



FIRST MINISTERS reach health agreement

Canada's first ministers reached an agreement on funding for health care in Ottawa on September 11. The agreement will see over \$20 billion worth of federal funding allocated to the provinces for health care over the next five years.

Under the new agreement, Newfoundland and Labrador will receive about \$400 million through the Canadian Health and Social Transfer, with directed funding provided for health care equipment, early childhood development initiatives and pilot projects for primary health care reform. "I don't want to pretend that the deal is going to solve all our health care problems overnight, but it does give a predictable level of funding," said Premier Brian Tobin. "It does allow us to see some daylight."

Premier Tobin played an instrumental role in facilitating the process of reaching the agreement. He and Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow worked closely with Prime Minister Jean Chretien to ensure all parties could agree to the \$23.4 billion deal.

Premier Tobin cautioned against unrealistic expectations of the health care system in the province as a result of the funding. "We have already taken spending decisions. We are purchasing new, high tech, very expensive pieces of equipment. We have reclassified some of our work groups, notably nurses, but others as well and increased their salaries quite substantially. It does not mean that there is suddenly a load of money for everybody everywhere. It does mean we can sustain the system." ❏

MINISTER led trade delegation

Sandra C. Kelly, Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, recently led a delegation of local companies to the Nova Scotia International Air Show and Aerospace Exhibition at Shearwater Airport. Currently, there are approximately 30 aerospace and defence companies involved in the industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The exhibition is gaining a reputation as one of Canada's premier aerospace and defence trade events. A major focus this year was exploring opportunities related to the Maritime Helicopter Project, the \$2.9 billion federal government initiative to replace the Sea King helicopters with 28 new maritime helicopters. "This exhibition gave us an excellent opportunity to promote the capabilities of our local businesses to the contractors expected to bid on the project," the minister said.

The exhibition hosted close to 50 groups, including aerospace and defence industry leaders such as Sikorsky, SPAR, Bombardier, Team Cormorant and others. Minister Kelly met with all companies represented and the department is planning to host an aerospace seminar which would bring major contractors to the province to explore local capabilities. ❏

Sexual Violence Awareness Week proclaimed

Roger Grimes, Minister of Health and Community Services, signed a proclamation designating September 10-16 as Sexual Violence Awareness Week in Newfoundland and Labrador. The week will culminate in the annual Take Back the Night march and associated events on September 15.

In the proclamation, Minister Grimes states: "The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes the need for all people to work together to ensure our communities are healthy

and safe for everyone."

Take Back the Night started in the 1970s in the United States. The march has been organized locally by the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre since 1985. Government, through the Department of Health and Community Services, has committed \$30,000 to the centre for the first time this year. ❏

