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FORTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND

Volume XLI

First Session

Number 1

VERBATIM REPORT
(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Thursday

25 May 1989

The House met at 3:00 of the clock in the afternoon, pursuant to adjournment.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:

Mr. Speaker, His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, has arrived.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):

Admit His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. Speaker leaves the Chair.

His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor takes the Chair.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:

Ladies and gentlemen, it is the wish of His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, that all present be seated.

Thank you.

PREMIER WELLS:

May it please Your Honour: The House of Assembly, agreeable to Your Honour's command, have proceeded to the choice of a Speaker and have elected Tom Lush, Member for the district of Bonavista North, to that office, and by their direction I present him for the approbation of Your Honour.

HIS HONOUR, THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR:

On behalf of Her Majesty I assure you of my sense of your efficiency and I do most fully approve and confirm you as Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):

Your Honour having approved of the choice of this House in constituting me as its Speaker, it now becomes my duty in the name of the representatives of Her Majesty's loyal subjects, the people of this Province, to claim

respectfully of Your Honour their accustomed rights and privileges, especially that they shall have freedom from arrest during their attendance in Parliament and that I as Speaker, may have full access to Your Honour's presence at all reasonable times and that they have confirmed to them all their ancient rights and privileges which have been confirmed to them by Your Honour's predecessors.

On behalf of Her Majesty I do confirm this House in the enjoyment of all its ancient and undoubted rights and privileges.

Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

It is my privilege and my pleasure to welcome you to this First Session of the Forty-First General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland.

Let me first congratulate all members, those who are returning as well as first time members, on their recent election to this Honourable House. This venerable institution constitutes the heart of our democratic and parliamentary system. The responsibilities of membership are onerous and demanding. Your deliberations will affect the aspirations of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and will chart their course for the future. I wish you success and personal fulfillment in the pursuit of the people's business.

I would also take this opportunity to congratulate the Member from Bonavista North, the Honourable Thomas Lush, on his election today as Speaker of the House. He joins a very select list of distinguished citizens of this Province who have served in that

important Office. With his skills and experience as a parliamentarian, and with the co-operation and assistance of all members, on both sides of this House, I am confident it will operate in a smooth and productive manner.

Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

On April 20th of this year, the people of this Province gave my Government a new mandate, a mandate for change. Accordingly, there will be a period of transition and reform. My Ministers, lead by My First Minister, will place before this Honourable House new directions and alternatives for serving the needs of our people. These will encompass the broadest possible initiatives to revitalize our society, our economy and the way in which Government itself operates.

Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

We have just recently celebrated our fortieth year of Confederation. We have a lot to celebrate and My Government recommend that our people consider celebrating by supporting the fortieth anniversary commemorative medallion programme of the Joseph R. Smallwood Heritage Foundation. Both the Medallion and the objectives of the Foundation are worthy of the support of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

While we do have a lot to celebrate it is a cause of great concern to My Ministers that after four decades we have yet to succeed in becoming a full participating province of Canada. Our public services, quality of

life and economic opportunities are all far from being the equal of our sister provinces. My Ministers are particularly concerned that instead of narrowing, as had been the case for the first thirty years of Confederation, the gap between Newfoundland and the Nation as a whole in these vital areas has in many respects been widening in recent years. A similar trend has also been evident between Newfoundland and the Maritime Provinces. What is even more disturbing to My Ministers is the fact that the out migration of our people to other parts of Canada has grown to the point where our population has actually been decreasing in recent years and there are fewer people living in the Province today than there were five years ago.

My Government's over-riding aim during its current mandate will be to reverse these alarming trends and provide an economy that will allow our people the opportunity to earn a good income, without having to leave the Province. In the pursuit of this goal My Government will ensure fairness, balance and equality of opportunity for all our people, in all regions of the Province. This will not be an easy task and the goal will not be achieved overnight, but My Government is committed to its ultimate achievement - the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have a right to expect no less.

In addition to economic reform, My Government will be giving the same level of priority to renewal of the educational system and renewal of the health care system during the term of its mandate.

Progress in revitalizing these

three critically important areas of public responsibility will constitute the building blocks to a physically, socially and economically healthy future for the whole of our society for the next decade and lay the foundation for the next century. Our chance of being successful in any one area is dependent upon being successful in the other two.

Mr. Speaker, and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

My ministers believe that, as Canadian citizens, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have as much right to expect good paying and productive jobs, without having to leave the Province, as do Canadian citizens in other provinces and that both the federal and provincial governments have a responsibility to ensure that the economic climate is such that their expectations can be met. The social and public services our people expect and need, including education and health services, can only be provided through a stronger, more vibrant economy. My Government will take steps to address the disparity in economic competence both between this Province and the Maritime Provinces, and between this Province and the Nation as a whole. This problem has been studied exhaustively over recent years but until now no direct steps have been taken to address the situation and implement solutions.

My Government is, at this moment, in the process of establishing an economic recovery plan, the details of which will be announced shortly. While My Government will continue to seek advice from experienced and knowledgeable persons inside and outside the

Province, the heart of the plan will be an action team that will implement the recommendations already in place as well as the vast number of new recommendations expected when the plan is fully in effect.

The economic recovery team will be mandated to work closely with all rural development associations to identify every potential economic opportunity in the Province and promote individuals, partnerships, companies or co-operatives to seize upon and develop every such opportunity.

My Ministers are confident of the fullest level of Federal Government co-operation in this undertaking because the Federal Government stands to gain as much as, or more than, My Government every time the economic recovery team succeeds in promoting an enterprise that creates a job.

My Government will support decentralization of business and industrial activity generally. Government assistance will be provided in such a manner that entrepreneurs will be encouraged to establish in areas of the Province which are in greatest need of help. As the biggest business and the largest employer in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Provincial Government itself will be decentralized to the extent that it is feasible and appropriate, so that all regions of the Province will have a fair opportunity to share in economic benefits derived from governmental expenditures, particularly as government activities and services expand and develop in future.

Special attention will also be given to the needs of single industry communities, with

balanced diversification programs being implemented as finances permit.

You will be asked to pass legislation to give effect to the economic recovery plan and you will be asked to provide the funding necessary to carry out the plan.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

Our economic, social and cultural development depends on improving the quality and accessibility of educational opportunities available to all our people in all areas of the Province. Newfoundland and Labrador cannot hope to participate fully in Canada's twenty-first century if we neglect our responsibilities in education. Our ability to achieve future economic success depends on our commitment to improve educational programming.

Functional illiteracy continues to be a serious problem in our Province. Some studies indicate that it may be as high as 44 per cent of our adult population - 20 percentage points higher than the national average. My Government will establish an effective literacy program using the services of volunteers and professional educators.

My Government will work toward upgrading school facilities in rural areas of the Province in order to eliminate the disparity between the level of services available in urban areas and the level of services available in rural areas, so that our children will enjoy equal opportunities in education regardless of where they live. Much of the existing disparity in educational

opportunities between the rural and urban parts of the Province results from reliance on local school taxes to fund a significant portion of the operational costs of education. There will be a full assessment of the school tax system to determine if fairness and equity in the funding of all schools throughout the Province can best be achieved by abolishing the school tax system or by changing its method of operation. My Ministers are determined, however, that fairness and equity in educational funding will be achieved.

At the post-secondary level, university and technical training facilities and programs must be linked to the Province's socio-economic direction, and services must be well co-ordinated to avoid duplication of effort and inefficient use of scarce resources.

My Government will expand post-secondary facilities to allow more students in rural areas to participate in the development of their careers without being penalized by the high costs of accommodation and transportation. As a start toward this, the curriculum of the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook will be expanded to include third and fourth year courses as quickly as they can be reasonably added and orderly expansion of facilities will permit. Bachelor level degrees in the basic arts and science disciplines will then be obtained at Corner Brook and Grenfell can, in due course, become a degree granting institution.

As soon as finances permit, a facility similar to Grenfell will be established in central

Newfoundland. In due course it too should evolve, as Grenfell is evolving, to become a degree granting institution. Should conditions warrant, a similar approach will be considered for one or two other areas of the Province, as the respective regions of Newfoundland and Labrador expand and grow. In the interim, first year university courses will again be offered in the Labrador West area as soon as possible and in the Burin area.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

The health care system in Newfoundland and Labrador has been under considerable pressure in recent years. Hospital beds remain closed while waiting lists for elective procedures have increased. Doctors and nurses and support staff perform their duties under difficult conditions. Some equipment and services are strained to their capacity. It is My Government's belief that work must be started immediately to alleviate this situation. While the final resolution to this problem will likely take many years to fully address, and a strong economy will be required to fund all the improvements that are necessary, My Government will not be daunted by the enormity of the challenge facing it. Indeed, the first step in resolving this problem lies in the acknowledgement that it exists.

My Government will, within the limits of overall fiscal responsibility, provide more resources for the health care system. Progress will be achieved in the early years of My Government's mandate. To alleviate some of the pressure on expensive acute care and chronic

care facilities, an immediate initiative of My Government will be to provide a cost-effective and efficient community home care program. Other new initiatives are also being developed. Following consultations with appropriate health care groups, My Government will make final determinations on directions to be pursued and they will be announced in this House.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

While My Government will be pursuing the foregoing matters as urgent and pressing priorities, there are many other areas of grave importance to the general welfare of the Province which also will be addressed by my government during its mandate.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

My Ministers attach great importance to bringing in measures aimed at preserving and strengthening parliamentary democracy in the Province and ensuring that Government is held duly accountable for the proper discharge of its responsibilities. It is in this Honourable House where leadership must be demonstrated and where the process of change must be initiated. My Government will act in four major areas of electoral and governmental reform early in its mandate.

First, new legislation will be brought before the House to reform the overall process of election of members to the House of Assembly and, in particular, the financing of those elections so that the process is fair and open to all who wish to seek public office.

An opportunity will be provided for all interested citizens and groups to make representation to a Committee of this Honourable House with respect to the proposed legislation.

Attention will also be given to reforming the procedures and operation of this Honourable House of Assembly, particularly with respect to control of the public purse by the people's representatives. In this regard, legislation will be introduced to:

strictly limit the use of Special Warrants to emergency circumstances;

provide for proper functioning of the Public Accounts Committee;

provide for other Committees of the House;

provide for a separate and independent Auditor General's Act; and

provide for television and radio access to all proceedings of the House and the Committees of the House.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

My Government will be taking concrete steps to ensure that maximum return and benefit is received for the expenditure of all taxpayers' dollars and that waste and unproductive activity are eliminated wherever they may be found. My Government's resolve to serve the people responsibly and efficiently has already been reflected in recent reductions in the size of the Executive Council and in the streamlining of Government Departments.

New conflict of interest

legislation will be introduced to reform the present rules and guidelines. The Government must not and will not do business with a Minister or any member of a Minister's immediate family, or any company or firm in which a Minister or any member of a Minister's immediate family has any financial interest whatsoever. There must be no room for suggestion of improper dealing real or perceived by any Minister of the Crown. To ensure that appropriate checks and balances are maintained, and that suggestions of improper conduct are dealt with openly and fairly, My Government will be proposing the establishment of an Ethics Committee of the House of Assembly to hear any allegations of conflict of interest and to express an opinion thereon. My First Minister, however, will not be relieved of his obligation to be responsible for the standard of ethics of all Ministers, and the decision as to who remains in or has to leave the Cabinet, for ethical reasons or otherwise, shall remain the First Minister's responsibility.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

My Government attaches great importance to the family as an institution in our society and on the need to protect and provide for the basic needs of our children. My Government's approach will be to develop a supportive and positive environment in which to achieve this goal, primarily through the work of "front-line" professionals in the Department of Social Services. Improved counselling, educational and other services for the victims of child abuse and family violence will be provided.

Increased support will be given to programs which offer the opportunity to reduce the incident of child and family violence. Improved facilities ranging from temporary transition houses for victims of family violence to institutions for the longer-term care of children and other people in need of support from the social service system will be given appropriate attention. This will allow people in need of such assistance to achieve basic dignity and to receive active counselling and training as required.

I have a personal interest in the initiatives of My Government in this area and look forward to the continuation of the efforts of the Family Life Institute, which I established, which has as its objective the bringing together of the various organizations in our Province that are involved in matters related to the institution of the family.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

My Government believes that the principles of fairness and balance demand immediate attention to an action on issues which affect women.

Women have greater obstacles to overcome in entering the work force and taking an active role in the political process. My Government is committed to providing assistance to assure women of equal opportunities in both these areas.

My Government is also concerned about the lack of an adequate number of child care spaces to allow mothers who wish to seek employment opportunities to do

so. Employers, employees and governments at all levels should be partners in ensuring that all parents - and mothers in particular - have an opportunity to seek outside employment and children do not suffer from an inadequate child care program. Steps will be taken, as soon as funding permits, to ensure that the need for good quality day care is met.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

The most precious resource of Newfoundland and Labrador is its youth. The future of our Province lies in the hands and the hearts of the young people of today. Unfortunately, our youth unemployment rate is significantly higher than that of any other Canadian province. Young men and women who cannot find work have become despondent. There is little incentive to finish school and to seek higher education or vocational training. If this situation is allowed to continue, we will be sowing the seeds of our own economic and cultural destruction.

My Government is committed to launching an aggressive attack on the problems facing our youth today. The great challenge which My Government will address is ensuring an economy that will provide job opportunities when our youth are ready to seek employment.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

In recent years, economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador has been impeded by an unsettled labour climate. My Government is determined to achieve a more productive and

amicable labour relations environment and to deal directly with the issues that are contributing to this situation. These are difficult issues and there are no easy solutions to them. However, My Government commits itself to a full consultative process with both organized and non-organized labour, and with management, to address such issues as double-breasting, industrial standards, essential workers, minimum wages, occupational health and safety, and pay equity.

My Ministers are confident that mutual respect and genuine concern for the welfare and interest of all sectors of society employees, employers and the public at large will result in a progressive and rewarding relationship over time.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

We find ourselves increasingly beset by environmental problems at the local, provincial, national and global levels. It is a condition that must be addressed in order to prevent our children from being faced with a Province and world damaged beyond repair.

These are issues that cannot be ignored because of our relatively small population and minimal impact on the larger stage.

Most environmental concerns are local in origin all cumulatively combine to present us with international dangers.

For the sake of our health, enjoyment and safety, and for the sake of the generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that will people this Province into the next century, My

Government will develop an effective conservation strategy and will discharge fully its responsibility to protect our environment.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

My Government's commitment to develop all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador will not be effective without a parallel commitment to enhance municipal government in the Province.

The greatest need in the case of many smaller communities is for a supply of good quality drinking water and a sewage disposal system that will not create health hazards. The Province cannot abandon small communities which do not have the ability to construct and maintain their own facilities. We must all share the burden and help out. It should not be forgotten that all of the municipalities presently enjoying water and sewer systems do so because of financial help from the Province in the past.

My Government intends to undertake an immediate assessment of our ability to establish a provincial water and sewer utilities corporation that would take over and operate as a public utility all existing water and sewer facilities in the Province. It could then use its revenues to borrow capital and build new systems for areas not now served, in much the same manner that Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro expanded electrical services to all parts of the Province under the Rural Electrification Program. If the assessment indicates that it is a viable proposition, as My Ministers expect will be indicated, you will

be asked to pass legislation to create and provide for the corporation.

Smaller communities need access to other basic municipal services such as fire protection, road maintenance and snow clearing, garbage disposal, ambulances, recreational facilities and municipal planning. Because of the large number and wide dispersal of communities in our Province, such services can only be provided in the near future if groups of adjacent communities are prepared to co-operate in the provision of such services on a shared basis. My Government will work with all communities to foster a better regional perspective and administrative structure at the local level to provide such services on a regional basis.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

My Government intends during the currency of its mandate to introduce measures to strengthen our agricultural sector and to reform our land use and forest management practices.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

Hydro electric power continues to be a vexing problem for My Government. There are two major aspects to the problem in relation to the development and use of hydro power in Labrador. One is the Province's inability to deliver the hydro power that could be developed in Labrador to its ultimate market in a manner that will provide this Province with the benefit of the development and sale of that power. Secondly, Newfoundland and Labrador has so

far been unable to access the power that has been developed within the Province, to meet the needs of our own people and as a result we are faced with serious future supply problems.

It is well recognized that one of the responsibilities of the Parliament of Canada is to ensure that free international and interprovincial trade exists in this country. Parliament must see to it that there is no impediment to international or interprovincial trade and that there is no barrier to the free flow of goods and services between provinces. The authority, the jurisdiction and the responsibility of the Canadian Parliament to protect these rights are clear and indisputable.

My Government will therefore be taking the necessary steps to ensure that the Federal Government fulfills its obligation to Newfoundland and Labrador in this area. Canada must either provide this Province with the right to get its power to market or compensate the Province for the consequences of Canada's failure to provide us with that right. My Ministers believe that this principle applies to power already developed and power yet to be developed.

Accordingly, it is My Government's intention to seek an arrangement with the Province of Quebec to further develop the water powers of Labrador and to sell such power, as may be surplus to our needs, westward through Quebec, and ensure that the profits from such development will, in fact, come to this Province. Failing this, however, My Government will take steps to ensure that Canada discharges its constitutional

obligation to this Province by providing a transmission line through Quebec or by constructing a transmission line along an alternate route across Labrador and to the island and, if necessary and feasible, to the Maritime Provinces.

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is entitled to no less under the Constitution of Canada.

The Province unquestionably has the constitutional jurisdiction to manage and provide for the use, sale and distribution of power generated within the Province in order to meet the legitimate needs of its residents.

My Government will take the legislative steps necessary to ensure that the Province regulates the generation, distribution and supply of all electricity in the Province so as to meet the needs of the people of the Province. This can and will be done.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

No industrial or commercial activity is more important to Newfoundland than fishing. It has been the basis of our economy for nearly 500 years.

We are now faced with a major crisis in our fisheries. It appears certain that there will be further substantial reductions next year in the total allowable catch of northern cod. The potential impact of this on our Province will be enormous by comparison with the impact on other provinces.

My Government has taken and intends to pursue a firm position with the Federal Government.

Because of the importance of fisheries to our economy, the quota allocated to plants and fishermen of this Province must have priority over all other allocations. To do otherwise would result in this Province having its economy virtually destroyed while the resources adjacent to its shores are shipped past its idle plants and used to provide job opportunities elsewhere.

My Ministers recognize there will likely still be reductions in the quotas available to this Province and they will work closely with the Federal Government to develop alternative employment opportunities for those people presently engaged in the fishing industry who will be displaced for a period of time due to catch reductions.

My Government will ensure that the Department of Fisheries is recognized as the key industrial division of Government. With increased budgetary resources, we will expand research and development facilities, and develop consolidated marketing programs. Initiatives will be taken to promote aquaculture, develop holding facilities, encourage secondary processing of fish in the Province, and develop in consultation with the Federal Government a catch-failure insurance or assistance program.

The Province must have a greater role in the decisionmaking process in such fisheries matters as the establishment of the total allowable catch in the waters around our Province, allocation of fishing licenses, and other regulatory controls. My Government's objective is to achieve this by working with the

Federal Government to establish a joint Canada-Newfoundland Fisheries Board, similar to the Offshore Petroleum Board, to develop fisheries policy and to manage the fisheries in all of the waters around Newfoundland and Labrador. This would provide effective provincial participation in the management of our basic resource without giving us the additional financial burden that would result from having legislative jurisdiction even if it could be achieved.

The current crisis in our fishery only serves to emphasize the urgency for the Federal Government to take immediate steps to end foreign over fishing in our waters. Canada must also seek international approval to bring the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks within Canadian fisheries management jurisdiction immediately. My Ministers believe this will require the personal commitment and involvement of the Prime Minister, and they will make every effort to induce that involvement.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

Newfoundland and Labrador needs the Hibernia Project to provide for a significant increase in the level of economic activity in the Province.

The Statement of Principles signed last July would, if followed through completely, result in an agreement for the development of Hibernia that would see increased economic activity realized in the next five or six years. My Government will do everything within its power to ensure that the Hibernia oil field is developed without delay. At the

same time, My Ministers will endeavour to maximize the benefits and the build up of offshore oil and gas related technology in this Province.

Unfortunately the March 31st, 1989 deadline for completion of the agreements was unduly optimistic and it will be late this Fall, at the earliest, before completion of the agreements can be realized. Following preliminary discussions with Federal Government and industry representatives, My Ministers are confident that all parties remain committed to bring about the development of Hibernia as quickly as possible.

My Ministers are concerned that offshore exploration has ceased at the moment. Steps will be taken to promote at the earliest possible time exploration in the offshore area and to ensure that this Province derives the maximum level of economic benefit from that exploration.

My Ministers will promote and do everything reasonable to provide for the development of the White Rose and Terra Nova oil fields. This will provide jobs for some of the thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in the Province without work, and for those who have had to leave in recent years and go to other provinces to find work.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

An efficient transportation system is one of the most important, but at the same time one of the most costly, services My Government has to provide.

Our economy will only grow and diversify if we have a good and

reliable means of transportation. We will stagnate if we do not have a reliable and efficient means of moving goods, services and people from one part of the Province to another and the means to deliver our exports to markets outside the Province.

At the same time, because of our sparse population distributed over 6,000 miles of coastline, the cost of providing reliable and efficient transportation services is very high.

We must, therefore, ensure that the Federal Government provides Newfoundland all of the transportation services that it is obligated to provide. This nation was founded on the precept that the Federal Government would provide a national transportation system across every province from coast to coast. The Terms of Union with Newfoundland were negotiated and entered into on the understanding that, in agreeing to take over and relieve Newfoundland of the cost of the railway and steamship services, the Federal Government was simply providing for the new Province of Newfoundland the provincial portion of the national transportation system for which it was responsible in any event.

The Newfoundland Transportation Initiative entered into with the Government of Canada last year has the effect of relieving the Federal Government of all its future obligations to provide, within Newfoundland, the provincial portion of the national transportation system. It also has the effect of terminating the specific obligation of the Federal Government to relieve Newfoundland of the cost of providing the provincial portion of that

system. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador cannot use its limited financial resources to relieve the Federal Government of what is in reality a federal responsibility.

My Ministers will ensure that steps are taken immediately to re-instate the federal constitutional obligation to provide for the Newfoundland portion of the national transportation system, as the Federal Government provides for the rest of the nation. This means the Federal Government must compensate Newfoundland for the additional highway costs that the Province will have to bear as a result of the downgrading and closure of the Newfoundland railway. These costs include the additional cost of substantially upgrading the Trans Canada Highway to accommodate the increased traffic, as well as the increased operating and maintenance cost associated therewith.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

In promoting fairness, balance and equality of opportunity for all regions of the Province, My Government would be remiss if it did not pay particular attention to the needs of the people of Labrador. The unacceptable economic and social conditions in the small communities along the coastal area of Labrador will receive priority attention from My Government, as this region truly constitutes one of the areas in the Province of greatest need. All residents of Labrador, irrespective of their origin, race and place of living, will receive fair and balanced treatment.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The

Honourable House of Assembly:

My Government regards defence spending as an important contributor in regional development and job creation. The increase in military operations and training exercises at the Canadian Forces Base in Goose Bay has brought a contribution to the Provincial economy estimated to be in excess of \$150 million in 1988 alone, creating over 500 direct civilian jobs at the air base. The potential development of the NATO Tactical Fighter Weapons Training Centre at the Base is a massive undertaking, offering significant new industrial, commercial and other economic opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It has been estimated that the construction of the NATO facility will cost approximately \$600 million, creating over 4,500 person years of employment during construction and 1,200 permanent civilian jobs with an annual operating budget of about \$300 million. My Government supports the existing military arrangements at Goose Bay as well as the efforts made by the Government of Canada to secure the NATO Centre at the Base.

While anxious to capture these economic benefits, My Government will not ignore the genuine concerns of the native peoples. Further military usage will be conditional upon My Government being satisfied that such development will not preclude the opportunity for our native peoples to live on the land in the manner to which they are accustomed. My Ministers are satisfied that the Federal Government is addressing this concern and will resolve the issue satisfactorily before proceeding with further development.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

At the outset of my address, I noted that while Newfoundland has recently entered into its fifth decade of Confederation with Canada, we have not yet succeeded in becoming a full participating province of Canada, with public services, quality of life and economic opportunity similar or equal to that of other provinces.

There are a number of reasons for this, some of which we must take responsibility for ourselves. Still others lie largely beyond our control and are primarily the consequence of failures at the national level. Responsibility to correct our own failures clearly lie with us, but My Ministers also acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that efforts are made to cause the Federal Government to take the necessary steps to correct failures at the national level.

My Government is gravely concerned about the ability of Newfoundland and other smaller provinces in Canada to have any real impact on governmental decisions made at the national level. Having little more than two percent of the population of Canada, we have little more than two percent of the voting power in the House of Commons.

At the same time, the two most populous provinces, Ontario and Quebec, together have sixty percent of the population and therefore sixty percent of the voting power of the House of Commons. Under these circumstances, it is difficult, if not impossible, for provinces such as Newfoundland to obtain fair and equal treatment as a province in

our federal nation. That does not necessarily reflect ill-will or selfishness on the part of the Ontario and Quebec members of the House of Commons. It simply reflects the reality that their primary obligation is to their own constituency, the people of Ontario and Quebec. That is why, in a true federal state, voting power in the national legislature is always balanced so as to ensure that one or two provinces with the majority of the people cannot make decisions contrary to the interests of the majority of the provinces. At the same time the majority of the provinces must not be able to make decisions contrary to the wishes of the majority of the people. That is the essence of a federal system.

If the true federal principle is to be embodied in the Canadian Constitution, it is My Government's strong belief that there must be a chamber of the federal legislature in which each province has an equal say in the exercise of federal legislative power in Canada.

That chamber should be a reformed Senate a so called 'Triple E' Senate that is elected, effective and which has equal representation from each province. The exercise of federal legislative power would then have to be acceptable to the two majorities in the federal state namely the majority of the people in the country, which would be measured by a vote in the House of Commons, and the majority of the provinces, which would be measured by a vote in the Senate. That is the only means by which provinces with smaller populations, such as ours, can protect their interests in relation to the two provinces with larger populations, and thereby

attain their rightful and proper position as full participating provinces of this nation.

My Ministers are convinced that a reformed Senate, combined with a strong and resourceful Federal Government, is the only means by which regional disparities in this country will ever be corrected. Unfortunately, the Meech Lake Accord, as it is at this moment, will make proper reform of the Senate practically impossible because it would change the amending formula to require unanimous approval of the provinces and at the same time would reduce still further the powers of the Federal Government. My Ministers believe, therefore, that substantial changes must be made in the Meech Lake Accord if this Province is ever to become anything other than a have not province dependent on handouts from the Federal Government. My Ministers also share the concerns of other Provincial Premiers, including concerns about the impact of the Meech Lake Accord on the Charter of Rights and about the creation of a special status for one province. Our primary concern however is with the long term impact of the Accord on the ability of Newfoundland and Labrador to become a full participating province of Canada.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

In pursuing changes in the Meech Lake Accord, My Government is sensitive to its responsibility to the nation. Toward that end we will accommodate and reasonably compromise, to protect the greater interests of the nation, but we must never compromise principal or abandon our only means of ever becoming a full participating

province of this country. In the decades and centuries ahead, our people must be in a position to enjoy a good quality of life - an equal opportunity as a matter of right and not as matter of the grace of other provinces. The difficult part is determining just how far these compromises and accommodations should go. The Meech Lake Accord, as it is at this moment, goes well beyond what My Ministers can ever agree to and there is a great body of opinion in this country that it goes well beyond what the Nation as a whole can ever survive. My Ministers share that concern as well.

Having stated this, however, My Government wishes to assure all other parties to the Meech Lake Accord of its willingness to work for the constructive change in the Accord, fully recognizing in the first instance the desirability, although not the legal necessity, of achieving the political approbation of the Government and Legislature of Quebec for the constitutional reforms put in place to date. As desirable as achieving that approbation is, My government is not prepared to have it achieved at the price of losing a fair and secure future for this Province and its people. My Government will be giving this entire matter appropriate attention in the coming months and will initiate constructive dialogue with all other parties in advance of formal consultations at the First Ministers' level.

My Government anticipates that this positive approach and attitude toward constitutional reform offers a reasonable opportunity for success. However, should these efforts fail because of intransigence on the part of other provinces or the Federal

Government, My Government will have no alternative but to ask this Honourable House to rescind the Resolution adopting the Meech Lake Accord passed during the last session of the last legislature.

Such a step will not be taken lightly but we must discharge our responsibility to put the greater interests of this Province and its people - and My Ministers believe the greater interest of the whole nation and its people - ahead of temporary political accommodation no matter how desirable, in the short term, that may be.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

I realize that this has been a lengthy address but as this is the first session of the new legislature My Ministers felt it appropriate to set out in some detail their concerns about the public affairs of the Province and the manner in which My Ministers intend to address those concerns.

My Government's agenda is an ambitious one - one that will require a total commitment by all sectors of our society if the aims and aspirations which we hope to achieve are to be fulfilled. But fulfill them we must the alternative is simply not acceptable.

At the same time, My Government recognizes that these are difficult issues. It would be naive and misleading, therefore, to suggest that My Government's goals and objectives can be fully achieved in any short time period. Indeed, some of My Government's aims and objectives may not even be able to be achieved during its current mandate.

It may take a decade or more before we are able to bring about nationally a situation where the smaller provinces such as Newfoundland take their rightful position as full participating partners in the federal state of Canada. We must not however fail to take the necessary first steps because the overall process may be lengthy or difficult.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

The existing financial condition of the Province is not strong, and that will inhibit My Government's ability to take immediate action on all fronts that so desperately require attention.

Recent decisions and actions of the Federal Government have added further difficulties. Federal budgetary decisions involving general tax increases, cutbacks in transfer payments to the provinces, changes to the unemployment insurance system, reductions in funds earmarked for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and reductions in planned expenditures for federal-provincial agreements on economic and regional development, will all impact in a significant and adverse way on the ability of the Province to deal with its many deeply rooted economic and social problems.

Added to this situation are other difficulties related to economic circumstances in general, including the crisis which is developing in the fishery, the pending closure of the phosphorous plant at Long Harbour, and the delay in signing of the Hibernia Agreement.

While the present circumstances

and conditions may be intimidating to some, My Government will not shirk from addressing them merely because of their difficulty. They will not deter My Government from taking the necessary first steps toward a better future for our people. Unless and until the first steps are taken, there is no possibility of ever achieving our longer term goals and aspirations. At the same time, My Government recognizes the need to be responsive to the immediate needs of the Province and its people, and will act in a responsible, fair and balanced way in dealing with those needs.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

In addition to the legislative measures already mentioned, My Ministers will bring before this Honourable House, in this Session, a number of important pieces of legislation.

Legislation will be introduced to provide for the restructuring of the departments of My Government.

Amendments to The Loan And Guarantee Act will be introduced to provide more effective control over the process of issuing loan guarantees.

Legislation will be introduced to consolidate and improve existing legislation relative to the control and management of the Province's forest resources.

Legislation will be introduced to consolidate and improve existing legislation relative to the administration and control of the Province's crown lands.

You will also be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Honourable House of Assembly:

I invoke God's blessing upon you as you commence your fruitful labours in this First Session of the Forty-First General Assembly. May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

Motion, the hon. the President of Council to introduce a bill entitled, "An Act Respecting The Office Of The Auditor General And The Auditing Of The Public Accounts Of The Province," carried. (Bill No. 1).

On motion Bill No. (1) read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

His Honour The Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased to make a speech to the Members met in General Assembly, and for greater accuracy I have obtained a copy and it will be presently distributed to all hon. Members.

The member for St. John's South.

MR. MURPHY:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly, it is my great honour today to move the Address in Reply to the Gracious Speech from the Throne and to express my gratitude to His Honour for opening the First Session of the Forty-First General Assembly of the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, as the newly elected member for the District of St. John's South, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the people

of this great district in electing me as their representative in the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you and the people of St. John's South that the confidence and trust that they have placed in me will not be misplaced. I commit to you, Sir, that I will do my utmost to ensure that the people of my district are truly represented.

Mr. Speaker, it is evident that the enthusiasm and confidence of this Government has been expressed in the Gracious Speech from the Throne. The initiatives put forward regarding economic recovery, education, health care, fisheries development, labour relations, issues affecting women and youth, and the determination to claim Newfoundland and Labrador's rightful place in this Canadian Confederation are all indications of the dedication and optimism of this Government in moving this Province forward to economic and social success for the future.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne, apart from its specific initiatives and policies, truly generates the feelings of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador which were evident during the Provincial election and campaign.

The need for a Government with strong leadership, viable ambitions, understanding, sensibility, and achievable aspirations for the future, remained at the forefront of this election for the past several years. On April 20 the people of Newfoundland and Labrador recognized this new team as the government that would bring this great Province to future economic

and social success.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that this government has the qualities, dedication and initiatives to provide this Province with strong leadership and a viable means of recovery toward future prosperity of which all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are truly deserving.

Mr. Speaker, too long have the people of this Province waited for a government dedicated to success. A promise of a new beginning falls short where there is not relative success. Members on this side of the House, along with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, recognize the need for a "real change".

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this government can provide this change, a change where, once again, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can hold their heads high and enjoy the opportunities as do other Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, our potential as a Province reflecting growth, development and economic prosperity is unmeasurable.

The Honourable the Premier and his government have provided a strong foundation to Newfoundland and Labrador, and through tireless dedication and sound policies this great Province will gain its rightful place as a fruitful and prosperous region of Canada and the world.

Mr. Speaker, let it be known that the caucus of which I am so proud to be a member will never deprive the people of this Province their due right to be represented by a government that will put forward the best possible methods in

pursuing future prosperity.

I firmly believe a "real change" is now present. The Honourable the Premier has, in a very short time, provided the initiative in cost reduction through forming a competent team that will successfully deal with the business of governing this Province.

The optimism and expertise expressed in the gracious Speech from the Throne only substantiate the goals and objectives of this government.

Mr. Speaker, the people of St. John's South, along with the people across this great Province, eagerly await the opportunity to participate in making this "real change".

There is much to be done. The fisheries, Hibernia, Lower Churchill, health care, job development, education and youth, are only some of the things that have been left in a turmoil.

This government will provide continuous efforts in addressing these matters for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. No effort will be spared where success can be the inevitable result.

Indeed, this government has the confidence and trust of the people of Newfoundland and I speak for all the members on this side of the House in saying that we will do our utmost to provide strong and active representation in bringing forth prosperity for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move the Address in Reply to the Gracious Speech from

the Throne.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Lewisporte.

MR. PENNEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would first of all like to join my colleague in applauding and commending His Honour on the excellent presentation today of the Gracious Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour and privilege for me to second the motion so ably delivered by the honourable member for St. John's South.

Mr. Speaker, this certainly is a great day for the district of Lewisporte, as it is for me personally, and it is with a great deal of pride that I stand in this distinguished and honourable House and represent the district that has been my home, the historic district of Lewisporte.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people of Lewisporte district, who placed such confidence in me by electing me their member in this honourable House.

Over the next few months I fully intend to address the many needs of the entire district.

The road conditions throughout the district can easily be described in a single word - deplorable.

Some of the residents of my District are required to travel over roads that have not been upgraded for years.

The water and sewer services, not unlike those in the neighbouring

district of Twillingate, are totally unacceptable for 1989. There are specific examples, Mr. Speaker, that would not be acceptable even by 18th Century standards.

The small town of Little Burnt Bay with its 485 residents must be provided with an adequate supply of drinking water that is acceptable by Health Department standards. They have done without long enough.

Mr. Speaker, we also have some pressing transportation needs within the District. This afternoon I would like to address just one of them.

The community of Change Islands has to contend with a totally antiquated ferry system that fosters a feeling of abandonment throughout much of Winter and Spring. Mr. Speaker, I was stranded on the Island for two days during the month of April, and I can personally attest to the frustration that is inevitable under such circumstances. I can appreciate fully the feeling the residents have of being treated as second class. This, Mr. Speaker, is totally unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, we have in our area one of the greatest untapped tourist potentials in the entire Province. Notre Dame Bay has justifiably been touted as a boaters paradise. It offers not only unparalleled scenery, but to the tourist industry, which is in its infancy in Newfoundland, it offers cod jigging, bird watching, mussel picking, whale watching, and the myriad of activities that we as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have come to take for granted, and the rest of the world can only envy.

Mr. Speaker, on a slightly more serious note, we have watched the gradual erosion of Government concern over educational programs for Central Newfoundland. Post secondary education must become a priority and the Central Newfoundland area must be provided with the facilities to offer a standard of education that rivals the rest of North America.

Mr. Speaker, most of these concerns have been addressed through the Gracious Speech from the Throne, and I would like to commend the Government on the initiatives announced today. The Throne Speech has in no uncertain terms allayed the concerns of those who have had to watch expenditures increase in urban areas at the expense of rural communities such as those that comprise the District of Lewisporte.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Premier Peckford once stated, very eloquently, "Some day the sun will shine and have-not will be no more." I would like to remind everyone in this Honourable House that daylight was April 20, it is now sunrise-

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PENNEY:

-the sun is about to shine, Mr. Speaker, and very soon regional disparity in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador will be no more.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PENNEY:

May I take this opportunity to congratulate His Honour on having been elected Speaker. I am sure

that your long years of distinguished service in the House will serve you well in carrying out the important and prestigious role of Speaker. I am sure all Honourable Members join in congratulating you and I am certain this House will be well served under your Speakership.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate all members who have been elected or re-elected to this great House of Assembly. Although we are of different political persuasion we all have a common desire, and that is to improve the lot of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We differ only in the way we plan to do this.

Mr. Speaker, the Gracious Speech from the Throne today explains how we, the Government, plan to bring about this improvement.

I am personally impressed with the economic recovery program and with the initiatives to deal with our unemployment problems.

Mr. Speaker, we have watched for too long our single greatest resource having to leave our Province. We have watched for too long this resource being abandoned because of insufficient insight on the part of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The resource to which I refer, of course, Mr. Speaker, is our youth.

The long term economic recovery program that His Honour outlined today will help correct this situation, and Newfoundlanders will once again be able to take pride in the fact that they were born in this Province, educated in this Province and gainfully employed in this Province.

It will also ensure that our next generation of Newfoundlanders will proudly exclaim to the rest of the world: "As loved our fathers, so we love/Where once they stood we stand/Their prayers be raised to Heaven above/God guard thee Newfoundland."

Mr. Speaker, there is one other area of concern that must not be forgotten, and that is the area of environmental concerns.

As Newfoundlanders and Labradorians we are privileged to live in one of the few remaining unspoiled areas on planet earth. We can no longer afford to take this for granted, and without considerable government intervention our next generation will be referring to our great, pristine wilderness in the past tense. Mr. Speaker, this would undoubtedly be the greatest single catastrophe to befall the portion of our globe that has not already fallen victim to the twin predators, civilization and progress.

Mr. Speaker, we must not allow this to happen. I am very proud of the fact that the government of which I am part shares my concerns and this issue will be given a high profile over the next few years.

To put this concern into perspective, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you a statement that has been borrowed from an unknown author, and has been adopted as the motto of the Notre Dame Rod and Gun Club, of which I am very proud to say I am a member: "We do not inherit what we have from our forefathers. We simply hold it in trust for our children."

Mr. Speaker, I have been honoured today to have been given the opportunity and privilege of seconding the motion presented by my colleague.

I have performed this most pleasant duty on what is indeed a most historic occasion.

Mr. Speaker, not only are we opening a new session of the House of Assembly, which is always an important occasion; we are entering a new era in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are introducing an entirely new government with an entirely new approach to dealing with the problems that our people have to face on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, we have over the past few years witnessed a confrontational approach to government. We have come of age, Mr. Speaker, and we are about to introduce a more mature, fair and reasonable approach to government under the very capable leadership of the Hon. Premier Clyde Wells.

I extend my heartiest congratulations to Premier Wells on a well fought election and a very deserving win. I am convinced, as are all those who have had the privilege of working with him, that he will not relinquish in his efforts toward achieving a standard of living for every, man, woman, and child in this Province that is comparable to that of all other Canadian.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PENNEY:

Mr. Speaker, it is with considerable pride, that I second the motion that a committee be appointed to draft a reply to the most Gracious Speech from the

Throne.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let my first words today in the opening of this new session of the Legislature be words of congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the high office of Speaker of this House. All of us in the House, I am sure, certainly all of us in the official Opposition, look forward with confidence and with optimism to your impartiality, to your fairness and to your doing your duty for all members, impartially, on both sides of this House. We have great confidence, Sir, in your ability and we were delighted, earlier today in private session, to make your nomination by the Hon. Premier unanimous. Welcome and best wishes to you over the coming years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

I also want to take the opportunity on behalf of my colleagues to offer congratulations to the Deputy Speaker, the hon. member for Trinity - Ray de Verde (Mr. I. Snow), and to the Deputy Chairman of Committees, the hon. member for Bellevue (Mr. Barrett). We look

forward to working with those gentlemen in performing the functions and duties of the people's elected House.

I would also like to take the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the mover and the seconder that an Address in Reply be prepared for the Gracious Speech from the Throne.

I know what it is like myself on opening day when new members for the first time, both new members, coming to the House of Assembly look forward, I suppose with fear and trepidation, to getting on their feet for the first time, and to have to do it on opening day with the ceremonial approach and the visiting dignitaries is not easy. But those gentlemen did it with finesse, they did it with great eloquence, and your constituents are to be proud of the way that you performed here today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take the opportunity to, in a public way, offer my congratulations to the hon. the Premier and his colleagues for their victory on April 20.

Those of us who live in a democracy may not always like the wishes of the electorate. I am sure the Premier and his colleagues do, and I congratulate them. For the sake of the people of the Province, Mr. Speaker, I wish them well in their tenure in office and I know they will do their best, with determination and fairness and balance, to provide good, honest, decent, open, effective government for the

people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is what the process is all about and I wish him, on behalf of my colleagues, congratulations and wish him well in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like at this time to take the opportunity to wish all members congratulations, those who were elected for the first time to this House and those who were elected for the second, third, fourth or fifth time, whatever the case might be.

In the words of a poet, an anonymous poet, "I suppose it matters not how we got here or how we reached here: What matters is that we are here." Now that we are here, by the wishes of our constituents, it is our responsibility collectively to perform efficiently and effectively for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would also like to take the opportunity today to welcome the dignitaries, the visitors from Church and State, and all visitors to the House of Assembly. This is an important ceremonial day that we always have at the beginning of each session in this Province, and one that I hope will always continue, when people will come to observe the official opening of their elected Parliament.

Before going any further, I would like to take the opportunity as well to mention that since this Legislature last met one of the former members of this House passed on, Captain Earl Winsor, who was a very, very dear personal friend of mine, a seat mate of mine actually when I first took my seat in this Legislature in 1975. He served the people of

Newfoundland and Labrador with dignity as the member for the House of Assembly for Labrador North, I believe, and then laterally Fogo. So I would hope, Sir, at some point within the next few days that this House would see fit to send the appropriate words of sympathy to the Windsor family on behalf of all of us.

Mr. Speaker, as we begin this new session and this new Parliament let me say that I am delighted to be leading this Opposition. This Opposition that we have here today is the largest not only in number, as I understand it, ever elected in this Province, but it is certainly also the most qualified - I do not mean that derogatory on any other opposition - in terms of experience in government. This Opposition has depth in quality and in quantity and I believe that that will make for good, effective government for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

That is what we intend to do. We do not intend, Mr. Speaker, to oppose for the sake of opposing. We do not intend to be obstructionist. We intend to put forward sound, sensible alternatives as we see them for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We intend always to hold ourselves out as an alternative to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador because if democracy is to work and function effectively the people must always have an alternative, and that will be the goal of this Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

We intend to provide good opposition, we intend to provide

aggressive opposition, but we do not intend to be confrontational, nor do we intend to be personal. We will not be pushovers, Mr. Speaker, we do not intend to jump in bed with the government, but we will support measures that we believe are in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We will propose solutions ourselves and we hope that the government will have the good sense, from time to time, to accept some of the solutions that we propose to different problems facing the people of this Province. Nobody has a monopoly on ideas, nobody has a monopoly on innovation, nobody has a monopoly on doing everything perfectly. There might be the odd time when something good and constructive will emanate from the Opposition benches, and I would hope the government would have the straightforwardness of thought, therefore, to accept it in the spirit in which it would be given on behalf of the people of this Province.

Mr. Speaker, there is a chance today in Newfoundland and Labrador for a new beginning, and I hope that there will be new opportunities for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador as a result of that new beginning. Our people face many problems. The Government face many problems. But it is up to the Government to lead and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are expecting the Government to lead. As a responsible Opposition we will do our part to help the process. We will do our part to make it work. We will do our part to make sure that the legislature functions and functions for the benefit of the people.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has a

right to govern. That is our democratic system and the people have spoken. But I suppose it is probably the first time since Confederation, as far as I know, that a single Opposition party actually gathered more votes than the Government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDDEOUT:

There have been times when two Opposition parties, the Liberal Reform Party and the Liberal Party back in 1975 and so on, would have garnered a larger total number of votes, but for a single party to garner more votes than the Government is rather unusual and, therefore, the circumstances that surround that are unusual. But people look to the Government for leadership and they have a right to do that. We will support the measures that are necessary for the economic and social good of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is up to the Government to convince us and to convince the people of this Province that the measures are necessary. That is leadership and we will expect that from the Government.

We hope for a productive session. We hope that there will be lots of good ideas and lots of good legislation, lots of new programs coming from the Government. There are a lot of tough questions, a lot of tough issues, Mr. Speaker, facing this new Government, and we will be asking the Government tough questions. I know they expect that and we will expect from them in return frank and candid answers. That is how this House will work best.

The Government has a program that it sold to the people of

Newfoundland and Labrador in the general election. So, therefore, the Government has to deliver to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and they have to meet the expectations that they created as we would if we had won the election, or some other party if they had won. The people expect the Government to deliver on their commitments. And if I noticed anything in this Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, today it was the vagueness, the generalities. The theme is jumping off of every page and can be summed up in words like 'as soon as possible', 'where appropriate', 'as soon as funding permits', 'in due course', 'the earliest possible date', 'as quickly as possible! There is nothing concrete, there is no concrete plan, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that this is a new Government in this particular document.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

And I was expecting today a new Government, with a new vision, with new hope, new dreams, to come into this Assembly, into this legislature, Mr. Speaker, with a concrete plan of how they were going to approach the problem solving of Newfoundland and Labrador over the next five or six months, the first year of their mandate. It is not there. There is nothing there to stimulate, Mr. Speaker, in my view, the hearts of the youth in this Province. There is nothing there to stimulate the vision and the dreams of the ordinary Newfoundlander and Labradorian. There is nothing there to stimulate the imaginative skill of the entrepreneurial community in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We were called the old crowd, we could not have new ideas, so I thought the new team would have new ideas and have it on the pages of this document. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, they are sadly lacking.

Now some of the things we hear I like. I like the new electoral reform legislation the Government is talking about, The Election Expenses Act, the Ethics Committee, a new Auditor General's Act, a lot of these were things we talked about ourselves, and, you know, would have brought to fruition if we had had an opportunity to do so. I compliment the Government for taking the initiative to bring them before this Legislature, and I hope that they come quickly, because some of those things we have talked about in this province long enough. The Election Expenses Act, for example, has been talked about long enough, the time for electoral reform in Newfoundland and Labrador has come and there is an opportunity for the government to do that. If they do it, Mr. Speaker, then I can assure the Premier he will have our support.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is not a day for me to get into a lot of specifics and take up a lot of time, the Premier has yet to speak and I know that the people have been here a long time, but over the coming days those of us in the Opposition and those in government will have adequate time to debate thoroughly the Speech from the Throne, to ask questions, to determine where the government really intends to go.

I suspect, Mr. Speaker, it will be the budget document that hopefully will come soon, that will lay a

more concrete framework on what the government really intends to do. I thought a new government would have done more of that in the Speech from the Throne, but we will wait for the budget document to see that.

Many of the goals and the statements, Mr. Speaker, contained in the Speech from the Throne, as I said, were ones that we can all support. Much of it is global, the government took the global approach to everything in Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are some things that were raised in the Speech from the Throne that, quite frankly, I am concerned about. I do not know about this new municipal financing corporation that the government is talking about. It says in the Speech from the Throne that that corporation will take over 'all existing water and sewer' installations in the province - all existing. I do not know what the Federation of Mayors and Municipalities thinks of that approach. I know what the present Minister of Municipal Affairs, (Mr. Gullage) Mr. Speaker, thought about it when he spoke on it during the election campaign. He said 'all' did not mean 'all', but this document today says 'all'. I do not know how that is going to work.

Page 9 in the document talks about electricity and there is something very, very concerning going on here. "Government will take the legislative steps to ensure that the Province regulates the generation, distribution and supply of all electricity in the province" which we have the right to do now, I suppose, under legislation "so as to meet the needs of the people" of

Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now what does that mean? Does that mean nationalization Newfoundland Light and Power? Is that what the government is talking about? If so, why did they not say it. Or does it mean the privatization of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro? I do not know what it means, this document does not tell us what it means, but I hope that the government will be forthcoming very, very quickly and tell us exactly what their plan is. Maybe it is a plan we can support, but right now we do not know, it only says that something is coming, it does not tell us exactly what is coming.

I was surprised that perhaps there was more time spent in the Throne speech, Mr. Speaker, talking about Meech Lake and Senate Reforms than there was talking about the fishery. And the fishery is the backbone of the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador and it is in a state of crisis those days. So when we can spend more time in a written document talking about those theoretical things, like Meech Lake and things of that nature, then we do talking concretely about what our plans are for management of the crisis that faces the fishery in this Province today, then one has to wonder.

The school tax system, Mr. Speaker, that we have in Newfoundland and Labrador, the government said during the election that it would be abolished. Now the Throne Speech says it is going to be studied. Is this backsliding? Is the government backing away from commitments that it made to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador during the election? The

special economic recovery team was supposed to be set up within thirty days of the election, and now it is going to be somewhere further down the road. It is not set up yet, although the election has been over for more than thirty days. So these are things, Mr. Speaker, that, in a constructive fashion, we will be expecting the government to perform on over the coming weeks. As I said, we will perform the role of the Official Opposition with determination, we will perform it with dignity, we will perform it as ladies and gentleman, but we will do it aggressively so that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador always has in front of them an alternative and I believe that is what our role is all about.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

I thank my colleagues and all hon. Members of the House. Mr. Speaker, I join with the hon. the leader of the Opposition in expressing congratulations to the people to whom he expressed it, first of all, to yourself. I think you would probably feel complimented if I said you were the dean of this House. That does not mean that you are a terribly old person, but you are the dean of the House in terms of parliamentary experience and your colleagues have recognized that enthusiastically and unanimously pressuring you to accept the appointment as they did this

morning.

We are very glad that you did accept it. We are very glad because we all have great confidence in your sense of fairness and, though you were elected under the banner of a particular political party as all Speakers are, we in this party to which you belong will expect you to perform your duties as Speaker of the House so as to bring great credit to us, and you do that by ensuring that you are fair to all members of this House whatever their political stripe. We have great confidence in your ability to do that and your ability to supervise the conduct of the affairs of this House in such a manner, as you yourself said this morning, that will bring decorum and respect, and will attract the respect and admiration of the people of the Province, which for some time has been lacking. And I am glad to hear Your Honour make those kinds of comments and I can assure you that you will have the enthusiastic support of the members on this side of the House, and from my earlier discussions with the leader of the Opposition, and from what he said here today, I have every confidence that you will have his support and the support of the members on that side of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

I also extend congratulations to the Deputy Speaker (Mr. L. Snow) and to the Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. Barrett) and say to them that your colleagues in this House share the same confidence in your ability to do the jobs that you have been asked to do and we expect similar great

performance from both of you. I extend sincere congratulations.

I would also congratulate the hon. member for St. John's South and the hon. the member for Lewisporte for their tremendous performance in moving and seconding the motion that an Address be drafted in reply from the Speech from the Throne. I think both acquitted themselves well and their comments indicate clearly that we can expect from the new members of this House first-rate performances in the discharge of their duties, and I extend to them congratulations as well.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to express appreciation to the leader of the Opposition for his very kind comments and congratulations to me and to the members on this side of the House. I accept those with the sincerity with which I am sure that they were offered, and I express appreciation to him for that.

He is quite right when he says, as we have said on occasion, that periodically governments must change if we are to preserve our democratic process; that is the essence of it. It does not reflect any discredit on the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, who was Premier at the time and Leader of the majority party at the time, nor on any of his members; it reflects democracy at work. And I extend to the Leader of the Opposition and the members on his side of the House reciprocal congratulations for their performance during the campaign and for the successes that they achieve during the election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I also share with the leader of the Opposition the comments he made about a former member of this House, Captain Earl Winsor, who died since the House last sat, and I assure him that the House will join and act as one in extending our appreciation and condolences to the family of Captain Winsor.

I also welcome the comments of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition about how he expects the Opposition to perform in the House of Assembly. I think what he has said is totally the correct approach. I expect from comments that he made and from discussion I had with him earlier that he and the Opposition will perform in that way and I have great confidence in saying, Mr. Speaker, that when that occurs this House will indeed earn the esteem and respect of the people of this Province and the business and affairs of the public of this Province will be better handled as a result.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to extend appreciation to the members who were in the last House from both sides who are no longer members of this House, those who decided to leave voluntarily and those who were persuaded to leave during the course of the election. They all made a contribution and on behalf of the people of this Province I would express to each and every one of them our appreciation for the contribution that they did make. I am sure you, Mr. Speaker, and honourable members opposite would forgive me if I expressed some particular thanks to the former Member for Fogo, Mr. Beaton Tulk, who was a long-time member of this Party, and to Mr. Eugene Hiscock, who also was a long-time

member in this House and represented this Party. I express particular appreciation to them, but I do express the same appreciation to all members who formerly served and are not any longer here.

I should also take this public occasion to express the Government's gratitude, and I am sure the gratitude of the House, to the people involved in the public service of this Province. They have performed well during what is, by any standard, a difficult period, when there is a transfer from one government to another, and I express my appreciation to the members of the public service for their performance and for their performance over the years as well. In doing that I would also note with great regret the passing of a public servant, her funeral was today, as a matter of fact, Pat McCormack, who worked since 1981 in the Legislative Counsel Office, and prior to that worked for many years in the Department of Justice. She died just a couple of days ago of cancer and was buried today. She happens to be the sister of the hon. Member for Placentia (Mr. Hogan) and I am sure this whole House would express to that hon. Member and to his entire family our condolences on the death of his sister.

I also express condolences to the family of Cathie Brodie, who was a long-time secretary in the Opposition Office, and just one week after she moved to take up her duties on the government side of the public service died a very tragic death and was buried about ten days ago. To her family, too, I express condolences.

Mr. Speaker, finally I want to

express appreciation to the staff of the House of Assembly, who help and guide us through these difficult times and changes and make sure that all of us do everything quite properly. To all of the members of the staff I express sincere appreciation, and I join with the Leader of the Opposition in expressing our gratitude to the Leaders of the Church and State, and all of the people who are present in the Assembly today to witness this opening. Your participation is a significant part of the formal opening because it conveys a message to us of the interest and concern of the people of this Province. You play that role, and we are very glad to see that you are here and we express appreciation to you for coming.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I should say a word of appreciation to the electorate for their great wisdom -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

In deciding that the party that we represent would be asked to provide the function of government for the balance of this term, and we sincerely hope for some time beyond that. But I want to express appreciation to the electorate for deciding that it was time for a change, after some seventeen years. On behalf of the people on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, I confirm to the electorate that a change they will indeed get. We are going to make significant changes in the way in which this Province is governed and we are confident it will produce much improved results from the approach taken by the former government.

Now, I remind all hon. members, and everybody who reads the Speech from the Throne or makes a comment on it, that this government has not yet been in office three weeks. It takes time to do things. We have established a pattern of thinking things through so that we do them right. We do not rush at things and treat them superficially. We intend to do them right.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition commented on the contents of the speech and made the criticism that there were no firm commitments, it was 'as soon as possible,' 'when funds permit.' That is quite correct. That comment is accurate. But that is what we call being honest with the electorate. We are not deceiving the electorate as to what is going to happen. That is called honesty in politics.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:
That is the way this government will perform, Mr. Speaker, as long as I lead it.

During the less than three weeks that we have been in office we have had to restore government to a functioning process again. It had been dormant for some time, so it has taken some time. There is no detail in the Speech from the Throne, nor should there be really. There is no detailed legislation prepared and ready yet because there just has not been time. We have a budget just about ready. It will be brought in very quickly. We do not even have a budget yet this year. It is important that we do that so that we can get on with work and life in this Province, and that

will be brought in very shortly.

Notice will be given shortly of a motion to provide interim supply because interim supply has not even been provided for. So all of those things have needed to be done and are in the process of being done.

While I am talking about the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition about the Speech from the Throne and the contents of it, there are a couple of things I jotted down I might mention. He comments on electricity, on what the Speech from the Throne says about our concerns about electricity. It says precisely what was intended. We are going to introduce legislation that will give this Province the ability to control all electricity generated and distributed in this Province. By that means we will ensure that the people of this Province have access to an adequate supply of electricity at a reasonable cost. We are going to do it by legislative means.

We are not talking about nationalizing Newfoundland light and Power, which is an outlandish suggestion. Whoever thought of it? We are not talking about privatizing Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. This has nothing to do with that. We are talking about doing what government is responsible to do, introduce legislation to ensure that the public affairs of the Province are properly provided for. That is what is meant.

The water and sewer corporation that was mentioned: The commitment during the election campaign was that we would assess the ability to do that, and we will.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No, no!

PREMIER WELLS:

We think that that can be achieved.

The members who are making some noise opposite have a very selective memory. You have chosen to read only a selective line from the policy statement. Go read the policy statement and it spells it out very clearly, Mr. Speaker.

We are not so irresponsible as to totally undertake to do something that we are not absolutely certain can be achieved. We told the people of this Province we would do an assessment, and we will. If that assessment produces what we think it will produce, we will proceed with the proposal to provide for the people of this Province an adequate water and sewer system in all parts of the Province.

On the School Tax Authority, the same comment applies. We said exactly the same thing in leading up to the election as was said in the Throne Speech today. There is no difference between what His Honour read today and the position that we took, and that is the government's position.

With respect to the economic recovery team, the statement was that within thirty days of taking office we would have an economic recovery team in place, and I say to you, with a reasonable level of confidence, Mr. Speaker, that we expect to do so. Work is well underway on it but it is not yet complete. We expect to have it in place within the thirty days. But if it is thirty-one or thirty-three, really, do not hang us out to dry for that. We are

not going to rush at it and do it incorrectly because it may take an extra day or two.

Mr. Speaker, the thrust of the speech, or the purpose of the speech, was to set out for the people of this Province the concerns that the government saw, the problems, the situation that the government saw, the state of the Province, if you will, and what we felt needed to be addressed, and to give members, and the public at large in this Province, an indication of the thrust of the government, the direction in which we intended to go to address it. When the budget is delivered there will be a little bit more information. As the hon. the Leader of the Opposition says, we will give some more detail as to the direction in which the government intends to go. That will not complete the picture totally. We will have to wait until legislation is introduced to get the complete picture as to the details of what government intends to do. That is the normal process. You do not expect, and never have that kind of detail in a Speech from the Throne. It was long enough as it was. God help us if we had to put that much more detail in it.

Mr. Speaker, the government's major concern is that after forty years of Confederation - six weeks ago we celebrated our 40th Anniversary as a Province of Canada - we are in some respects as far behind the other provinces of Canada, including Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, in our economic state, as we were forty years ago. In some respects that is so. That cannot be tolerated. The gap in recent years has been getting worse. We have always had out-migration of people, but never

before in our history as a Province have we had out-migration to the extent that our population actually decreased in numbers. That is frightening.

MS DUFF:

There was a drop in the birth rate.

PREMIER WELLS:

The hon. member for St. John's East (Ms Duff) talks about the birth rate. Yes, of course. What about the birth rate? The answer is simple. We were increasing our population, in the first thirty years of Confederation, at twice the rate of Nova Scotia, but in the last ten years Nova Scotia has been increasing its population at five times our rate. Now what about the birth rate? It affects Nova Scotia as well. I am talking about what is happening to Newfoundland by comparison to what has happened to Nova Scotia. We should not blind ourselves and say, oh, it is the birth rate, or some other superficial problem. We should get down and look to the fundamental problem, and only, only if we do that will we really be able to propose and put in place solutions to solve our problems. For too long, Mr. Speaker, we have been treating the symptoms. We have been throwing a bit of money at a problem. We have been providing make-work projects for people out of work instead of altering our fundamental situation so that we would have a vibrant economy where people could get stable, full-time employment with a good level of income. We have abandoned that, we have ignored, and we have looked at something superficial and said, oh, it's the birth rate or it is some other thing, or it is a problem with the fisheries and it is temporary. Well, it is not. We are getting worse and we

have to be honest enough with ourselves to sit down and look at it and see what the fundamental problem is because if we do not do that we will never find a solution. That is going to be the difference between this government and its predecessor. That is what the difference is going to be. We are going to treat the problems and not the symptoms.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

We are not going to look at a problem and say, how big does the band-aid have to be, we are going to look at the problem and ask, what causes it? Let us treat the problem so that we can eliminate the consequences in the future, not keep putting band-aids on it, ever larger band-aids requiring ever more band-aids. The fisheries is a matter of major concern to everybody in this province, but you do not solve the problems in the fisheries by hopping on a plane and flying off to Ottawa and putting on a show.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

You get down to the fundamental problem and you deal with it properly. Show does not work. It is not enough to put on a show, to pretend that something is happening or something is being done. We are more concerned about doing something that will produce long-term, proper results, not the show of it. And as long as we take that approach, Mr. Speaker, I have every confidence we are on the right track to finding a solution to the long-term problems that have beset this Province. Everybody is excited

and concerned and upset at the problem in the fishery. They think it is a national catastrophe, and it is. It is. The federal government has a major responsibility for this, a major responsibility. They have been managing the resource, but it turns out that they mismanaged the resource. They have responsibility for the consequences of their mismanagement, and they must take steps to ensure that those people in our Province who have been hurt by this mismanagement will be protected in the meantime. But it is not enough just to throw some money at the fishermen and the fish plant workers who will be displaced for a period of time. We should be working with the federal government to work together to find a longer term solution and provide for long-term alternative employment, to having that many people reliant upon the fisheries. That is the thrust we should be taking—not just throwing money at it—and that is what we are doing. That is why there is a meeting scheduled here tomorrow with the Minister of International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) and the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Sideon) here tomorrow to deal with these problems in a proper way. Show is not enough, show does not produce results, it just gets your name in lights temporarily.

Mr. Speaker, everybody is concerned about the national catastrophe that is the fisheries, and so they should be, but nobody seems to be concerned about the national catastrophe that an average of eighteen or nineteen percent unemployment in this Province over the last five years represents. If that were occurring in Ontario or Quebec the entire resources of the federal

government would be directed at resolving the problem, because it would be a national catastrophe. Here the federal government and the government of this province, prior to this time, have been satisfied to take band-aids, a bit of money, a few makework jobs, without getting down to deal with the fundamental problem. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are going to deal with the fundamental problem, and part of the fundamental problem is the structure of the national institutions of this country. and the fact that we have no real say in what happens in Ottawa. We do not need more power in this Province, we do not need more jurisdiction for provincial Premiers, a small province like Newfoundland. We have total jurisdiction in health matters now and we are closing hospital beds because we do not have the resources to keep them open. It is not more power and jurisdiction we need here. I do not want to be a more powerful Premier, but I want the people of this province to have a greater say in the exercise of federal power and the expenditure of federal funds—

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

— they should in any federal nation. And when we start to correct this problem, when we start working on this problem and achieve its ultimate correction, Newfoundland and Labrador will become a full participating Province of Canada. But as long as the only means of deciding how federal power is going to be exercised is a vote in the House of Commons, as it is at the moment, then Newfoundland and Labrador, and all of the other smaller provinces, will never have

any say. We will be in the position, the absolutely incredible position, that we are in today: The economy of Ontario is so buoyant and so booming that they are really concerned about the potential for massive inflation and the Federal Government had to cut down and squeeze, raise the interest rates and depress economic activity, and look at the rest of us in Atlantic Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador in particular. It is totally the wrong medicine. All that ever occurs is the medicine that is right for Ontario and Quebec. And as the Speech from the Throne says, Mr. Speaker, I cannot blame that on the members of the House of Commons from Ontario and Quebec. They are doing their duty to protect the interest of their constituents. That is why in a federal state there should be a balance of the voting power. That is why we will never have a place in this country other than what Ontario or Quebec are prepared to give us as a result of their good graces. You will never have it as a matter of right until we alter our national institutions to provide for a proper federal country, to acknowledge the Federal principles that guide this country.

That is why I feel so strongly about Meech Lake, because I am concerned not about tomorrow or next year or the next five years in this Province, although I am concerned about that, but not that to the exclusion of our future for the next decades and the next century in this country. And anybody who sits in this chair has a responsibility not to be concerned only about the next election and getting finances to make people happy so he will get votes in the next election. The

person who sits in this chair has a responsibility for the future of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

And when I go out of this office, I want to go out, Mr. Speaker, satisfied that I will have discharged that responsibility properly and that the people not yet born in this Province, but who will be born, will have an opportunity in the practical choice to stay here and live here and expect to make a good living here as a matter of right and not as a matter of the good graces of somebody else. That is the aspiration we have. We have the means of doing it, but just do it right; start at the basics and laid the foundation right and build properly on that, and I am confident, Mr. Speaker, it can be achieved. Now that is the approach that this government will take.

Mr. Speaker, in the process we cannot ignore the pressing, current problems. We must bear the long-term goal in mind, but we cannot ignore the fact that we do have pressing current problems. The situation in the fisheries is the single most important, most pressing problem in this Province at the moment. There will be a meeting tomorrow, there will be numerous other meetings over the next little while. We have made some preliminary proposals to representatives of the federal government as to how there should be a joint response. We will be working this out in further detail in meetings with them over the next weeks and months. We want to solve the problem right. A band-aid for the next six months

or the next six years is not adequate. We want to do the job right from the beginning. And we are confident that the Federal Government will see our point of view in that and we will be prepared to participate and work with us.

I have already mentioned the economic recovery team. I expect that we will be in a position to announce something on that in the not too distant future within the next week to two weeks. We are hoping, again, that the Federal Government will recognize its responsibility and will do so in a way that will enable them to work directly with us instead of the federal government performing independently and separately trying to deal with the same problem and not doing it very well, and our government in this Province working independently and not as effectively as it could if we work co-operatively. So we are making a proposal along those lines to the Federal Government as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne spells out clearly the emphasis we intend to place on education and health. We see education, health and the economy as the three priorities for the government of this Province for the next two to three years at least. They must be our priorities. We will not be able to build the Province that all of us desire, and build the economy that all of us need if we are to have good social services, good health facilities, good education facilities, if we do not work on those three things together: health, education and the economy; and this government intends to do just that.

We also will deal with, as the Speech from the Throne indicates, concerns that we have for those of our people who are living in smaller communities without the amenities of life that most of us who live in places like St. John's or Stephenville or Gander or Corner Brook or Marystown take for granted. All of us in those places look for more from the government, but how many of us have ever been in Norman Bay on the Coast of Labrador, or Pinsent Arm and see what those people have to go through? How many of them have seen that and seen what those people have to go through? No only is there not a road, there is not even a pathway. The people have to jump from rock to rock over mud holes. There is no water. They have to get in a boat and row three miles to get fresh water. That is what I am talking about. I say all of us who are taking these things for granted, who with the help of all the taxpayers of this Province over the last twenty-five years have gotten our water and sewer systems installed let us not forget that. All of us have an obligation to those people. They are the people who are maintaining the sovereignty of that territory for this Province. Do not every forget that. The Labrador coast is part of this Province partly because of the group of people in those communities are living in that way. Let us not forget that. They are there proclaiming our sovereignty every day, and without it we would have very little basis for claiming it to be part of this Province. So let us not forget that when we hear derided the desire of this government to make sure that we bring those kinds of services to our people in the smaller communities. That is what

motivates people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I will not keep you much longer, Sir. I do want to express, because perhaps it might be expected, my personal confidence, having spoken with representatives of industry and the federal government, that the Hibernia development will indeed take place - there is no way I can guarantee it; it is not a certainty - and express, as I have for the last two years, my support for it, because Newfoundland needs it. It is not the best deal that we could have worked out, it is not great, but without it we are going to fall a great deal short of the economic activity that we need in this Province. But by the same token I do not want to create the unfair and improper euphoria that has been created in the past by suggesting that it is just a month or a week away. It was indeed unduly optimistic - to be more accurate it was unfair to our people to suggest that it would be in place by March 31 and induce our people to go out and make expenditures and decisions on the basis of that.

The reality is that those agreements will, if we are lucky, be signed by late Fall, very late Fall, at the earliest. It could possibly be later. I do not want to create any undue optimism I want to be fair and frank with our people, but at the same time I want to express my confidence, from everything that I have heard, that it will in fact proceed.

Mr. Speaker, we will not succeed in solving the many serious problems of this Province if we do

not work together, all of us. Government and the private sector, labour unions and management, government and Opposition, fisherman and processors, all of us, at the same time that we proclaim our differences or our opposite point of view, should bear in mind the longer term and larger objective to make this Province work properly so that it can be a place for our people to live comfortably and happily and have a good standard of living in every corner of it without having to leave of necessity to find employment, or find an adequate level of income. All of us have to make that effort.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, having heard the comment that I did today from the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, that when the government brings forth its proposals and demonstrates their obvious merit, we will get the willing support and co-operation of the Opposition for those proposals. I am confident that they, too, will see this need, as I am sure they do. While we differ in our approach, as one former speaker said, I do not question their sincerity in wanting to achieve nothing but the best for this Province. I am confident that when we bring in our proposals they will see the merit of them and will find them worthy of support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence in listening to me.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

On motion, a Committee was appointed to draft an Address in Reply to the Gracious Speech from the Throne which shall consist of the following members: The hon.

member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy); the hon. member for Lewisporte (Mr. Penney); and the hon. member for Fortune Hermitage (Mr. Langdon).

Notices of Motion

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider certain resolutions for the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. Mary's - the Capes.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to present the following motion:

WHEREAS the present crisis in the Newfoundland fishery should now be recognized as a national disaster; and

WHEREAS a special Federal Cabinet committee has been put in place to deal with this problem; and

WHEREAS there is a pending disaster for fishermen, plant workers, trawlermen, and the Province generally; and

WHEREAS the total economy of the Province is going to be negatively affected; and

WHEREAS foreign concerns continue to fish non-surplus species; and

WHEREAS the rapid growth of the seal herds is detrimental to our

fish stocks; and

WHEREAS the Newfoundland fishermen have been expressing these concerns for years; and

WHEREAS there is a lack of capability at a provincial level to gather and assess pertinent information relating to the fishery; and

WHEREAS the former government continuously sought more input into decision making relating to fishery issues; and

WHEREAS the present crisis transcends party politics;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that an all-party committee of the House be struck to monitor and have direct liaison with the Federal Cabinet committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this hon. House press for a proper compensation package for fishermen, plant workers, trawlermen, and communities affected; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federal Government be requested to review their licensing policies as they relate to foreign fishing interests; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that immediate action be taken to reduce and control the seal population; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the present government develop within the Province capabilities to gather and assess appropriate information related to the fishery that would be necessary for proper long-term planning; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the

present Government develop the proper technologies to harvest and market underutilized species; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Province continue to seek involvement in the decision making processes that relate to the Newfoundland fishery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Carbonear.

MR. REID:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on tomorrow I will ask leave to introduce the following motion:

WHEREAS the fishing industry is the most critically important sector of the Province's overall economy; and

WHEREAS the fishery plays a key role in the fabric of our rural economy in particular; and

WHEREAS the fishing industry is facing considerable uncertainty as a result of major quota reductions; and

WHEREAS all major fisheries interest groups and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador have expressed alarm over the detrimental impact of foreign overfishing of fish stocks on the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks; and

WHEREAS the people of this Province have every right to derive benefits associated with the exploitation of fish stocks in its adjacent waters;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House call upon the Prime Minister and the Government of

Canada to take every appropriate measure to safeguard the Province's special interest in resources in its adjacent waters by ensuring that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians engaged in the fishing industry have priority access to the total allowable catch; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this hon. House calls upon the Prime Minister to become personally involved in the efforts of the Government of Canada to address the foreign overfishing problem, in order to achieve international approval for Canada to exercise control over the entire Continental Shelf.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Humber Valley.

MR. WOODFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Rural Development Association has experienced rapid growth since its formation in the early 1960's, unmatched anywhere in Canada; and

WHEREAS the Rural Development movement with membership of 56 associations encompassing more than 500 communities and over 80 per cent of the Provinces rural population has indeed meant a coming together of people; and

WHEREAS the Rural Development Association movement is a "people movement" from which stems the energy and ideas required to foster growth and development; and

WHEREAS the movement has not had a new agreement for over a year, thereby creating uncertainty in the Rural Development movement, because of the funding structure;

BE IT RESOLVED that government take the initiative to make sure the agreement is signed immediately.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. DUMARESQUE:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to move the following resolution:

WHEREAS no community throughout Coastal Labrador has a full water and sewer system; and

WHEREAS many communities lack even the beginnings of such services; and

WHEREAS unemployment is a chronic problem; and

WHEREAS economic development has been substantially absent from all sectors of our economy; and

WHEREAS the Federal Government failed to sign the third Labrador Subsidiary Development Agreement; and

WHEREAS the dignity of every Labradorian is at stake;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Administration impress upon the Federal Government the urgency and need for an immediate signing of this agreement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that both

levels of government focus particular attention on the economic development of Labrador and implement concrete programs to standardize Coastal Labrador with the rest of this great Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS the previous Liberal Administration entered into an agreement for the development of the Upper Churchill hydroelectric potential which has seen Hydro Quebec reap from the venture profits which are now estimated to be approximately \$800 million a year; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador by comparison receives in the order of \$12 million annually; and

WHEREAS that contract is in effect for a total of sixty-five years without an option for the Churchill Falls Labrador Corporation to renegotiate the price paid to CFLCo by Hydro Quebec for the electrical energy being supplied; and

WHEREAS negotiations have recently been progressing very favourably between Hydro Quebec and the Government of Quebec on the one side and Newfoundland Hydro and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (under the Progressive Conservative Administration) on the other side in reference to developing the overall resource

potential of the Churchill River Watershed and other hydro-electric potential of Labrador; and

WHEREAS these negotiations were based on the recovery by Newfoundland and Labrador of some portion of the economic rent given away by the Upper Churchill contract; and

WHEREAS the development of the Lower Churchill plus the intertie to the island power grid system would generate \$10 billion in construction activity and thousands of jobs over a fifteen year construction period and would make possible the attraction of energy intensive industries and would further stabilize energy costs for the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS the Premier through the public position he has taken in opposing the Meech Lake Accord has alienated the Government of Quebec thereby all but eliminating any possibility of reaching a negotiated settlement with Quebec that does not include another "giveaway" of Newfoundland and Labrador resources;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House directs the Premier to reassure Quebec of this Province's commitment to the negotiations leading to an agreement for the development of the Lower Churchill in the spirit of which these negotiations have been ongoing for the past several years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island.

MR. WALSH:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave of the House to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Tourism Industry is a vital part of the Province's economic recovery; and

WHEREAS Tourism is the fastest growing industry in our Province; and

WHEREAS Tourism has the potential to create much needed employment in our Province;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Minister of Development continues in his effort to establish a new Tourism Development Subsidiary Agreement for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and thus stimulate the Development of the Tourism Industry and Tourism related infrastructure so that we can meet the demands of our visitors to our Province, and those travelling within.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for St. John's East.

MS DUFF:
Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Liberal Party of this Province was critical of the former Progressive Conservative Government's economic restraints in the Health care sector; and

WHEREAS the Liberal Party, in the recent election promised quality health care for all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador regardless of cost; and

WHEREAS the former Government of Newfoundland and Labrador had already undertaken initiatives to address the problems of bed closures and staff shortages and to improve diagnostic services throughout the Province, particularly related to increased availability of CAT Scan facilities and Screening Mammography; and

WHEREAS the Liberal Party now forms the Government of this Province;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this Hon. House go on record as demanding that the Government keep its election promise and provide health care services with no staff shortages, no bed closures and no unreasonable delays for hospital admissions and surgery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for LaPoile.

MR. RAMSAY:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has an obligation to provide a viable transportation system in this Province; and

WHEREAS the previous provincial administration could not fully understand the consequences of the "Newfoundland Transportation Initiative"; and

WHEREAS there was more than a sense of loss with this agreement, there was the loss of an obligation on the part of the Government of Canada to maintain a quality viable transportation

system in the Province; and

WHEREAS this crippling of our transportation system in the Province will only serve to keep Newfoundland and Labrador from realizing its full economic potential;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador pursue all efforts to hold the Government of Canada to its obligation to be responsible for the provincial portion of the national transportation system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to move the following resolution:

WHEREAS there is an alarmingly high incidence of sexual assault and domestic violence in Canada, including Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS the victims of these crimes are almost exclusively children and women; and

WHEREAS the rate of disclosure of these crimes to child welfare officials and the police has been rising; and

WHEREAS there is a need for immediate improvements in our criminal justice, social and health care services to give victims and survivors the assistance and support they need, and to deal effectively with offenders; and

WHEREAS there is a need for our society to develop a greater understanding of the causes of personal crimes against children and women, and for the government to lead the way in preventing these crimes;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the government proceed immediately with the following steps to improve services and supports to victims and survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence:

a) the Department of Justice hire victim court workers for each of the province's major court centres;

b) the Department of Social Services increase the number of front-line social workers;

c) the Department of Social Services fund resource centres for adult survivors of child sexual assault;

d) the Department of Social Services increase funding for Iris Kirby House in St. John's, the Transition House in Corner Brook, and Libra House in Happy Valley - Goose Bay;

e) the Department of Social Services fund new transition houses for battered women and children in Labrador West, Gander and any other places where there is a demonstrated need; and

f) the Department of Health expand mental health services for children and adolescents, and establish these services in each region of the province.

BE IT RESOLVED ALSO that the government commission a task force to conduct a major multi-disciplinary study on sexual assault and family violence to

provide guidance to the public and the government on changes that must come about to prevent these crimes; and to advise the government on what programs and services should be provided to victims and survivors, and to offenders.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Harbour Grace.

MR. CRANE:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has had a high unemployment rate for a number of years; and

WHEREAS the previous Government have done little to significantly change this; and

WHEREAS the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment put forward recommendations to help solve the problem; and

WHEREAS the Liberal Party has advocated policies to help alleviate the unemployment burden in the Province;

BE IT RESOLVED that all Members of the House of Assembly combine their efforts and work to put in place the mechanisms to help alleviate our problem and steer our Province toward economic recovery;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we request the Federal Government to assist us in providing an opportunity for meaningful employment for our citizens of

this Province instead of many of the make work projects that are of a temporary nature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS a Province wide general strike in the construction industry is eminent this Summer; and

WHEREAS thousands of Newfoundlanders each year depend on the seasonal employment provided by the construction industry as their only source of income; and

WHEREAS the former administration had legislation drafted entitled "An Act to Amend the Labour Relations Act, 1977"; and

WHEREAS Section 89 - Subsections I and II deal specifically with businesses under common control which addresses directly the issue of double-breasting; and

WHEREAS the double-breasting issue continues to cause labour unrest which endangers employment security in the construction industry;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Government bring forward immediately this act which will help to ensure labour peace in our Province and thereby protect the jobs of thousands of people employed in the construction industry of Newfoundland and

Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. George's.

MR. SIHRT:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution;

WHEREAS the new Rural Development Subsidiary Agreement III was not signed before March 31, 1989 by the previous Administration; and

WHEREAS the 56 Development Associations of the Province had been promised a new agreement by October, 1988; and

WHEREAS the Development Associations are one of the main contributors to a strong economic base in many rural areas of this Province; and

WHEREAS all 56 Development Associations are at the point of closing down operations because of lack of funding; and

WHEREAS the Premier of the Province and the new Government are committed to making sure the full economic potential of this Province is realized;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Federal Government take very seriously the economic concerns of this Province especially as it relates to the people who want to begin long-term economic planning for the future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government urge the Federal Government to enter into a new Rural Development Subsidiary

Agreement III immediately.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. WINSOR:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS school boards in the Province are experiencing severe financial difficulties; and

WHEREAS the former P.C. Government took several new initiatives to address the problem;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the present Government immediately:

A) Implement fully the school tax equalization formula;

B) Provide 100 per cent of all busing costs;

C) Implement a capital debt restructuring program for boards with an excessive debt load.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there further motions?

MR. HEWLETT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Green Bay.

MR. HEWLETT:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Province's inland fish, wildlife, forests and outdoors generally are being subjected to increasing pressure by people; and

WHEREAS the current efforts to enforce conservation laws come under various jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS if greater conservation efforts are not mounted, the residents of the Province will be shortchanged in the future, and the tourism industry will be hurt;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the government consolidate and strengthen natural conservation law enforcement by the following means:

(a) negotiating with the Government of Canada the transfer of responsibility for inland fisheries law enforcement to the Province, together with the payment by the Federal Government to the Provincial Government of a grant to cover the cost of the responsibility transferred;

(b) in consultation with affected employee and interest groups, creating one unified inland conservation law enforcement agency, called the Newfoundland and Labrador Ranger Force, to enforce inland fisheries, wildlife, forestry and environment laws; and

(c) providing the Ranger Force with the mandate and the resources to do an effective job of protecting the Province's inland natural resources.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Terra Nova.

MR. GREENING:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS agriculture has been one of the resourced based industries in our Province; and

WHEREAS the importance of agriculture to the economy of our Province has been neglected; and

WHEREAS funding for the industry has been at a minimum; and

WHEREAS agriculture in the Province is at a developmental stage;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that every step be taken to ensure that the agricultural industry in the Province be given top priority when funds are being allocated.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to move the following resolution:

WHEREAS this is the first opportunity for a Liberal Government to administer the affairs of the Province in seventeen years; and

WHEREAS today in the Throne Speech the Liberal Government shouldered the concerns of the Native People of this Province to the Federal Government; and

WHEREAS the Native People of our Province need more than moral support from our government.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that a Select Committee of the House of Assembly be immediately established to address the concerns of the Native People and report to the House of Assembly within six months with recommendations to achieve the aims and objectives of the Native People and the government collectively.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to move the following resolution:

WHEREAS the previous Conservative government authorized the Marystown Shipyard to advance the schedule for the construction of two ferries for Bell Island; and

WHEREAS a letter of intent was issued to the Marystown Shipyard by the Department of Transportation for an immediate start on these ferries; and

WHEREAS these ferries are a necessary transportation link for the residents of Bell Island;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this House direct the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation to live up to the commitment made to the residents of Bell Island and the employees of the Marystown Shipyard and have construction of these two vessels start immediately; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House direct Government to have the Marystown Shipyard design and

construct an adequate ice breaker type ferry to serve the residents of Fogo.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to move the following resolution:

WHEREAS there is increasing demand and need for post-secondary education in the Province; and

WHEREAS the present structure for attaining student aid is antiquated and excludes a large portion of the student population; and

WHEREAS parents are required to contribute heavily to these education expenses; and

WHEREAS parental financial obligation prevent them from providing these funds to attend post-secondary institutions;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government establish a Select Committee of the House to address the whole issue of student aid to reflect today's reality, and thus provide financial relief to students and parents.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for St. John's East Extern.

MR. PARSONS:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to move

the following resolution:

WHEREAS many areas of the Province have been promised recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS the areas promised were the areas of greatest need; and

WHEREAS those areas promised were financially stable and fully met all requirements;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs direct his personnel to implement the procedures necessary to put the wheels in motion for the erection of those facilities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I understand there are no further resolutions coming. Is that correct?

MR. SPEAKER:

Yes.

MR. BAKER:

I would like to take this opportunity, first of all, Mr. Speaker, to inform members of the House, and staff and the press, that in discussions with the Opposition House Leader we have reached an understanding that because of the time of year, because of the warm weather coming and so on, that the hours of opening and closing of the House of Assembly will be moved ahead by one hour. I think the Opposition House Leader would like to comment

on that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I can tell members of the House and the public that we have had discussions and my colleagues on this side of the House are quite prepared to accept that change. It would mean that from Monday to Thursday we would be sitting from two o'clock to five o'clock, and it would also mean that on Friday morning we would be sitting from nine o'clock to twelve o'clock. So we agree with that. It would have to be by agreement, obviously, because the rules provide for that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that the House at its rising do adjourn until 2:00 p.m. on Monday and that the House do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER:

Before announcing the official adjournment, may I remind everybody present of your invitation to join hon. members and myself in the foyer, on the main floor, for refreshments.

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