

# Liberals question MUN appointment

**L**iberal Education critic Roland Butler says the new chairman of Memorial University's board of regents was appointed because of his government connections.

On Tuesday, Education Minister Joan Burke named St. John's lawyer Bob Simmonds the new chairman of the board.

"A little over a year ago, this gentleman was campaign chair for (now Finance Minister Jerome) Kennedy," Butler said.

"I would have to say that by looking at it, I would have to classify it as a political appointment."

Butler said while political patronage is not new in this province, the current administration is known to "support people who support the premier or the party, and place them in some key positions."

The provincial government gets to appoint 17 of the 30 members of the board of regents, including the chairman. None of those positions are paid.

Butler did credit the government for filling the post within weeks of the end of former chairman Gil Dalton's term.

Dalton was widely criticized for letting the government interfere with the search for a new MUN president, a search that has been sidelined by the controversy.

Butler also called Simmonds a strong personality and said he hoped he will be more than a mouthpiece for the government.

NDP Leader Lorraine Michael declined to comment on the appointment.



Roland Butler