

# Wells should step aside: Liberals

*Parsons wants  
fundraiser investigated*

By DAVE BARTLETT

THE TELEGRAM

A dinner for former St. John's Mayor Andy Wells has led the Opposition Liberals to ask Wells to step aside as head of the Public Utilities Board.

Opposition House leader, Kelvin Parsons also asked the province's conflict of interest advisory committee to investigate the matter during question period at the House of Assembly Thursday.

The dinner is to celebrate Wells' 30 years of public service, but it will also raise money to help pay his outstanding legal bills stemming from a defamation suit against former city councilor Paul Sears. Wells won the suit, appealed the settlement and then lost on appeal leaving him with a legal tab in the \$100,000 range.

See NQ, page A2



Premier Danny Williams

## *No conflict: Dunderdale*

... Continued from page A1

Minister of Natural Resources Kathy Dunderdale said she's spoken to dinner organizer Kevin Breen and with Wells and is satisfied that there is no conflict of interest.

"I want to assure this House, Mr. Speaker, that if there is any violation of conflict of interest requirements or any hint of impropriety this government will deal with it," she said.

Dunderdale also said Breen and Wells offered a list of people who will attend the dinner. She said that list will be scrutinized for any possible conflict.

When Parsons called for Wells to step aside he got this answer from Premier Danny Williams:

"Absolutely not."

"If (the dinner) requires, as requested, a check by the conflict of interest committee, no problem," said Williams. "But as for asking someone to resign because someone wants to go out and have a dinner in his honour to pay tribute for 30 years of public service, not likely."

Outside the House, Williams got angry when pressed by reporters.

"He's having a dinner. The man is being given a dinner for 30 years of public service. Why would someone step aside for going to dinner? I'm going to dinner tonight. Maybe I should step aside if I'm going home to supper," said the premier.

Why would someone step aside for going to dinner? I'm going to dinner tonight. Maybe I should step aside if I'm going home to supper.

Danny Williams