringing in, and I would say to him that they increase by fifty to sixty per cent in the majority of cases. I can give him the full schedule of fines, what they are right now verses what the minister is proposing under Bill 48, and they increased from fifty to sixty per cent. But I will get back to that in a little while.

First of all, the chartered banks, the minister said a moment ago, will now be handling licence renewal. I would say to the minister that he is probably making the first step today toward privatization of licence renewal and motor vehicle registration, period. He is probably getting into the whole area of privatization. I am wondering if the minister will tell us when he gets up if he is, indeed, moving in that direction, to eventually quite possibly do away with all the motor registration offices right across Newfoundland and Labrador? Of course, we see the office now has been eliminated in Wabush, and the Motor Vehicle Registration Office has been eliminated in Clarenville, as

well. The minister, I am sure, will be quite pleased to make his position known on it when he rises in debate, but that would lead me to believe that the minister is moving toward a full privatization of motor vehicle registration in the Province.

I would ask him, as well, what will now happen with the first-timers? I have plenty of questions for the minister.

Mr. Gilbert: I will listen while I am out here.

Mr. Doyle: Okay. What will now happen, Mr. Speaker, to the first-timers who are going to be getting licenses? These people will still be dealing with the Motor Registration Division, but I would say to the Minister that it is quite possibly the intention of Government now to privatize that, as well, to close up the Motor Vehicle Registration offices as a cost-cutting measure, and probably to farm that particular service out to private individuals, or private contractors. I am hearing a few rumors, albeit not totally founded yet, but I am hearing a few rumors going around that the first-time driver's test may very well be farmed out, or contracted out, to the private driving schools, thereby eliminating the need for these people at the Motor Registration Division. The driver's test could very well, I am hearing, be contracted out to private individuals and private driving schools.

I am interested in hearing from the Minister, when he gets up to speak, how many Motor Vehicle offices are likely to close as a result of the move he is making today, by privatizing this and farming it out to the chartered

banks in the Province. Will we now need the number of Motor Vehicle offices in the Province that we have? I cannot see under this scenario the Minister is proposing how we will, because the work load is certainly going to be much lighter than it is right now. They are going to have literally thousands and thousands of people who will be going to the bank from now on the way you go with an electrical bill; you will be going to a chartered bank with your licence renewal and they will be processing it and sending it off, the Minister says, to a central Motor Vehicle office here in the Province. So it could very well be that we will only need, as a result of this move, maybe one Motor Vehicle office, a central one, possibly the one that is in Mount Pearl.

The Minister has not indicated as a result of this move, farming it out to the banks, how many layoffs are likely to occur. How many layoffs are likely to occur at the Motor Registration office? Surely, you are not going to need the number of people you have right now, because the work load, as I said, will be reduced considerably. So I am wondering how many people this is going to affect directly.

Have the respective unions who look after these people been consulted? Have they been notified as to how many people they are going to have to find jobs for as a result of the move? And what is going to be the main function of these offices right now if the Minister is moving in that direction? Hopefully, the Minister will give us that information when he stands, maybe tomorrow sometime, to answer some of these questions.

I have another question for the Minister on the banks. What will be the bank charges associated with having this service performed by them? As a result of having this function performed by them, what will be the bank charges and who will be paying for it? Will it be the individual who goes looking for a renewal of licence? Will he be charged an extra fee? It is not made clear in the Bill, and I did not expect it to be made clear in the Bill. I guess these will be regulations which will come after, but surely there will be an additional charge put on that the Minister has not identified and has not said anything about, as a result of having the banks handle it. Who is going to pay that extra charge? Will it be the Government? Will the Government be subsidizing the thing, or will it be the individuals who will wind up paying the charge for the banks doing this service for the people?

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the Government has already closed motor vehicle offices at Clarendville and Wabush, and I will be anxious to hear from the Minister as to whether or not he is going to be closing additional offices in the Province. What about the future of the motor vehicle office in Mount Pearl? Is this now going to be reduced? Is that going to be reduced to processing the permanent drivers' licences? They are not going to have the function now of renewal, so will that be reduced to processing permanent driver and vehicle permits, initially processed at the chartered banks?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Doyle: You will have to deal

with the Member for Mount Pearl on that one. Mr. Speaker, I remember quite well how the Government promised to decentralize Government services and to help sustain and diversify the rural economy of the Province, but they seem to be pursuing policies with this particular Bill which will centralize Government services east of the overpass.

I will get back to that one in a few minutes and have a few more comments to make on it, but the next part of this Bill, the next amendment in the Bill, which will cause some concern and we have some questions on, is designating the federal park wardens as peace officers. First of all, the minister did not make clear why he is doing that. Currently, peace officer designation includes the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, the RCMP and municipal police. Will the federal park wardens now have all the powers of a peace officer when it comes to patrolling or enforcing the Highway Traffic Act? Will the federal park warden now have all the powers of a peace officer to enforce traffic regulations in the Province? And to serve warrants? Will he be able to investigate traffic accidents, make arrests, inspect vehicles and everything that is currently done by the RCMP or the RNC?

And I am interested in knowing why the Minister would want to extend that responsibility to a federal park warden, to be able to police and to give tickets and what have you. Certainly they are not trained in that particular area, so why would they be required under this Act to get involved in doing that?

Also, Mr. Speaker, why is the

jurisdiction under the Act specifically limited to national parks? If the Minister is proposing to have this done in the national parks, why would he not propose to extend that to the Provincial parks as well? That is another question I would like the Minister to answer.

Mr. Speaker, it certainly appears that the Province is transferring some of the responsibility for policing the Highway Traffic Act to federal employees in national parks. Does that mean the Province may reduce the presence of the provincial police in these parks? Will the RCMP still be patrolling the parks? Will they still be enforcing the Highway Traffic Act, or will full responsibility of the Highway Traffic Act in the national parks now be given to the park warden? Because that is a radical move from what it was before.

Just in case the Minister missed it when he was out, I asked him if that same responsibility is going to be extended to the provincial parks as well as the federal parks.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) the RCMP.

Mr. Doyle: Well, the RCMP currently patrol the federal national parks, as well. So why is he giving a warden in a federal national park the responsibility of policing the Highway Traffic Act, and enforcing the Highway Traffic Act, and not doing it in the provincial parks? What makes the federal park so special in this regard?

And what about the training of that individual? I ask the Minister. He is not trained to deal with that type of incident,

so is he now going to be requiring special training for federal park officials to police and enforce the Highway Traffic Act? And what duties and responsibilities flow from that? Will he be able to now lay charges?

I have a feeling that it is pointless to be speaking to the Minister. I am up here this last fifteen minutes talking to the Minister, and all the Minister has been doing is out drinking coffee and talking to his colleagues down in the back.

Mr. Simms: Shame on him.

Mr. Doyle: He is not paying any attention anyway, so I do not know what I am up here asking him questions for. I know when he gets up in three or four days from now, when debate is finished on the Bill, he will completely and totally ignore every question I asked. But he will be asked these questions again - I believe we have the opportunity when we go in Committee.

Mr. Simms: Absolutely.

Mr. Doyle: So we will keep asking and asking and asking. If the Minister does not wish to listen now, well that is all fine and dandy.

Mr. Simms: That is all you can do about it.

Mr. Doyle: That is all I can do about it. So, will the federal park warden now have the responsibility and will he now have the power, if he is giving the federal park warden the power to police the Act and to enforce it, to lay charges in Provincial Court as well? And what are the reasons? I mean, the Minister got

up and said he is going to extend that power to the warden. Why is he doing it? The least he could have done was gotten up and said we are doing it, and here is the reason for it, so we would not have to get up asking these questions. I asked him about the provincial parks. He made no reference to that in his comments, either. I will get back to that one in a few minutes, as well, Mr. Speaker.

I want to have a talk with the Minister now on the schedule of fines. He just skipped over that part of it as if there was no great change -

Mr. Simms: No big deal.

Mr. Doyle: - in the fines, it was no big deal. Well, the Minister I believe, if memory serves me correctly, raised about \$4 million last year on fines in the Province. That is fine. All the money the Minister can get I am sure he can use. He raised \$4 million last year. I believe this year, under that new fine structure he is bringing in, he will be raising roughly about \$6 million or \$6.5 million.

Now he skipped over the fine part of it fairly quickly, saying that there were going to be a few increases but no big deal. But there is a big deal. I am sure the people of the Province will be very disturbed, indeed, when they find out what these increases are all about. Now I would say to the Minister that he has increased some of these fines to the tune of - I believe I said 50 per cent to maybe 60 per cent.

Mr. Tobin: How much?

Mr. Doyle: Fifty per cent to

sixty per cent I believe, some of them. Let me have a look here. I think it is fifty - oh yes. An amendment to the schedule of penalties for Traffic Act violations will increase the maximum and minimum penalties for three hundred violations by 50 per cent to 60 per cent. And some of these are very substantial.

Now the Minister said no, he is not increasing fines that heavily. But I have a copy of the old Act today, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act," what the current structure of the fines are versus what the new fines will be. And on page 20 if Members do not realize it, if they want to go to page 20 of the Bill: a non-resident failing to register a commercial motor vehicle, the fine will now be \$900, I would say to the Minister. The fine will be \$900 maximum and a minimum of \$360. Now the maximum under this Bill is \$900, the maximum under the old one was \$600. So that is a \$300 increase in that fine. The minimum now is \$360, the minimum under the old one was \$240.

Mr. Gilbert: (Inaudible).

Mr. Doyle: So you are going from \$600 to \$900. Now that is probably a poor example, that one. A non-resident failing to register, that is maybe a poor example, because we are all inclined to say, well, the non-resident, who cares? And I am inclined to say that, as well. So if you put a fine of \$1,000 or \$2,000 on them, it is not affecting the Newfoundland public. But it did go from \$600 to \$900.

But what about a dealer assigning or transferring a licence? Transfer of license. This is the

second one. That goes from \$240 up to \$360.

An Hon. Member: What is wrong with that?

Mr. Doyle: An increase of \$120 of a slap.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Doyle: Goes from \$240 -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Doyle: - up to \$360. Now, most of them, probably 250 out of 300 are increased from 50 per cent to 60 per cent. I picked out a few, and I just put a few marks after ones which caught my eye.

Identification plates not securely fastened in a proper way. A licence plate not put on in a proper way will go from a \$60 fine up to \$100.

Mr. Hogan: Are you against this, or what?

Mr. Doyle: If you do not have your licence plate on your car now affixed on it in the proper way, if it should fall to one side, you will get a \$100 fine for it. Failure to keep your licence plates, your identification plates clean, a \$100 fine.

An Hon. Member: Maximum.

Mr. Doyle: Maximum. The maximum under the old Act was \$60. So it has gone from \$60 to \$100 on the maximum. The minimum has gone from \$12 up to \$25.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Doyle: Well, as I said, some of them are increasing by 100 per cent. But the majority is going

from 50 per cent to 60 per cent.

An Hon. Member: Think about hit-and-run now, think about hit-and-run.

Mr. Doyle: Failure to file a change of address with the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. That is a \$90 dollar fine now if you fail to notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles on your address being changed. Removing an identification plate or a marker without authority. Sometimes on your licence plate, where you have that little tag up in the corner, because it was not properly put on it might fall off, your fine now for having that little tag fall off your license plate will be \$360.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Doyle: It is not true? The Member for St. John's South says it is not true.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) court of law. I mean, no judge is going to do that.

Mr. Doyle: Well, what's it in here for if you don't want to collect it? Why would you have it in the Act?

An Hon. Member: Are you against it?

Mr. Doyle: So if you now put on your little sticker on the licence plate and it falls off because maybe it was not put on properly, or was not dry when you put it on, or because of bad weather conditions or what have you, and you should be pulled in by an RCMP or an RNC officer, you can get a fine now of \$360.

So, I make no wonder -

Mr. Hogan: So what?

Mr. Doyle: The Member for Placentia says, So what? Well, I do not believe the people of the Province would treat it that way at all. He is probably a little bit better off than the average individual.

Mr. Speaker, these fines are draconian. They are out of line and they go up as I said, by 50 per cent to 60 per cent.

Failing to sign your licence: Now, how many times have you been pulled in by a peace officer, pulled in by the RCMP and asked to produce your licence and you forgot to sign it?

An Hon. Member: What?

Mr. Doyle: You might have forgotten to sign your licence. Now, what is going to be the fine for forgetting to sign your licence, forgetting to put your signature down on the bottom line? One hundred dollars, one hundred dollars -

An Hon. Member: One hundred dollars?

Mr. Doyle: - is going to be the fine now for failing to sign your licence.

An Hon. Member: It is hard enough, (inaudible).

Mr. Doyle: You had better check it. Failing to sign your licence.

An Hon. Member: Time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doyle: I have a full hour, if I want to go.

An Hon. Member: Keep going, he has got no licence, (inaudible).

Mr. Doyle: So the maximum on that under the old Act, was a sixty dollar fine and it has now gone to one hundred dollars.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Doyle: The minimum was twelve dollars and now it has gone to twenty-five dollars.

An Hon. Member: Norm, the Minister of Social Services just went out for his licence.

Mr. Doyle: A licensee, failing to produce a licence upon request, you will now get a hundred dollar fine for that one as well. So, I make no wonder that the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation skipped over the penalty schedule and said, it really was not important; make no wonder he skipped over that, Mr. Speaker, because he is now going to collect roughly about \$6.5 million, if everything remains the way it was last year, he collected about \$4 million last year under the Act and this year, if it holds true, he will collect about \$6.5 million, so, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the questions that I would like the Minister to address when he stands in his place.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

Mr. Tobin: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please! Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: Oh, I am sorry.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Murphy: Just a few comments, a quick few comments. I think there is a lot of good material in

this new Act, Mr. Speaker, to discourage obviously, that is the intent of a lot of this Act, is to discourage those people on the highways and byways from breaking the law because the carnage that has taken place on our highways has been increasing over the years and -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) and not wearing seat belts.

Mr. Murphy: - if we do not initiate- I mean these fines here, Mr. Speaker, are comparable to mainland fines and I will just draw on one to bring home the point.

Somebody mentioned that \$180 maximum fine for riding a bicycle on a sidewalk, riding a bicycle on a sidewalk.

Well, let me inform this House that not too long ago in this city, there was an elderly woman with a bag of groceries in her hand, Mr. Speaker, who was hit by a bicycle and the woman was hospitalized for a period of nearly six months and it nearly caused a fatality.

So these are the kind of things that this piece of legislation ensures, the safety of the public in this Province, and I think the Minister has done an excellent job, his officials have done an excellent job, and I think to sit here and make points just for the sake of making points is not what we should be doing, we should be endorsing this type of legislation, anything that improves the safety of both the motor vehicle operators and the pedestrians, is obviously a solid piece of legislation and I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in many of the cases, the new fines

schedule is put in place to discourage those type of infractions.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, what a cop out by the Member for St. John's South. What a cop out - this bill - there is nothing, Mr. Speaker -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: Do not tell me about this Bill and what is in it and what is not in it. For example, when you talk about the fines, the Member got up and he talked about a bicycle and someone going home with a bag of groceries. Well, Mr. Speaker, what about this one here: making avoidable noises when animal passing engine, \$180 fine.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Now, Mr. Speaker, making avoidable noises-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: - when animal passing an engine, how do you do that.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Yes, Mr. Speaker -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: Yes, Mr. Speaker, avoidable noises. Who is going to determine the avoidable noises, Mr. Speaker? If you have not got the Member for St. John's South in the car with you, who would know whether there is an avoidable

noise or not? That is the question that has to be answered here.

An Hon. Member: St. John's South.

Mr. Tobin: Yes, St. John's South. Mr. Speaker, it could have been the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island and then you would have both of them in the same car. Driving while suffering from disease or disability: and who would know if someone has or has not got a disease, \$180 and if you are caught twice it is \$240. Now, who can determine whether a person driving a car has a disease? Is that what the Minister of Transportation is going to be?

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this is what is happening. What the Minister of Transportation has brought before this House today is unbelievable. And the sad part about this is that not one member over there, including the Minister of Transportation, knew what was in the bill. Not one, Mr. Speaker, including the Minister of Transportation. We know that there is an attempt to privatize the transportation system.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Oh yes there is. We know that is taking place.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: I think I got a half hour.

Mr. Speaker, we know that is taking place. We know that the Minister of Transportation has made a move in Wabush and in Clarendville to privatize the system. And I will make a prediction that before this Government is finished with the

Department of Transportation that the maintenance on the equipment will be privatized. I will make that prediction.

An Hon. Member: A good move.

Mr. Tobin: I do not know if it is a good move or not. I will make another prediction, Mr. Speaker, that snow clearing will be privatized in a lot of places in Newfoundland and that this Minister and this Government will privatize the transportation system; they will privatize the maintenance and they will privatize the snow clearing. They have already started to privatize -

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I would call what the Member for St. John's South is doing - unavoidable lies. That is what I would say. We look at these fines, Mr. Speaker, look at every one of them.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Oh, listen, Mr. Speaker, to the Member for St. John's South.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Sure you got to pay it, but you do not increase the fines by 500 per cent without telling the people of the Province. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, should have went through the public hearing process. That is what should have happened to this bill. In fact the Legislative Review Committee should have looked at this and let the people see what was in it. And I venture to bet it was intentional, Mr.

Speaker, by the Government House Leader; he intentionally kept this Bill from going to the public. That is why it was not there.

An Hon. Member: It was already on the order paper.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, how would he know.

An Hon. Member: That went through the committee stage.

Mr. Tobin: That did not go to the committee stage. This Bill that has increases of up to 500 per cent did not go to the committee stage and I would like to know why, Mr. Speaker. And I do not think the members opposite read the Bill. I am not sure the Member for Bonavista South read this Bill in detail, there is a man, Mr. Speaker, a very reputable lawyer in this Province who has defended people, I am sure, from traffic offenses from time to time. Mr. Speaker, what do they say about animals passing subsequent motor vehicles? But anyway, Mr. Speaker -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, if you ever heard the comment my friend from St. John's South just made I am sure you would name him, but that is not important. But we would ask my colleague from Bonavista South, who is familiar with the court system in this Province and who from time to time has represented people as it relates to violations of the Highway Traffic Act, and I would suspect, Mr. Speaker, that he would be very disturbed, although he might not say it here today because he is trying to get in Cabinet, but he would be very disturbed by what is taking place

in this Bill when the fine increases. That is true. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, I think he would be a damn sight better than some of the crowd that is in there now.

An Hon. Member: What did you say?

Mr. Tobin: I said the Member for Bonavista South would be a lot better than you if he was in Cabinet. That is what I said. You are one the ones that I was talking about.

Now, the privatization of that department has started. The Minister of Transportation has started the privatization by putting -

An Hon. Member: O-o-oh!

Mr. Tobin: There it is. There is the unavoidable noise. - by putting in place a system to replace Government employees both in Clarendville and in Wabush. I can speak from the Clarendville office that serves the Burin Peninsula, the District that I am honoured to represent.

Mr. Hogan: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: I am not going to be distracted by the Member for Placentia. Let the Member for Placentia go out and tell the people who work on maintenance in the depots in his district what he just said in this House - it is the right thing to privatize it. Let the Member for Placentia go out and tell his constituents that, I bet he will not do it, Mr. Speaker. He mumbled it in here under his breath, let them privatize it, it is the right thing to do. But what is he going to say to his constituents when there is nowhere for them to go to

work, when somebody else is out, Mr. Speaker, and some other company is out doing maintenance on the highway equipment and his people are home laid off like is going on throughout this Province since this administration came to power. That is what is taking place.

What about the privatization? How far is the Minister going to go as it relates to privatizing the Motor Registration Offices? Will there be jobs affected in the Motor Registration Office in Mount Pearl? These are the questions that I would like to have answered. Will there be jobs affected in the Registration Office in Clarendville, or in Corner Brook? That is what I would like to know. Because the banks are going to do it. You pay the banks your money, another haul for the banks, Mr. Speaker, the big banks, the big boys from Bay Street hauling the money off the poor. Then they send it out to you in the mail. Now what is the difference between that and the post office? That is what I would like to know.

Mr. Hogan: There is none.

Mr. Tobin: No, there is none is right. I agree with my colleague for Placentia, there is none. But the banks are going to make a buck off the people or two. But there are going to be jobs lost as a result of it, because if everybody goes to the bank there is going to be nobody going to the Registration Office, and there are going to be layoffs in Corner Brook and Mount Pearl. That is what is happening in this Province - this Government is on the course to privatization. It is a Government by commission, and a Government destined to privatize.

We are not just going to see it in Transportation, we are going to see it, Mr. Speaker, in Municipal Affairs.

An Hon. Member: Air Canada.

Mr. Tobin: If the members of this House knew what the Minister of Municipal Affairs briefed the Federation on in the last twenty-four hours -

Mr. Ramsay: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: I would say to the Member for LaPoile, do you know what the Minister of Municipal Affairs told the Federation of Municipalities as it relates to cutbacks, and how it is going to affect your district? Do you know that? Yes, like you knew what was going on in the fish plant. That is what you know. No, Mr. Speaker, he does not nor do any other members over there. The Cabinet may know it. But I would suspect the backbenchers do not know what it was told. It is not very encouraging at all. All you have to do, Mr. Speaker, is ask the people who were briefed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs as to what took place in terms of cutbacks in that Department.

We look at this Bill, and we look at the fines, and that has to be the trigger. Parking on private land, \$180 fine. What does that mean, parking on private land, \$180 fine? Parking too close to a bus stop, \$180 fine. Mr. Speaker, if you do not pay it you get ten days in jail. Parking within a cross walk another \$180.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Parking too near railway crossings?

An Hon. Member: There are none of them left.

Mr. Tobin: That is the point I was going to make. Now, Mr. Speaker, they come into the House and they talk about the railway, remember the railway - although they are spending the money pretty good on building it. Now they bring in a new Act and they charge you \$180 for parking too close to a railway crossing. That is how consistent this Government is.

An Hon. Member: What?

Mr. Tobin: Parking too close to a railway crossing, \$180, and ten days in jail if you do not pay the fine. There are no railway crossings in the Province. What consistency! No wonder they did not put it to the public, they should tear it up, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, parking on the roadway side of a stopped or parked vehicle, another \$180. I suppose they call that double parking.

An Hon. Member: Big fire trucks and ambulances.

Mr. Simms: How much was it before?

Mr. Tobin: Forty-five dollars or something.

Permitting passengers to ride improperly on motorcycles, \$180; backing vehicle when unsafe to do so. How do you back a vehicle when it is unsafe to do so?

Mr. Ramsay: Backing out on a highway, backing out -

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for LaPoile should try it

backward. Now, here is a dandy, driving motor vehicle with sticker on windows, a \$180 fine.

An Hon. Member: It is not the offense he is talking about.

Mr. Tobin: I am talking about the fine, \$180 for having a sticker. If you go to a park and they pass you a sticker. Now, this is a good one. Here is the Minister of Wildlife, responsible for parks, and every time you go into a park to get your seasonal ticket they give you a windshield sticker and the Minister of Transportation will give you \$180 fine for it. What a way to raise money. They give you a parking permit here for members and then they give you \$180 fine for putting on the sticker. What hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker. Driving vehicle with load projecting, whatever that means.

An Hon. Member: Something hanging out over the vehicle.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Minister to explain this one, racing a bicycle on the highway, \$180. It was never \$180 before for racing a bicycle on the highways. He has increased the fines in this Bill, I would suspect, by several million dollars. They will pick up several million dollars a year in increases. The Government will raise millions, and millions, and millions of dollars as a result of these increases.

Mr. Walsh: If people will not break the law, how dare you say they are criminals.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Member for Mount Scio what I think of him, if he wants to get onto it. Let the Member

for Mount Scio - Bell Island go back with Belle and never mind down here interrupting. What is happening here is that this Government in an attempt to raise money is putting taxes on people who break traffic violations, and they are increasing it. Is there anyone over there who never got a speeding or parking ticket? No, Mr. Speaker, none of them.

Mr. Walsh: (Inaudible) now you are advocating -

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, why do you not take that Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island and put him back there where he should be? He is the jewel of the Liberal caucus. I am saying to the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, and I am saying quite clearly to the members opposite, that I am not saying people should break the law, they should not break the law, but this Bill should go out to the public, that is what should have happened. Why did it not go to the committee stages and let the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have input into it? Why did they not do that? Because the President of Treasury Board, the Government House Leader, would not let it go because he knew there would be an uproar about it, the same as there is about this one before us on the Crown lands. That is what is going on in this Province, is that public hearings should have been held on this Bill and let the people of Newfoundland and Labrador - Mr. Speaker, I may even move a six month hoist on this Bill, if they torment me. That is what I might do with this Bill. Because I can tell you right now that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador should not be burdened with unfair taxes that they had no input into. And when a Government turns around and

increases -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: - when Government turns around and increases fines -

Mr. Murphy: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's South, on a point of order.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, this Bill No. 48 did go through Committee under my Chair and the Vice-Chair, the Member for Kilbride.

Mr. Walsh: That is terrible!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

Mr. Tobin: It did not go through the public scrutiny system.

An Hon. Member: Are you speaking to the point of order?

Mr. Tobin: I am not speaking to the point of order because there is no point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has ruled there is no point of order.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, let me say to the Member for St. John's South he covered up the Bill, that is what he did. My colleague on the Committee -

An Hon. Member: That is not true.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: - said that you never made reference to the fines that are in this Bill and there is nowhere in Hansard on your Committee -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, will someone gag the Member for LaPoile?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: Can the Member for St. John's South show me his Hansard?

Mr. Murphy: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Can you show me the Hansard where it was taped? The Committees of Hansard?

Mr. Murphy: The Committee met in camera.

Mr. Tobin: Oh, yes. Now, Mr. Speaker, the truth is coming out. They met in camera. The same as they met in camera when he refused to table the report of the minorities on the Committee when he was supposed to do it. They met in camera too. You got the credibility now to talk about in camera. You lay the facts on the table. That is what you will do. You covered it up and you hid it away from the public, Mr. Speaker, and you should be ashamed of yourself. You hid it from the public. You did not bring it out to the public. That is what is going on. Any member, Mr. Speaker, chairman of a committee who would hide a bill as important as this from the public of Newfoundland and Labrador is not worthy to serve as chairman of a committee. The President of Treasury Board is nodding his head, I know he agrees with me.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: He nodded his head when I said that you did not deserve to be Chairman of the Committee. Now go up and talk to him. That is what is going on in this Assembly. I would ask the Minister who is now talking to the Chairman of the Committee why don't they withdraw the Bill and put it to the public of the Province and let them see the increases?

Mr. Simms: Do you know what the increase amounts to? Two million or three million dollars more.

Mr. Tobin: There you go, Mr. Speaker.

The increase in fines amounts to \$2 million or \$3 million more.

Some Hon. Members: That is only if they break the law.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please! Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, if you break the law now you will pay a fine. But based upon the fines that were paid in this Province last year the Government will raise an additional \$3 million based upon what is in this report.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, it is some hard to speak in this Legislature when you got people like the Member for LaPoile yapping constantly all of the time, and the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island. Mr. Speaker, when the Premier is away that Member up there never stops yapping, when the Premier is here he is up like a fellow ready to go to church to get in Cabinet. He is that prim and proper.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the Member who was kicked out as Chairman of Caucus should be ashamed to open his mouth in this Assembly. That is what he should be doing. Instead of yapping, a fellow who was kicked out as Chairman of Caucus should not be yapping you should be ashamed of yourself. And you are not impressing your colleagues by the way you are getting on in this Assembly, I can assure you that. They have no notion of putting you back as Chairman, you can forget that. So keep your mouth closed and let me get on with my debate.

Mr. Simms: They can confirm that down there in (inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Yes, I know they confirmed it.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: There he goes again.

I looked in Hansard the other day and I think it was forty-seven times that the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island in one day interrupted. One day, Mr. Speaker. If my memory serves me correctly it was forty-seven times that the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island interrupted.

Mr. Flight: It is not very difficult.

Mr. Tobin: So based on what was paid in on fines under this Highway Traffic Act last year, this year there will be an additional \$3 million revenue coming to the Government.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Based on last year's

finer I am saying.

An Hon. Member: Do you agree with breaking the law.

Mr. Tobin: I do not agree with breaking the law. I do not think people should be breaking the law.

An Hon. Member: How many points do you have?

Mr. Tobin: None of your business, Mr. Speaker. I do not agree with breaking the law, but I do not agree, either, that the Government should, through the backdoor, go in and grab \$3 million off the people of this Province without going to public hearings on the Bill. I really do not support that. I honestly believe, Mr. Speaker, that this Government - and they take great glory in saying that they brought in these committee stages for people to have input into it. Give them credit, they brought it in, Mr. Speaker. They go around this Province boasting, the Premier wherever he speaks, talks about how he brought in this new policy, so why then, Mr. Speaker, would a Bill of a magnitude of \$3 million, raising \$3 million in fines, not be put to the public for scrutiny? If the Bill is supposed to work why did it not happen? That is the question I would like to have answered. I believe the question deserves an answer, and I believe the Minister of Transportation should answer it.

An Hon. Member: Your colleague (inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Will you pay your money and go home? Make your donation back to the Province, and go home and do us all a favor. What is going on in this Province today is a Government that is

trying to blindfold the people of this Province in the dark. When the Minister introduced his legislation today, did anyone recall him making reference to the increase in fines of between 50 and 60 per cent, and of implementing new fines that did not exist before? Did anyone hear the Minister doing that when he brought in this Bill today? The answer is no, Mr. Speaker, and why he did not do it is because he did not want the public to find out about it. That is the reason why he did not do it, and the public have a right to know about something like this, and the Minister has to be honest with the Legislature and with the people of the Province. I think, Mr. Speaker, that on a Bill that is going to make that type of a tax grab the Minister should immediately withdraw the Bill, forget about privatizing the Department of Transportation immediately, withdraw the Bill, and let the people who work for Government continue to work in Clarendville and in Wabush, let the people have some input into what they feel about this \$3 million fine increase, and then let the House of Assembly make the decision, because that is not what happened, but that is what should happen. There is nobody on either side of the House that are advocating, or would advocate, that people should break the law. There is nobody on either side of the House that is advocating, or should advocate that there should not be a penalty imposed, but should there be a penalty as severe as a \$3 million tax grab to this Province imposed without public input? I say no, and I ask the Minister -

An Hon. Member: Why are you sitting?

Mr. Tobin: I guess my time is up. That is the only reason why I am sitting here. I ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, if he would consider, when he gets up to speak on the Bill, sometime next week, whenever debate is closed on it, and I can assure him that it will not be today or tomorrow, he need not get overly anxious on that, but I ask him if he would consider putting this Bill to the public and let them have input on a \$3 million tax grab?

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Minister speaks now he closes debate.

The hon. the Member for Menihek.

Mr. A. Snow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this particular Bill, Bill 48, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act. I represent one of the two districts that this Bill has already impacted upon in a sense of delivery of service, one being Clarendville, Trinity North I believe that district is, and I am from the district of Menihek and my district has been impacted by certain clauses in this particular Bill, and by moves of the Minister of Public Works, Services and Transportation. Of course the impact I have felt, and the residents of Western Labrador, has been negative. Under the guise of an improvement of service this regime has seen fit to shut down and close an office in Western Labrador. Now, there were two employees there and the Minister made much ado about the fact that there were no layoffs in Wabush, but indeed what occurred in Wabush was worse than no layoffs with these particular positions. The positions themselves were made

redundant. And of course that has a tremendous impact upon the individuals and upon the service being delivered by those individuals to any taxpayer of this Province.

But there are three main concerns that I wish to raise in this debate. One is the definition of a peace officer. I have not clarified in my own mind why this is being done, why now a federal warden would be a peace officer in a national park. Now is it this regimes intention to have, as the Minister of Treasury Board suggested, peace in the parks. But in that case what they are proposing to do is that they will not have the RCMP patrolling the parks. They will have these Wardens patrolling the parks and thus decrease the policing costs. Is that the intention? And I ask the Minister to clarify that when he gets up to continue debate on the Bill.

The second thing is I have a direct concern as I mentioned earlier with clause (1) which really privatizes the service that is now offered by Motor Vehicle Registration, which gives the bank the power to sell licences and to renew licences to individual residents of this Province.

The third concern I have is with the horrendous increases in fines, from 50 per cent to 60 per cent increases in the amounts of the fines that are imposed upon people who have these violations. It has been mentioned by previous speakers from the other side that concern for the safety and the welfare of people on the roads is the reason why the fines have been tremendously increased, as a deterrent I would assume against speeding or other violations.

Well if they are so concerned about the safety and the welfare of the individuals on the roads why isn't more money being spent on snow clearing and maintaining the highways rather than cutting back? Because we know that hazardous conditions on a road have a greater effect on causing accidents than some of these violations. So if they really have a concern for the safety and the health of individuals of this Province with regard to motor vehicle usage they should also increase the amount of funding. And maybe if they were to increase the amount of funding by the same amount or a similar amount as 50 per cent, instead of taking \$500,000 out of the maintenance of highways in this Province, increase the amount by 50 per cent such as they have done in the fines.

But the initial and most important concern that I and the residents of Western Labrador have is this privatization of the Motor Vehicle Registration. This office does approximately 20,000 transactions in Wabush annually. The people of Wabush would make use of this. There have never been complaints that I know of in Wabush about the extreme long line ups at the Motor Vehicle Registration office, which is one of the reasons the Minister espoused, the Premier espoused and the President of Treasury Board espoused, that they are changing this because people are complaining about the lineups. There has never been a complaint about the lineup, although they have made 20,000 transactions in the Motor Vehicle Registration office in Wabush.

Now, I have seen and heard several complaints about the long lineups in banks in Wabush and Labrador

City, and, of course, that occurs right throughout this Province. So that is really not a sound reason, if you will, for privatizing this service. It is a very flimsy reason. When we listen to the Government, or this regime, talk about the other reason for doing it, it is they are going to improve the service. Now their idea of improvement vis-a-vis the service that was delivered to the people of Wabush, is the fact that a person in Wabush will now have to wait one full year before this service will be improved. They have already lost the service of being able to purchase a licence at their local Motor Vehicle Registration office, and it is going to take a year - one full year - before this comes on line. So the people of Wabush and Labrador City are really being asked to do away with this service - and the people of Clarenville of course - which they have had for years in order to pay for a service that is going to be implemented right across this Province, and that is horrendously unfair.

The Minister makes a great ado about this being a people oriented Department. Of course, if he indeed believes that it is a people oriented Department, rather than bringing in changes which are going to remove his Department's image from this good service, if it is supposed to be a good service, he should be attempting to put more offices in this Province to make it easier, more efficient for people to acquire licences in this Province.

Now, I really believe that when they say it, and they mentioned about making this efficient, what they are really saying is that it is cost-effective, and their idea

of being cost-effective is laying off people. Now they do not mind jumping in bed with the bank, and paying the bank service, as the Minister has suggested; they will jump in bed with the bank and pay these multi-national corporations thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars to provide this service, while they will fire employees out the door. Now, that is fairness and balance.

An Hon. Member: Will the banks hire the local people?

Mr. A. Snow: I doubt very much if the banks will hire many extra people to provide this service. Indeed, if the banks are going to be hiring as the Minister suggested, are they going to be doing it because they are going to charge only one dollar for this service? That is what the Minister has said, there is only going to be a one dollar charge to the individual.

He has also stated in this House that the banks will not be paid any extra by this Government - they are not going to have any extra charges to the Government nor to the individual. But now there is a suggestion from the other side that the banks are going to hire new people for this service. Well, he must know different bankers than I do, if they are going to go out and provide this community service now at a loss and create new employment, great new employment opportunities because they want to pick up the slack, so to speak, of where this particular regime left off.

An Hon. Member: Who will they hire (inaudible).

Mr. A. Snow: Maybe there is going

to be extra employment in the banks. Well, let us look at that scenario. If they are indeed going to hire more people, well, it does not sit square then with what the Minister is suggesting, that the Government is not going to have an extra charge in this. He is saying the client or the customer or the person receiving the licence is only going to have to pay one dollar. Well, if it is going to be more there, that means he has misled the House. He misled the House then, if he is going to have to pay the banks more money.

An Hon. Member: Who?

Mr. A. Snow: The Minister.

An Hon. Member: Why?

Mr. A. Snow: Because he suggested there was only going to be a one dollar charge and the Government would not have to pay the banks more money.

Mr. Simms: Yes, he said that. He said that in the House. Now what? Now what did he say?

Mr. A. Snow: Will you leave me alone. I was doing well until you interrupted me.

Mr. Simms: Tell me what you are saying. He said in the House that the Government would not have to pay the banks.

Mr. A. Snow: Yes.

Mr. Simms: Now, is he saying differently?

Mr. Gilbert: On a point of order. My colleague here tells me that the hon. member said that I misled the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Works,
Services and Transportation.

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, I was
engrossed in something else, which
is more important than what the
Member was saying as a matter of
fact, but my colleague tells me
that the member said I misled the
House. If he did, would you ask
him to withdraw that, please.

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of
order.

The hon. the Member for Menihek.

Mr. Simms: No point of order?

Mr. Speaker: No.

Mr. A. Snow: Mr. Speaker, we know
there is no point of order. I did
not suggest that the Minister
deliberately misled the House. I
am merely suggesting that if,
indeed, he was saying there was a
one dollar fee and that was the
only fee going to be paid by a
client or a customer at the banks,
and the banks are not being paid
any more money by the Government -

Mr. Simms: That is what he said.

Mr. A. Snow: - and then a Member
of his Cabinet suggested, in
flicking across the House, that
there would be more people hired
by the banks. So, there was only
20,000 transactions -

Mr. Kelland: A point of order,
Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the
Minister of Environment and Lands
on a point of order.

Mr. Kelland: Thank you. Just to

clarify a point, really, I assume
the Member for Menihek, normally a
straightforward, upright person
with integrity, said that someone
shouted or indicated from this
side that the banks were going to
hire more people. I simply asked
him, from my chair, if banks hired
local people. I made no
suggestion whatsoever that there
would be an increase in staff. I
have no idea. He probably just
misunderstood the comment. I was
just asking him a question during
his discourse, and the exact
wording was 'do banks hire local
people'?

Mr. Speaker: No point of order.
The hon. the Member for Menihek.

Mr. Kelland: I did not expect it
was, really.

Mr. A. Snow: Thank you, Mr.
Speaker. Now if I may continue.
So, really, in privatizing this
service, which has been provided
by different Governments over
numbers of years in this Province,
what they are going to be doing is
laying off people, although it has
been denied by this regime. They
have done it. Even worse than the
laying off, what they have done is
made the jobs redundant - they
have done away with two job in
Wabush. Now, I would like to know
how many of the fourteen jobs that
are with the Motor Registration
Office in Grand Falls will be made
redundant. Will it be half? Will
it be three-quarters? Maybe it
will be all of them. In Corner
Brook there are twelve jobs with
the Motor Vehicle Registration
Office. Will it be half of them
or all of them?

Mr. Gullage: Is this a quiz?

Mr. A. Snow: Yes, this is a
quiz. And probably some of your

constituents, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, may be working in that office in Mount Pearl and they would be concerned about losing their employment. They may indeed have fifteen, sixteen or twenty years seniority. I know one of the employees in Wabush had sixteen years seniority and they were flicked out the door. So some of those sixty-three people in Mount Pearl may be flicked out the door. And, of course, we know that is going to cause an awful lot of heartache and problems for these people who have worked and provided a good service, not just to the people of this Province, but to the Government of this Province.

But, Mr. Speaker, when will they be doing this? It seems that the Premier suggests that if this Opposition were to pass this Bill or other pieces of legislation, they would implement this service immediately. The President of Treasury Board has suggested that they could do this in as short a period of time as two to three months. The Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, through public relations people, has suggested it is going to take a year. Now, who is correct? How long is it going to be before the people in Corner Brook get flicked out the door? How long is it going to be before the people in Grand Falls will be flicked out the door? How long before they are laid off in Mount Pearl?

Mr. Simms: What?

Mr. A. Snow: Maybe they will just close down the office in Mount Pearl.

Mr. Simms: It will never close in Grand Falls, I will tell you that.

Mr. A. Snow: And to go along, to fall in line with what this regime has suggested they are going to be doing, decentralizing Government services and putting as part of their economic strategy, if you will, the relocating of offices from inside the overpass, as the Premier has suggested, to outside the overpass, maybe the people of Labrador City and Wabush can look forward to that being the new regional office or the new central office for all of this Province.

Mr. Simms: Do not go putting ideas into his head.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) official opening.

Mr. A. Snow: Well, I would look forward to the official opening in Wabush, because I am very disappointed as -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. A. Snow: I look forward to the official opening of this new office in Wabush, and I know the residents of Western Labrador will look forward to the opening of this new office in Labrador, because they were drastically, they were very, very disappointed and disgusted with the closure of the former office of Motor Vehicle Registration.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. A. Snow: Well, the new office that would serve the whole Province may fall in line with what this regime has talked about doing as part of their economic strategy, which is taking offices from areas such as St. John's or inside the overpass, and relocating to rural parts of this Province.

Mr. Simms: They will not be here long enough for that.

Mr. A. Snow: So we in Western Labrador look forward to this new employment opportunity in Western Labrador. We look forward with bated breath to this new employment opportunity in Western Labrador. We are disappointed with this particular Bill in Western Labrador. When the people have the opportunity of seeing what is in it, and they will - they would liked to have had the opportunity through a public -

An Hon. Member: That is what they got you here for.

Mr. A. Snow: They will. I will tell them what is in the bill. They would have preferred to have more public participation in the Bill, such as we had with Bill 53. We all know there has been some good suggestions coming from the people of this Province with regard to Bill 53, now coming in as Bill 25, of course, and we all know it was helpful for this regime to go out and seek public opinion and public support for different Bills. I am disappointed they did not see fit to put Bill 48 through the same public scrutiny as they did other Bills.

An Hon. Member: Talk to the Vice-Chairman.

Mr. A. Snow: I think that is about it now. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Simms: I say to the minister it was a lovely try, even though he is not in his own seat.

Mr. Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am very much awake. I can assure the hon. minister I am very much awake. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to speak today in the debate but I wanted to get up for just a few minutes to reiterate and support some of the penetrating questions that have been put by my colleagues who have already spoken in the debate, and I refer to the Member for Harbour Main, the Member for Burin - Placentia West, and, just then, the Member for Menihek.

In the beginning, the minister seemed to be treating this as an incidental bill almost. He did not seem to be paying too much attention to it until some of my colleagues started asking a ream of questions. Now, they are very legitimate questions. No matter if members opposite may find it humorous and may try to interject and taunt members on this side when they get up to speak, it is important to recognize the fact that these members are elected to express their views and their opinions, and to ask the questions they rightly feel should be asked, particularly in the case of the Member for Menihek, whose District has suffered from a decision of this Government to close down an office up there, to eliminate jobs.

And it is quite expected that one might suggest that this bill could very well lead to a move towards privatization. I mean, that is a reasonable observation for somebody to make. Because what the Government may very well do is decide to put this service they are now offering, licences through the banks, they may decide to implement that kind of position in the entire Province. And whilst

there could be good arguments made for benefits from that kind of approach, benefits of service to the public, as my colleague pointed out, though, somebody made the observation that they might do it to eliminate the long lineups in the Motor Registration offices, but yet they would be sending people to banks where quite frequently you often see large lineups. So there may not be a big difference in that respect. But that was a reasonable suggestion, an observation, for my colleague to put forth, the fact that they might very well implement this system throughout the entire Province.

Mr. Baker: There are five banks in Gander (inaudible) anyway.

Mr. Simms: Now there is a sub-Motor Registration office in Gander I think, if the Minister would be - if the Minister -

Mr. Baker: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Yes, protesting. But there is one there, a sub-office, and they have an officer, an individual working out of that office. But in the case of Corner Brook, Grand Falls and other centres where there are Motor Registration offices, if the Government wanted to implement this system throughout the entire Province, then isn't it fair to suggest that that is a form of privatization?

That is fair to suggest. And that is all my colleagues have been saying. And I do not think the Minister should pooh-pooh that kind of observation. He should respond to it in a serious way when he closes the debate on the Bill. So that is one point.

And, of course, if that were to happen it does not take a genius to realize and figure out that a number of people could lose their jobs as a result of it, people who are now members, I think, of NAPE - I think NAPE represents the workers at these Motor Registration offices. And there could be a considerable number of those individuals, if this system were to be implemented at large, who obviously would lose the jobs. They may not personally lose their own individual jobs, depending on the bumping procedure and everything else, but there would be that many less jobs in the public service. So they have every right to be concerned and to express concern through their elected Members, as the Member for Menihek, the Member for Burin - Placentia West, and the Member for Harbour Main have been doing. That is point number one.

Point number two, and the other major observation I guess that has been made. In addition to the slew, the barrage of questions that have come from this side towards the Minister on this particular Bill, there is a whole bunch of questions in there if Members care to read Hansard tomorrow or the next day -

An Hon. Member: Do you have question marks?

Mr. Simms: - whenever Hansard is done. Well that is up to the Hansard editor to put the question mark there. All we can do is ask the questions. But there were several questions put forward.

The other main issue that has been raised - and I noted that Members opposite have attempted from time to time to interject when Members on this side were making these

observations, they have attempted to interject and say, oh yes, but that is for breaking the law, when we raised the question of increased fines.

Well, nobody is arguing. What Members opposite cannot seem to get through their thick skulls is that nobody is talking about the offences in particular. What we are saying is that as a result of this Bill, this legislation, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are not aware that the Government is increasing the fines in all of these areas, a whole slew of these areas. The public are not aware of it, and what it will result in is an additional \$2 million to \$3 million of tax revenue for the Government of the Province.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) the Budget.

Mr. Simms: And that is the point - yes, but the Budget did not as always, as it usually does not with this particular Minister of Finance, provide any details. That is the whole point! And that is the whole problem. It was announced in the Budget back in March that there will be fee increases, I think, some innocuous little statement like that. And every time we asked the Minister of Finance in the Budget debate - and you can go back through Hansard time and time again, we asked the Minister of Finance to give us details, where these fee increases will occur, and he said, You will find out in due course, or you will find out soon.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Who's gone?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: No they aren't, they are out there on the main floor. They came down to hear me even better, on the ground level floor. You see them out there acknowledging what a tremendous speech I am making. They just sent me in notes. Well, they are about to send in a note.

Anyway Mr. Speaker, before I was so rudely interrupted, the point I was trying to make is in support of my colleagues who have just spoken on the Bill. The other main item is the fact that there is tax grab in here, a hidden tax grab that has been totally ignored by the press, totally ignored by the news media; they have not made mention of it. It is totally ignored by the people in the Province because they are not aware of it. Of course, we try to raise it, point it out and bring it to the attention of the general populace, which is our duty and responsibility to do. In fact, to use a well known phrase of the Premier of the province, it is our constitutional responsibility to put forth -

An hon. Member: To discharge.

Mr. Simms: To discharge our responsibilities as members of the Opposition, precisely.

The main reason I stood today - I would have preferred to wait until later on in the debate, next week or next month, whenever we get to the latter stages of the debate, but I had these distinct impression from sitting here and listening to my colleagues, the Member for Harbour Main and the Member for Burin - Placentia West and the Member for Menihek, that members opposite were not taking the points they were trying to make too seriously. Particularly

I was concerned that the minister was not taking the points seriously. But I can assure members opposite that the points my colleagues have been making and will continue to make with our future speakers, are important points to be made and points that the public should be made aware of.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my colleague for Humber Valley, who is an individual who always puts forth penetrating questions, always adds considerably to the debate, with lots of food for thought being provided, is going to follow me next unless somebody on the other side intends to speak. And I want to remind the minister that he need not thrust up or jump up out of his seat. Nor should he do it, by the way. The minister should sit back and make sure there is nobody else who wishes to speak in the debate.

An Hon. Member: I would like to see the House move forward.

Mr. Simms: Well, the House is moving forward. It may not be moving forward as fast as the minister would like to see it, that is the only problem.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Yes, well, do not worry about it. He will be well aware of that fact when we do get into Committee. He will be well aware of that fact, I can assure him. But I would just suggest to him that he should not try to jump up and close the debate after one speaker, as he did when the Member for Burin - Placentia West spoke. He should sit in his seat and when nobody else stands, then he should stand to close the debate, not give the appearance of trying to force the closing of the debate,

because that is what he did. He even did it over here when he was not even in his own seat. He jumped up right quick and wanted to close the debate from the Premier's seat.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Well, the Member for Menihek gave a very interesting speech, I thought, and asked some good questions.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to belabour the point. I think I have made my point. And, as I said, if members opposite intend to debate the Bill, which I doubt very much, we have not seen them debate anything, we will attempt to give the minister a bit more time to read his rendition of Tennyson's poems, which I know he finds much more interesting than this particular tax grab and this particular Bill. We will continue to give him time to do that by offering some other penetrating questions and views. I thank members of the House, particularly members opposite, for giving me the attention they have so kindly given me over the last ten minutes or so.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

Mr. Woodford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier, I think it was in the spring or the fall of 1989, members opposite, or the Government opposite announced that we would have a committee system, and the committee system would be more open. It would consist of members of Government and members of Opposition, and it would be more open; it would let the people of the Province know exactly what is going on with regards to new legislation and

Bills coming to the House of Assembly and give them a chance to have some input before they came to the floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of the Bills came to the House and a lot went to Committee. We have had some in resource policy and social policy and so on, but this is one Bill, as far as I am concerned today, that we probably should have had some public hearings on. Now, granted there were some comments by members of the Committee that it should not, it was okay and so on. But it is one thing to get a driver's licence and drive around this province. It is another thing to know what the penalties are if you break the law. Now it should not be that hard for members opposite or members on this side or anybody in the Province to understand why the people should know first. When the minister introduced the demerit system last year, he had pamphlets drawn up and written up and sent all over the Province, to schools and all around, even to members in the House of Assembly, explaining what the penalties would be if you broke either one of those laws. So everybody knew about it.

But, Mr. Speaker, in this Bill there are some fairly substantial increases in the fines for what I call minor offences, a slip of the mind, where sometimes you would leave the House without a registration - a maximum fine of \$100. We have all done it -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) it is only \$45.

Mr. Woodford: - some time or other, and probably the policeman would just say - members opposite may say discretionary. Yes, it is

up to the police officer. You get him in the wrong mood or at the wrong time, and you are in trouble. Let us face it, if the rule is there, the law is there, it is made to be broken. It is definitely made to be broken.

The other thing I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, is that for some of these offences, as I say, there are major increases in fines for a minor offence. And showing absolutely no consistency whatsoever, we go on to more rules and regulations there, where I would say the fine should be doubled or a person should lose their licence altogether.

An Hon. Member: What would you call a minor offence?

Mr. Woodford: A minor offence, I would say, is leaving your registration at home. You are probably into a meeting or you are going home sometime, we have all done it, and left it in another coat pocket, left and went down the road and all of a sudden you are stopped and you have left the registration at home. Whose fault is that, really? Is that not a minor offence? Does the minister agree with me?

An Hon. Member: Leave it in the vehicle.

Mr. Woodford: No intention. What about if you had a different vehicle?

Mr. Hodder: Yes, but if you go through a red light, you do not get as much.

Mr. Woodford: It certainly does not make sense to me.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Woodford: Now you can twist and squirm and turn around all you like. If someone wants to ask me a question on it, I will answer them. I am not condoning breaking the law, but I am saying we have all gotten speeding tickets, we all got one for probably leaving your registration at home and not in your car or whatever. But it is still there. Speeding is there under the demerit system, and I agree with it wholeheartedly. The only thing I have about most of them is who knows - I do not know what section it is under now - that for speeding you can get for over ninety kilometres an hour, exceeding the limit by between 1 and 10 kilometers, I think it is a \$360 fine, or something like that. I just do not know what section it is under now, but it is a fairly substantial fine.

Now it is not the fine. My question is, how many people out there in the Province know that? This is it, Section 109(3)(a). Now how many people in the Province today, I would even say Members, knew when this started that if you exceeded the speed limit by between 1 and 10 kilometres per hour that you started off with a \$135 fine - minimum \$50, maximum \$135, second offence, \$225, and it goes up as much as \$260. Now who knew that? That is what I am saying.

This thing should be posted and given a chance. If this Bill should go through within the next week or ten days or two weeks or whatever, there should be a period of time where the public should know, should be given a chance to know about the rules and regulations and what the fines and everything are. It is not right for us to pass this Bill, for instance this evening, and for it

to be gazetted and signed by the Lieutenant-Governor and all of a sudden, in two weeks time, someone is stopped on the street or on road and this is put up in front of their face, without any consultation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, some of the other sections in the - notifying the public is one of my big concerns; getting it out and letting the public know what the infractions are and what they would be breaking. You talk about consistency. One of the things I am talking about goes from one extreme to the other. For instance, I mention again about the registration. That is the one I will dwell on. The other comparison I will make is section 136(1) of the Act. Passing a school bus, maximum fine \$180. Now, Mr. Speaker, any man or woman in this Province or in this country today who has the gall to pass a school bus should lose their licence, absolutely, not be given an \$180 fine.

I said it in this House before and I will say it again, I witnessed an occasion in Cormack one time where the school bus stopped on top of a hill, the arm on the school bus went out, that stop arm they have on the side, the lights went on, and along comes this fellow in a pick-up, up over the hill, and it was my daughter who was walking around the front of the bus, and I guarantee you if he had to hit her he would not have to worry about getting a fine, but just like that something told her to stop, and that fellow went along by that school bus. I got his license plate and he was charged. What did he get? A fifty dollar fine. Now, as far as I am concerned there is no problem going public with something like

that. I do not think there is a member in this House today who, if he ever witnessed something like that, or ever heard tell of something like that, I mean, it is a no, no. I have seen it time and time again, whipping along by school buses. Here you are, minimum fine \$45.00, maximum \$180, and I think under the merit system you lose six points. Now, to me there is no question, reach into the glove compartment, pass out your license, and take the car right on the spot. Now, that is how serious I am about that. I do not think that should be fooled with at all. When we look at \$100 for leaving your registration home and a \$180 maximum fine for passing a school bus, and everybody knows when passing a school bus today kids go around the front, they do not go around the back, they go around the front, and that is questionable to me as well, because they do not have a chance. Once they step out in front of that school bus they have not got a chance. If there is anybody foolish enough and they are out there, to pass that bus, they are bingo. That is it, you are finished.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is one of the areas that I think the Minister of Transportation should look at, I know he is not taking this seriously either. I just do not understand the rationale behind his thinking; this here is not serious, nothing is serious with the Minister. It is obvious from reading Tennyson's poems here you know, when we were debating a Bill in this Chamber that is crucial to each and every citizen of this Province and that is the type of attitude we get.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Woodford: As far as I am concerned it is pitiful. Another one you talk about, consistency, it is 148 (3) Mr. Speaker, it is concerning failure to remove vehicles from highway or Crown land or land occupied by the Crown, \$145 minimum, \$180 maximum.

Now the Minister of Environment has got all kinds of problems, not only him, his predecessor before him and the one before him had all kinds of problems, this Government is going to have problems with it, it has problems today, the previous Government had problems with it and the next one is going to have problems with it and that is car wrecks.

An Hon. Member: Car wrecks?

Mr. Woodford: Car wrecks and that is the same thing applies, when are you going to get out of it. What are they going to do, they can pile them up forevermore because of this cost of forty-five dollars just to get it towed to the dump, so there is no deterrent there for them to take it out.

The only way it could be stopped and a lot of municipalities today are doing it within their boundaries under the Municipalities Act and that is to have the cars removed on an order by the council.

They have some jurisdiction in that, I will admit, but if there is Crown lands in that community, and I know a lot of municipalities in this Province have taken it upon themselves at great expense, but because of the fact of what it involves, they do it. A lot of municipalities, they use to have this programme with CBC, you used to get \$25,000 for the school or something a few years ago. Reach

for the Top, I do not know what it was, but anyway it was an excellent programme, but they got - I think it was sponsored through Environment and Lands and CBC, but anyway, it was a good programme, an excellent programme and it cleaned up a lot of communities around the Province.

But anyway it was an excellent program because I know where I lived it worked well, the municipality got involved, the councils got involved, the schools got involved the same as they do today with recycling, the schools are getting involved. So they did an excellent job with it, and a lot of municipalities were cleaned up. What I am saying is the inconsistencies in some of the fines here.

The other one, Mr. Speaker, how many drivers out there today would know that the driver of a vehicle can have a maximum \$500 fine for not having his seat belt on. Now we are all a little bit absent-minded every now and again, and we jump in the vehicle and we take off and you are slapped with a \$500 fine.

An Hon. Member: That is the maximum.

Mr. Woodford: That is the maximum on that one.

An Hon. Member: What is the minimum?

Mr. Woodford: Never mind the minimum. I can give you the minimum too. But I mean let us face it, it is a discretionary thing and the maximum for that, yet we have the maximum for car wrecks and for passing a school bus \$180. I mean where is the consistency in the fines?

Now before my time is up, there are a few more examples I would like to give, Mr. Speaker, but I do not have time this evening, certainly I suppose I can go on some other time. But the other one is concerning the banks, this move by the Department to - especially in the Wabush, Labrador City area, I believe it was, Wabush area of closing the Registration Office and having it handled by the bank.

Now once that is done - the Minister says it is only cost one dollar. Maybe it is only going to cost a dollar. A great thing. But once that move is made I do not have to tell anybody here, and if it is done moreso, if it is done all over the Province, the banks in their wisdom, and being good businesspeople, I can assure you that once that move is made you are going to be paying more than one dollar for your licence, I can assure you.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) Grand Falls.

Mr. Woodford: But you do not drive to Grand Falls for your licence. I am talking if there is a monopoly on it - there is one thing to walk into the bank and get your licence and take it and go on and pay your dollar provided it is going to stay like that.

An Hon. Member: What if you do not want to pay your dollar?

Mr. Woodford: But anyway, Mr. Speaker, regardless of -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Woodford: Yes, but, Mr. Speaker, when you have someone who

is not going to listen, I mean the Minister opposite said absolutely nothing and got up and did not answer any questions pertaining to the foremen on the highways. He has not answered a question yet. His answers have been contradictory to what the Premier has said. So I do not know who is telling the truth, whether it is the Minister or the Premier. If the Premier says no, the Minister says yes. Who is telling the truth?

An Hon. Member: Consistent lies.

Mr. Woodford: Consistency. Inconsistency, Mr. Speaker. It being 5:00 p.m., I adjourn the debate.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Baker: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow is Private Members Day.

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