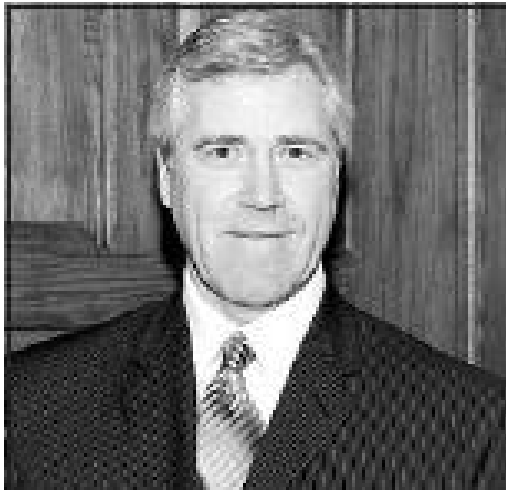

Liberals' top job officially handed over

Dwight Ball steps in as third leader in a year

BY JAMESMCLEOD
THE TELEGRAM

jmcleod@thetelegram.com Twitter: Telegramjames



Dwight Ball

Dwight

Ball officially took over as Opposition Leader Tuesday, and said his first order of business will be to get ready for the House of Assembly.

Ball, the Liberal MHA for Humber Valley spoke to The Telegram from Deer Lake, where he was working on constituency issues.

But over the next few weeks, he said he expects to be in St. John's for the lion's share of his time, getting the Liberal caucus ready for the House, which is scheduled to open at the beginning of March.

But while Ball represents the third leader for the Liberals in less than a year, the party's core issues won't change much.

He singled out the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project and the province's fishery as core issues for the Liberals — the same issues previous leaders Kevin Aylward and Yvonne Jones focused on.

"Fishery will dominate the agenda," Ball said. "We've been setting up meetings with a number of the interest groups. The fishery still impacts a lot of people in this province."

He said the party "still gets lots of calls on Muskrat Falls."

When he was announced as the new Liberal leader in mid-december, Ball said one of his core tasks will be to rebuild the Liberal party and reconnect with the grassroots.

Speaking to The Telegram, he renewed that commitment.

"If we get a call and you know, we're available to go and meet somebody no matter where they are, in any of the communities, well then we're going to be there," Ball said. "That's a commitment we've made and that's certainly one I'm going to be living up to."