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**VERBATIM REPORT**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 1976

**SPEAKER; THE HONOURABLE GERALD RYAN OTTENHEIMER**

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

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MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Trinity - Bay de Verde.

MR. ROWE: I wish to rise on a question of privilege. Mr. Speaker, with regard to an article in today's issue of The Daily News. Now, Sir, I would like to point out right at the outset and I am not attacking the particular article in question, nor the press reporter in question, but looking through the article itself it is reasonably accurate, but certain sentences and phrases were taken out of context which leave the wrong impression entirely, Sir, and I am referring to the article headlined, "Offshore development: Rowe Would Like To See Ownership Question Dropped."

Now, Sir, I can quite easily see why a reporter came out with that particular headline because quite frankly after the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) and the Minister of Mines and Energy finished with me I did not know whether I had spoken or I had awakened from a nightmare.

MR. NEARY: Dragged through a wringer.

MR. ROWE: Or dragged through a wringer, because they had so badly twisted the words that I had uttered.

MR. NEARY: Not true. That is not true.

MR. ROWE: Now, Sir, the LaPoile lippypede might just as well keep quiet now.

MR. NEARY: Who gets personal in this House?

MR. ROWE: I do not have a dictionary in front of me, Sir, but for all hon. members we all know what a millipede and a centipede is.

MR. NEARY: Somebody who gets -

MR. ROWE: Well the hon. member is a lippypede -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please!

MR. ROWE: - in other words, it is a mouth on legs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. ROWE: Now, Sir, I wish he would accord me the same -

MR. NEARY: Who gets personal in this House?

MR. ROWE: Now I am going to have silence?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! The hon. gentleman has a right to be heard in silence and I would also direct him to get on with the actual point -

MR. ROWE: If I am not harassed.

MR. SPEAKER: - without references to the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary).

MR. ROWE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only thing I would like to point out, Sir, is that I was developing a line of thought on Monday, and incidentally this came two days after the matter had been straightened up, I was developing a line of thought, which incidentally was identical to that of the original minister of Mines and Energy, Mr. Barry, and that headline is taken out of context and it leaves the wrong impression completely.

Sir, just to set the record straight, I cannot direct the reporter in question to set the record straight in the newspaper but I would like to bring to his attention Motion Number 12 which

MR. F. POWE:

was moved by myself, a private members motion which says as follows - and this should set the record straight -

BE IT RESOLVED that this House reaffirms that Newfoundland and Labrador owns, and possesses jurisdiction in respect of, the resources of the seabed, including mineral and hydrocarbons, in the area extending to the edge of the Continental Shelf and margin adjacent to Newfoundland and Labrador or to a limit extending two hundred miles from the inner limit of the Canadian Territorial Sea, whichever is the greater.

Now, Sir, I would like just to bring this to the attention of the House and to the attention of the reporter working with the Daily News just to set the record straight. I thought the record had been set straight yesterday but obviously this was a report that was published in this morning's paper from the events that took place on Monday and not yesterday.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Industrial and Rural Development.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: On that question of privilege. Without going into any detail, I certainly feel the member might have some kind of a claim at any point, that any member to rise and suggest that a headline did not properly reflect what he said. But I believe - and I am not conversant with every detail on privilege - but certainly there is no question of privilege involved. The headline, as I read it, fairly clearly represents the attitude expressed by the member. The details of the article as well represent the attitude expressed. I find it a bit strange, this kind of attitude that every time a press report comes out with a little kind of a slant or a little kind of a misrepresentation of the most minute sort, that a member will get up on a question of privilege. There is no question of privilege. There is an argument, a debate but certainly not a question of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition and then the hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be very brief with respect to the point. I think the remarks made by the hon. gentleman from Grand Falls (Mr. Lundrigan), the Minister of Industrial Development,

MR. ROBERTS:

are very much to the point in the sense that the rules of this House, and the practices of this House require that a so-called point of privilege be taken together with a motion to repair whatever damage is alleged to have been done to the privileges of the House or of the individual member. That is so. But I would also say to the hon. gentleman, and this is what my friend and colleague from Trinity-Bay de Verde (Mr. F. Rowe) was doing, that there is in this House a well-established practice - we have seen a number of instances of it this year. Indeed some of his colleagues, Mr. Speaker, have taken advantage of this practice this year and used it - whereby when Orders are called a member rises and states a so-called point of privilege, knowing full well that it is not the usual point of privilege. It is a point of privilege that is recognized, or a procedure that is recognized by this House and he takes advantage of it to read onto the record the correction of what he regards as being a misstatement, a serious misstatement of views which he expressed.

I have not looked it up but I will wager, Mr. Speaker, that we could find a dozen instances this year in this House of this practice being adopted. Whether or not it should be adopted is a separate matter altogether. But I will say I think it is well established in the practices of this House. Indeed - and there is no way in which the gentleman from Grand Falls (Mr. Lundrigan) could know this - if he were to look not at the present volume of Standing Orders, the present book which has a blue cover and which was reprinted before this session of the House, if he would look at the former version which was published with a green cover on it, and somebody who was in the House previously might have one in his desk or outside it -

AN HON. MEMBER: It was not that one?

MR. ROBERTS: No, it had a green cardboard cover on it - that version included some notes, some annotations which were prepared by one of Your Honour's predecessors, Mr. Speaker Sparks as he then was (who hangs here in splendor and in glory looking down upon us) one of the

MR. ROBERTS:

notes which Mr. Speaker Sparks put in that version of Standing Orders was a little note to the effect that in this House members often take advantage of so-called points of privilege which are not points of privilege to make a point that they had been misquoted. My friend from Trinity-Bay de Verde (Mr. F. Rowe) feels he has been misquoted. I agree with him.

MR. ROBERTS:

I think he has been misquoted or taken out of context. His views have not been presented accurately. All he is doing now is doing what is well established in the practice of this House, that is making a brief statement of the correct fact and then just asking that the press record it. It is a little different from the point raised by the gentleman from Kilbride (Mr. Wells) the other day, which again was not a point of privilege because he made no substantive motion, but it was a statement by the hon. gentleman which we all heard with interest because I believe it is the proper of the function of the House to hear such statements at this time. So I think my colleague is perfectly in order, Sir, and perfectly within the precedents of this chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, to that point of privilege. I would submit to Your Honour that there was really no point of privilege at all, Sir, and I am surprised to hear the hon. Leader of the Opposition say that he agreed with his colleague when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was not in the House when the statements were made. So therefore how would the Leader of the Opposition know if the hon. member was quoted correctly or not?

Mr. Speaker, too often in this hon. House we point the finger at the press for misquoting members for statements that are made on the floor of this hon. House. Nine chances out of ten, Sir, the statements are the member's own fault. When a member opens his mouth and puts his foot into it, then the press, Sir, have no choice but to report what the hon. gentleman said to the people of this Province. And in my opinion, Sir, that is what happened in this particular case. I want to congratulate the news reporter for doing such a fine job of reporting the proceedings of this hon. House yesterday. I think it was a fine job of reporting and the news reporter was absolutely correct in his statements concerning the remarks made by the hon. member for Trinity-Bay de Verde (Mr. F. Rowe).

MR. SPEAKER: Before proceeding I think it is necessary to give a

MP. SPEAKER:

ruling in this matter. What essentially has happened is that the hon. member for Trinity-Bay de Verde (Mr. F. Rowe) got up on a point of privilege and made a statement with reference to what he considered to be a misinterpretation or misquotation of his remarks. The hon. Minister for Industrial and Rural Development got up on what I think was essentially a point of order and made his submission, and then we had the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) speaking on the matter.

It is my understanding that the practice in this Legislature has been, and continues to be, that a member may rise, get the attention of the Chair, be recognized by the Chair, by stating point of privilege. When he then begins to speak there are essentially two possibilities: one, a bona fide, in the strict sense of the term, point of privilege, in the strict, technical, parliamentary sense of the term, point of privilege, which must be followed at some time, because usually two things have to be ascertained; whether it has come up at the first possible opportunity, whether there is a prima facie case, and then some substantive motion.

But also in this Legislature people get the attention of the Chair and are recognized by the Chair on a point of privilege in order to make a matter of explanation whereby they think or allege that they have been misunderstood, what they have said or done has been misrepresented and misquoted and misunderstood by the press, or indeed by somebody else and sometimes by some other member. That is a practice that has continued for some time in this Legislature. To the best of my knowledge in my readings of the Ottawa Hansard, members of the House of Commons as well have also gotten the attention of the House by getting up on a point of privilege and making, in fact, what is an explanation and not following it up with any substantive motion. To the best of my knowledge that also is a practice in the House of Commons, perhaps not used as frequently as here.

But whether it is or it is not, it is the practice in this Legislature. So I think the hon. gentleman was in order in speaking



MR. SPEAKER: as he did.

The hon. Minister of Tourism.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give notice to the House that I would like to address myself to a point of personal privilege at the earliest possible moment. I cannot do it today. And I realize, as I understand the rules, that a member should raise the point at the earliest opportunity. That would be today. It is in relation to the Evening Telegram of yesterday. I refrain from bringing the matter up because it has to do with a case which is before the courts, and out of respect for the court I do not feel that I should discuss it today.

MR. HICKEY:

I would like to point out to the House that it has to do with a company named Cabot Group 4. I have ignored a number of things that have been said in that past. I can no longer ignore those things. I wish to clarify my position, and I would like to do so when the case before the court is disposed of.

MR. ROBERTS: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: I have every sympathy with the hon. gentleman if he feels that The Evening Telegram - I assume he is referring to the news story about a criminal charge which was laid yesterday here in St. John's - and if the hon. gentleman feels the Telegram have defamed him in some way then I certainly have every sympathy with his desire and his wish to clear his name, or whatever the correct phrase. Clearing his name may be the wrong phrase, because that would imply there is something to be cleared away. But my point of order, Mr. Speaker, is this: I do not think there is anything in our rules or in the practice and precedents that would require or even permit the matter to be postponed. We are not allowed to discuss a court case here. That is a restraint we imposed, and a wise one, and we accept it. But, Sir, we are certainly required to dispose of a matter of personal privilege or privilege of the House as quickly as we can. The only reason I have ever heard of it being delayed - and if Your Honour looks at Beauchesne, the only reason is to prepare a transcript, or to get, if it is a tape recording outside, to get a tape recording of the offending words. So I would think, Sir, the hon. gentleman, if he wishes to proceed with it - and I certainly have every sympathy with him, and would urge him to proceed if he feels he wishes - the hon. gentleman, Sir, should proceed immediately with whatever action he has in mind, because I do not think it in any way, Sir, is barred or prohibited by the rule of timeliness with respect to privilege.

I would also say, of course, Sir, that since the statements in question were made outside the House, indeed were published in the paper, the hon. gentleman, if he feels he has been defamed, also has the

Mr. Roberts.

same remedy open to him that the gentleman from Kilbride has availed himself of with respect to certain statements made on another medium recently and that is namely to, you know, instruct a solicitor to take action in the High Court, the Supreme Court in this Province, of course, on a charge of libel. But that is beside the point.

MR. NEARY: Whether it is frivolous does not make any difference -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman from LaPoile, Sir, persists in interrupting. I would ask him to try to observe the rules of the House as best he can, Sir.

My point, Sir, is that I do not think the timeliness rule works in this case, in this instance, in the way in which the gentleman from St. John's East Extern (Mr. Hickey), the Minister of Tourism, has suggested. I raise it as a point of order, because I think it should be settled. Your Honour may well wish to hear further argument. Your Honour may well wish to consider the point, because I am not sure it has ever been raised before, at least in this Chamber, but I think it is a valid point, and if the hon. Minister of Tourism feels, as he obviously does, that he has been treated improperly by The Evening Telegram - and this is a very serious matter - then I, for one, feel he should be given every opportunity, Sir, to dispose of the matter in the House as quickly as possible. It may well take weeks or months to dispose of criminal action. You know, they do take a long time, and I would think the hon. gentleman, Sir, would not want to rest a moment beyond what he must. I think he raised the point feeling he must. What I am saying to him in my view, Mr. Speaker, is that I do not think he must at all. In fact, I think he must move now, and he should move now, and I would encourage him so to do, if it is in order.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, to that point of privilege. Mr. Speaker, I -

MR. SPEAKER: Just to interrupt the hon. gentleman. Actually we are now on a point of order.

MR. NEARY: Point of order? I thought it was a point of personal privilege raised. Well, to that point of order, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I am inclined to agree with the hon. Minister of Tourism that he should be permitted, Sir, to give notice that at the earliest opportunity he will be proceeding with appropriate action against The Evening Telegram for publishing the story. I do not know what it is the hon. member disagrees with. But, Sir, we had a precedent established in this House last week by the hon. member for Kilbride (Mr. Wells) who sat on his rights for two days, Sir.

MR. WELLS: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order has been raised.

MR. NEARY: There is a point of order, Mr. Speaker, before the House.

MR. WELLS: I am speaking to a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: There is another one to be heard now I am afraid.

MR. WELLS: Another one has been raised.

MR. NEARY: There cannot be two, Mr. Speaker. There cannot be two.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! I am not sure that there cannot be two.

If in speaking to a point of order a person is, in the opinion of another hon. member, out of order -

MR. NEARY: But the hon. minister can reply.

MR. SPEAKER: - then that is a second point of order which you have to dispose of first before coming back to the original point of order.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, you cannot have two points of order.

MR. WELLS: A point of order has been raised.

MR. SPEAKER: In my opinion you can, and we do.

MR. WELLS: Yes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: Sit down!

MR. NEARY: Most unusual. You cannot, Sir. That is against the rules.

MR. WELLS: If I may, on the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. WELLS: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order Your Honour is unquestionably correct. Otherwise, under the guise of speaking on a point of order an hon. member could get up and say anything under the sun. Whether it was relevant or irrelevant would not matter. So obviously a point of order can be raised, otherwise, as I say, anything would go in this House. Sometimes I think that is the case, but obviously it is not so by the rules.

The hon. gentleman from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) is now speaking on a point of order to do with the point raised by the hon. minister, but he is seeking now to drag in a completely different matter that is different in every respect to everything about the previous matter of privilege which was discussed in this House earlier this week. It is completely different. There is no analogy present. This has nothing to do with it. We are talking about the hon. minister's right to raise a point of privilege, and whether it should be dealt with at a later date or it should be dealt with sooner or now. That is my point of order and the hon. gentleman's remarks -

MR. NEARY: Ha! that is no point of order.

MR. WELLS: If I may finish. I know it is difficult but I would like to finish, Mr. Speaker. The hon. gentleman's remarks accordingly, I submit, are entirely out of order and he should be prohibited from dealing with other matters on this point of order.

MR. NEARY: To that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would submit to Your Honour that my remarks are in order, Sir, that I feel that the rules of this House should apply equally to all members, that we should not make chalk of one and cheese of the other, and if the member for Kilbride (Mr. Wells) has the right and the privilege to come into this hon. House and to give notice of a point of privilege, then my hon. friend the Minister of

MR. NEARY: Tourism should have the same right. Both involve personal privilege. Not privilege of the House, Sir, personal privilege. A matter of personal privilege.

The member for Kilbride (Mr. Wells) sat on his rights for two or three days. Five days after, I think, the speech made by me. The minister said he was waiting for the transcripts. He could have very easily had the transcripts much earlier, Sir. Much earlier.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please!

What I would wish to do now is dispose of the second point of order, then the hon. gentleman could continue with the original point of order on which he was speaking.

MR. NEARY: No, I am not finished with this one yet, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Well I am in a position now to make a judgement on it and I think the sooner we dispose of it then we will get back to the original -

MR. NEARY: Is this closure? Is this closure, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: This is not closure, and the hon. gentleman does not, as he knows, have the right to debate my ruling. There is one recourse which all hon. members have but he does not have the right to debate my ruling.

MR. NEARY: I am not debating Your Honour's ruling. I am not debating it.

MR. SPEAKER: I have now stated that I am now in a position to give a decision on the second point of order which will then be disposed of and we shall return to the first point of order.

On the second point of order; it certainly would be incorrect for any member in speaking on a point of order to enlarge the area. It must be specifically on the point of order raised. And we are dealing with the original point of order, one brought up by the Leader of the Opposition, with respect to the statement made by the hon. the Minister of Tourism. So I would ask the hon. member and any hon. members who are going to speak on the point of order to confine their remarks to that point of order. I think I should add as well that a statement or suggestion that the

MR. SPEAKER: rules apply equally on various sides is the type of statement which no hon. member, in my opinion, should make.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I think the rules, to the best of my knowledge and to the best of my ability, the rules apply equally to all members on all sides. I am not suggesting that the hon. gentleman stated the contrary.

MR. NEARY: As a matter of fact, the two members are on the same side, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I am stating that to make that

MR. SPEAKER:

statement can certainly easily lead to wrong interpretations. So I would suggest it is probably a sentence or a kind of statement which hon. members should refrain from making.

The hon. member from LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I am certainly glad you raised that point, Your Honour, because as Your Honour knows the two gentlemen that I am referring to sit on the same hon. side of the House, the opposite side to the Opposition. So in no way, shape or form, Sir, did anybody on this side of the House in this debate suggest that Your Honour or anybody else was impartial-or partial in this whole matter because in this particular case, Your Honour, the two gentlemen are colleagues sitting on the government side of the House. And so what I am saying, Sir, not Mr. Speaker that the same rules apply to one side that apply to the other, but that the rules apply equally to all members of the House, no matter what side they sit on. And I am glad that Your Honour upholds me in that statement. Because last week the member for Kilbride (Mr. Wells) was allowed to give notice of a question of personal privilege, the Minister of Tourism is following the precedent established last week, following it in the House today, and I am inclined to agree, Sir, that the Minister of Tourism should be given the right, the same rights as the member for Kilbride, to give notice of personal privilege, and I am all for him.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister without Portfolio.

MR. WELLS: There is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the cause of a breach of personal privilege can arise outside the House. Now obviously the point raised by the hon. Minister of Tourism arose outside of the House, but I feel perfectly right in bringing it up inside of the House in asking the House to -

MR. ROBERTS: There is no quarrel with that.

MR. WELLS: There is no quarrel with that, - asking that it be disposed of. I saw the article in question. I believe it deals with a court case involving another group, somebody other than the



MR. WELLS:

hon. minister. That being so I feel that the hon. minister would have the right not only to give notice but to have the matter dealt with very quickly. Now it is something that, my personal feeling and submission is to Your Honour that the minister ought to be given the opportunity to deal with it right away, right now. Your Honour may wish to take some time to and consider it later this afternoon, But I believe the hon. minister should be allowed to deal with that matter today and that is my submission to the point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. J. CROSBIE: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want to refer to Beauchesne page 95. Now whether the hon. gentleman goes ahead with his point of privilege now or does it later I submit that he has the right to give notice now and that the matter can be dealt with later in this session, a week later, a month later, six months.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSBIE: The matter should be raised at the earliest opportunity this section says, page 95, and it goes on to say in that paragraph, "A matter which is postponed to suit the convenience of the House or to secure the attendance of a member implicated, or to give the Speaker an opportunity to consider it fully does not forfeit priority when eventually raised." So the hon. gentleman is quite in order in raising this now, and could go ahead with it, if the House agrees, at any time. It does not have to be dealt with it this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, if I might just say another word. There certainly is no doubt at all as to the - I have just been looking up Sir Erskine May which is sort of, I guess, one step beyond Beauchesne, in the scale of authorities, the authority on which Beauchesne relies in many cases. There is no doubt at all but the hon. gentleman may raise a matter now and proceed with it later if

Mr. Roberts:

that is the wish of the House.

MR. SMALLWOOD: That is right.

MR. ROBERTS: Sure, that is common ground. But as I understood the Minister of Tourism, he has the opinion, or was of the opinion, which I believe to be incorrect, but as I understood he felt that the rules said he must wait. And the point which I make is that I do not think he has to wait. I think that if he wishes to proceed this day he may proceed this day, and if that is so I would urge him to proceed this day because the very essence of privilege, Sir, it is not unlike libel, and it is essential that the damage, the harm be counteracted as quickly as possible. I think that is the reason we have the timeliness rule, as being the essence of privilege, is that if a member's privilege or the House's privilege are offended then we must act quickly to repair the damage. And I think the hon. Minister of Tourism, as I heard his statement, was under the impression or of the opinion that the rules prevented him from dealing with this matter this day because it happens to refer to a matter, in which he is not involved, before the Criminal Courts of this Province. And I do not think the rules do prohibit him from -

MR. LUNDRIGAN: He does not think that.

MR. ROBERTS:

The member for Grand Falls (Mr. Lundrigan) seems to know what the Minister of Tourism thinks. I only know what the Minister of Tourism says. All I raised the point of order for is that I have asked for a ruling as to whether or not he may proceed this day. There is no doubt that if he does not want to proceed he does not have to proceed. But I would hope that if he can proceed, Sir, I would urge him to proceed. This is a very serious matter. I do not know exactly what the minister is complaining about. I have seen the article in question. It deals with certain criminal charges in which the minister is not involved. But it mentions the fact that the gentleman who has been charged in that criminal matter apparently is an acquaintance of the minister. That is what the newspaper article says in so many words. The minister obviously wishes to take objection. In view of the seriousness of this matter I would think the minister would want to act as quickly as he can to try to set straight the record. That is why I raised the point of order. For once I am trying to help the hon. minister.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister without Portfolio, and then the hon. Minister of Tourism.

MR. R. WELLS: Mr. Speaker, I think there is sufficient agreement in the various submissions that have been made on this point of order, Mr. Speaker, that I would ask, Mr. Speaker, to ask the hon. minister if he wishes to proceed with it now or later, because I think it is his choice entirely. I think that will resolve the matter.

MR. ROBERTS: He can proceed if he wishes.

MR. WELLS: Oh, yes. I think so.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. minister now speaking to the point of order?

MR. HICKEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I just want to clear a couple of things. The reason I approached this issue in the way I did was for two reasons: I was unsure. I did not think the rules of the House prevented me from debating, but nevertheless I was not sure. So I did not want to be in breach of the rules.

MR. ROBERTS: That point is resolved.

MR. HICKEY: Right. Secondly, I certainly, out of respect for the court - it is well known that one does not discuss, or have a discussion which may border on the issue before the court while indeed that issue is before it and not disposed of. So out of respect for the court I simply approached it in a way where I would give notice that I would rise whenever I could. I have since discussed this with my colleague, the House Leader. He knows the issue that I wish to take issue with, the matter I wish to take issue with. He is of the opinion that it will not indeed prejudice the case or affect the case. If that is so, and I accept what he says, then certainly I am prepared to proceed.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, to a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. To the same point of order?

MR. NEARY: No, Sir, a point of order. I am making a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: A different one? Proceed.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. members of the House to rulings on numbers of occasions in this hon. House that have been made by Your Honour that no matter that is before the court is to be permitted to be debated or discussed on the floor of this House. I have good reason, Your Honour, for stating that that ruling was made because I have been the subject of the ruling on a number of occasions by Your Honour when I tried to raise matters that were before the court, that my remarks in this hon. House would in no way influence the decision of the court. I was ruled out of order. I was told that the matter could not be debated. Other members, the member, I believe, the Minister of Mines and Energy, who tried to raise matters a couple of times to rebut debates, my arguments put forward in this hon. House, was ruled out of order, I believe, on one occasion. So there is ample precedent in this House, Your Honour, for what my hon. friend, the Minister of Tourism is saying, that we are either breaking new ground, Sir,

MR. NEARY:

or we are going to stick by the precedents that have been established in this hon. House for the last four or five years I suppose.

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order raised by the hon. gentleman is, in my opinion, very closely related to the original point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I think that both can be handled together. Firstly, certainly in my opinion the hon. minister if he wishes to make a statement on a point of privilege now may do so. I think that that was essentially the matter which first arose. The hon. minister was apparently of the opinion because certain matters were before the court he might be prohibited from speaking on a point of privilege. So I think it is quite clear that the hon. minister, if he wishes, may speak to a point of privilege now. Now as I understand it

Mr. Speaker:

what the hon. minister is going to speak to is a matter of privilege affecting himself or the House, I believe it is probably himself, but whichever it is, it is not his intention to rise to speak substantively on a matter which is before the court; that in speaking he is not going to speak on a matter which is to be adjudicated in court, but on a matter which affects his privilege, on what he considers to be a breach of privilege. And if my understanding of that is correct, then there is no need - unless my understanding is incorrect - there is no need to make a decision on the quite precise question, and indeed quite complex one on which I would not give a decision without having an opportunity to research it, and that would be which takes precedence the sub judice rule or the privilege rule, because the privilege is about, certainly in the order of business in this Legislature, privilege is of the highest priority.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: A matter of privilege can and must, and can, and does at times interrupt any proceedings apart from a vote. So it is of the highest priority in the order of business, it takes precedence over any government order, private members' resolution, it takes precedence over anything. However, the decision to how the priority which this Legislature accords to privilege and the general rule of sub judice, how they are reconciled and what the priority is, is something which I would not wish to make a decision on without doing certainly some research and some consultation. I do not think at this moment that it is necessary to give a decision on that, because the essential point, as I understand it, is whether the hon. minister has the right to speak now on a matter of personal privilege affecting him, or affecting the House, and in my opinion, he does have that right.

The hon. Minister of Tourism.

MR. T. HICKEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Based on the ruling. Your Honour, it seems that there is no objection to my proceeding. The matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker,

Mr. Hickey:

I refer to is in relation to an item in The Evening Telegram dated yesterday, and it refers to a case that is before the court involving a company by the name of Cabot Group 4 Limited, and involving an official of that company whom there is no need for me to name because members of the House are well aware, as indeed the public are aware the name referred to in this item.

I find no quarrel, Mr. Speaker, with most of the article, with the exception of the last paragraph, wherein it says, "Mr. So-and-So is also known as a close friend of Mr. Hickey and resided for a brief period some time ago in the minister's suite at Elizabeth Towers." Now, Mr. Speaker, on at least a half a dozen occasions, being jostled by friends in the Opposition, in relation to work performed by that company, that statement or something bordering on it might have been said. And I responded in the usual way in the House - did not take it too seriously, Your Honour. It appeared in the press at least three or four times after that and I ignored it. Now, Your Honour, there is a case before the Court, and I might say such a close friend this gentleman is of mine, The Evening Telegram and the journalist who wrote this article is so accurate that the case is indeed before the court because of an action taken by me against this individual of this company. The case would not be before the court, Your Honour, without the action as taken by me, for I am the aggrieved party, on the one hand, I suppose the government could be classified as that as well. But because of actions taken by myself, knowing and being aware and having proof that this individual was the person involved, took that action because it was proper to take it.

MR. HICKEY: My question or privilege, Your Honour, is that there is an implication in this silly, stupid statement which ends that article in the paper.

I would ask the gentleman or the lady, whoever it was who wrote it, to define what a close friend is. What is a close friend? Because somebody gives lodgings to a person, does that make him a close friend? Certainly not from the way I grew up Your Honour. My family and I have been in the habit to assist people we did not know.

AN HON. MEMBER: Take somebody in for a night?

MR. HICKEY: Yes. Does that automatically make this person a close friend of mine? I reluctantly, Your Honour, raise the issue because I do not appreciate and I do not like, take no satisfaction out of involving myself in this kind of an issue. But a little while ago, Your Honour, I indicated to the House, and through the House to the press, that I was not prepared any longer to take this kind of innuendo, implication, silly, snide remarks go on, and I am not. I am not going to allow it because I have had all of it that I am going to take, that is why I stand today.

The statement that this gentleman is a close friend of mine is absolutely erroneous. The gentleman is an acquaintance of mine, was an acquaintance of mine when he and his company did business with my department, was no more than that then and certainly is no more than that now. Nothing has changed, Your Honour, in the relationship between the gentleman and I with the exception of one thing, and that is he did business with my department for a period of time, long, long, long before the incident that is before the court took place, that relationship in terms of doing business with my department was severed, discontinued. I simply want to point out I do not know for the life of me what the significance is of pointing out that this gentleman is a close friend of Mr. Hickey. Is one to read something into that? Is one to conclude that there is collusion between that gentleman and Mr. Hickey? If that is the issue, Mr. Speaker, if that is the message



MR. HICKEY: where is their decency, their simple guts? Why do they not print it?

I assure this House, Your Honour, I have never lied to this House. I gave what information I could give. I gave what explanations I could give with regards to this gentleman, this company on many an occasion. I have not deceived the House ever. I do not ever intend to. I do not know what all of this is about and I simply ask the press in the name of decency, if nothing else, to stop it.

MR. SPEAKER: Before calling 'Statements by Ministers' I would like to point out to hon. members the presence in the House of a delegation from the Badger Town Council including Mayor Coleman and Councillors Davis and Stuckless, and certainly these gentlemen, on behalf of all hon. members, I welcome you to the Legislature and hope that your visit will be interesting.

MR. PETITIONS:

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: Thank you. I would like, Sir, to present a petition signed by approximately 1,000 voters who live in the district of Exploits, which district is one of the three that currently does not have a member in the House of Assembly.

The prayer of the petition, Mr. Speaker, I think is quite succinctly stated in the document itself and if I may I will just read it, it is quite brief, "We the undersigned as eligible voters of the district of Exploits request that the Premier and the government of this Province recognize immediately that it is our right to have an elected member to the House of Assembly to represent the interests of this district.

"In consideration of the fact that the House of Assembly is currently opened, and approximately two months have elapsed since the election for Exploits was ruled null and void, we humbly request that a specific date be set for the by-election and that the by-election itself be held before the end of April!"

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I present this petition, or I present it and my colleagues and I support it, not in any partisan sense because I believe this is a matter which transcends partisanship. The district of Exploits, Sir, was declared vacant by the Supreme Court as a result of an action taken according to the Election Act. It was declared vacant on January 30, 1976, which is more than two months past. Since then, as Your Honour is aware, two other districts have been declared - or the elections have been declared null and void, and as a result there are three districts which are not represented in this House.

Mr. Speaker, only the voters of those districts can determine who their representatives are to be, but they can only exercise that determination, Sir, in an election and the election can be held only if the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, the Premier and his colleagues of the cabinet, order it to be held. Mr. Speaker, we believe the election should be held. We believe the people in the district of Exploits and in the district of Bonavista North and of Ferryland should be given the opportunity to exercise their rights, their right to vote for a man or a woman to come here to this House as their member. There is no reason why the districts should not have elections, Sir. There is every reason why they should.

I present the petition, Sir, in the hope that the Premier and his colleagues in the cabinet will take heed to the request of, as I say, approximately 1,000 people which would be a very high proportion of the eligible electors in that district. I know some of them. I know they are Liberal and Tory alike. It is not a matter of a partisanship, Sir; they want to vote for a member. Only the government can give them that vote, Sir. I ask and urge the government to do it and to do it as quickly as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Industrial Development.

MR. LINDPIGAN: Now, Mr. Speaker, of the petition, the petition was more or less addressed to the Premier directly and the government, and

MR. LUNDRIGAN:

of course, the Premier has the option of making that particular decision. I just wish to say that the Premier is not in the House today. He is unavoidably absent. He will have the petition drawn to his attention, I am sure. And the thing which amazes me in just saying that I agree that every district needs early representation when there has been a district declared null and void or an election declared null and void rather, what amazes me is that the Leader of the Opposition in presenting this petition in an unpartisan way, an unpolitical way, an unparty way, no emphasis on the fact that he was out to the district a few days ago and held public meetings wherein he requested that the people -

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, to a point of order.

MP. SPEAKER: A point of order has been raised.

MR. ROBERTS: I have been in the district of Exploits on a number of occasions, Sir. I indeed will be there again this evening. I have not attended a public meeting in the district of Exploits for some time. If the gentleman from Grand Falls (Mr. Lundrigan), Sir, wishes to enter debate, I regret that I am not allowed to, nor is he, I submit, in this. But at any rate if he wishes to quote me, Sir, or allege my activities, let him quote me correctly and let him allege my activities correctly, Sir. I did not solicit the petition, if the hon. gentleman thinks I did.

MP. SPEAKER: On that point of order: As all hon. members know in speaking to a petition an hon. member must confine himself to either the names on the petition or the number of the material allegations of the petition, the basic request of the petition.

The hon. Minister of Industrial Development.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: Yes, Your Honour. I apologize to the hon. member. It is the Bonavista North area I guess he held his public meetings in, which also is a district that has been declared null and void - or the election was. But the amazing thing that strikes my attention - and this is something that perhaps if we were better politicians and

MR. LUNDRIGAN:

perhaps a little bit more partisan ourselves we would have been making public statements - that the Prime Minister of the country has left the seat in St. John's West vacant for what will be over a year.

MR. F. ROWE: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order has been raised.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: And the principle that the hon. -

MR. F. ROWE: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order has been raised.

MR. F. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I submit to Your Honour that the Minister of Industrial and Rural Development is now on an entirely different subject altogether in dealing with St. John's West. The minister or any other hon. member in this House can get up and support a petition and they have to confine their remarks to that petition. In this particular instance we are talking about the district of Exploits, not the federal riding of St. John's West. Neither is the minister, or any other member, allowed to enter into debate when supporting a petition.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: Mr. Speaker, on that point of order before continuing.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: Because of my respect for a lot of school marms in the Province I will not accuse the hon. member of being a school marm. But you cannot rise in the House to get a sentence out but the hon. member is misquoted, misrepresented, misjudged, anticipated, points of order, and this is the reason I rose earlier on a point of order or something earlier, that the hon. member in particular abuses the rule on points of order and question of privilege worst than I have ever seen in my life.

AN HON. MEMBER: Right. Right.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: Stanley Knowles would not even get along with him.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! I think we are now in a position to dispense with the point of order raised. Certainly one point, that there could be no debate on a petition, is certainly a valid one. The second point, or after the first one made in the timing of the hon. gentleman's remarks, was with represent the hon. minister was speaking on or about a different by-election, a by-election in St. John's West. Certainly the hon. minister in speaking to the petition must be relevant. This would certainly mean to make a speech on by-elections somewhere else would not be relevant. If one were to make a brief comparison, I suppose, or a passing reference to things being related that would be in order. I think it would be a question of emphasis, a passing kind of reference, then I do not think in itself would be out of order. But a direction of more than that kind of a reference or a comparison to directing one's remarks to a different by-election than the one referred to in the petition could well be and I think would be irrelevant.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: Thank you, Your Honour, for that ruling.

Just to complete my remarks, I was referring to the principle of calling by-elections, the principle of calling early by-elections, and supporting the principle that people should be given the earliest opportunity, bearing in mind all of the realities of a situation as we have in this Province, of having earlier representation. I was merely pointing out to the House

MR. LUNDRIGAN:

that I find it contradictory in the presentation by the Leader of the Opposition when he says that he presents a petition with no bias or no partisanship at all. I find that attitude today, I find his public attitude totally contradictory, because he has never uttered a word about his mentor in Ottawa who have kept the people in St. John's West for thirteen months without representation.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please! I would suggest the hon. minister is now getting beyond the point of comparison or reference and is entering the area of debate.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: Yes, Your Honour, I will have to agree with that. But I could not resist pointing out the level of mixed standard presented by the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I want to support the petition presented on behalf of over 1,000 residents, voters in the district of Exploits who want the by-election held in that district at as early a date as possible. I think they have a very justifiable case, Mr. Speaker. I do believe in accordance with the Election Act, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. the Premier is compelled under the Election Act, although I understand there is a loophole in the act, but under the Election Act the Premier has, or the Leader of the administration, I presume, has six months in which to call a by-election. I do not know. The six months have not expired yet, Mr. Speaker, but even though the hon. the Premier has six months in which to call the by-election, not only in Exploits but in the other two districts, I would submit to the House, Your Honour, that there is a moral obligation on the part of the Premier and the government to give the people, the voters, the citizens of Exploits an opportunity to go to the polls at an early a date as possible so that they can have representation in this House, so they can elect their member to this House to look after the many problems that they have in the district of Exploits. I do not care what government does, Sir. I think leaving a seat vacant for six months, for a year, for eighteen months is morally wrong. I do not care whether it is the government of this Province, the Premier of this Province

MR. NEARY:

or any other Province or the Prime Minister of Canada, it is wrong, Sir. If there are loopholes in the present Election Act, I would suggest to the House that during this sitting of the House that these loopholes be plugged so that there will be a limitation put on the amount of time that the Premier has to call a by-election when a seat becomes vacant.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Lewisporte.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the prayer of the petition as presented by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Since that seat became vacant some months ago I have been looking after it on behalf of my party, and I find that there are a lot of people in the district who have many complaints, and many things they would like their member to look into. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I get four or five calls a day from that particular district of the Province, and I think it is very important that the people have a chance to express their electoral right as quickly as possible. I feel that now that the court case has been taken care of - the general election was only last September - it is important to get the full complement of members in this House before much time passes by, and for that reason I would like to support this petition, and ask that the Premier call the by-election as soon as possible so that the people there can have a member they can turn to, and they will not have to - you know, sometimes they have to apologize for calling me because they know that I am not their member, but, of course, I will do what I can for them. But it is important, I think, that they get a member in the House as quickly as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister without Portfolio.

MR. WELLS: To that petition, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the government recognizes that by-elections have to be called. It is the responsibility of the Premier and a decision of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council when the by-election is called and, of course, it will be called within the rules. And I appreciate, and we appreciate it is the right of the petitioners to bring their wishes to the floor of the House of Assembly as they have done. It is rather a different matter to set a time limit on the calling of the election, because there is a twenty-one day writ. It is now, for practical purposes, impossible if it were called today to have the by-election by the end of April. But on



MR. WELLS:

the by-election, a decision will be made by the government within the rules and the by-election will be called in due course so that the people of these and the other districts will not be without representation here, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, just a word or two in support of the petition presented by my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition. The district of Exploits, of course, includes among other communities the town of Bishops Falls where I spent a number of years, fifteen altogether, and having that particular interest, having spent so many years there, I would like to particularly identify with the support that has been expressed for the petition. It is important that the people of Bishops Falls, together with Botwood and Peterview and Northern Arm and Point Leamington, Leading Ticks and the other communities in the outer part of that district have representation in the House of Assembly. That goes without saying. The fact that each of us is here as a member bespeaks the truth of what I have just said, that it is important that each district, and each citizen of this Province have an electoral voice in the House of Assembly. I am disappointed to hear in the response of the Minister without Portfolio that he did not, obviously, sense any urgency in the matter. I do not think, Mr. Speaker, it is enough to say that it will be done within the rules, but I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that it is more important that it be done within the requirements of the situation, and the requirements are that it be done very, very quickly unless, of course, the Premier or his colleagues can advance some good reason why the matter has to be delayed. Were that the case, if that is the case, then I am sure that the people of Exploits, and all of us generally, will understand. But in the absence of some good reason for delay, the obvious requirement is that the election be called without any further delay. I always enjoy the comments of the Minister of Industrial

Mr. Simmons.

and Rural Development. He has his own unique contribution to bring to the debate here, and I would be tempted, Mr. Speaker, to get into the discussion on St. John's West. There are so many things that could be said about that. I would like to see that one called soon, too. One could be snide, one could be snide, Mr. Speaker, and suggest that the people up there have not begun to miss their member, they have not gotten used to a member, and perhaps they have not begun to miss one yet, and perhaps that is why we do not see petitions there.

MR. NEARY: Is this in order, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, old Mr. Law-and-Order himself is now keeping us straight for a change. That is a pleasant change.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Exploits got used to a member. Steve Mulrooney, when he sat here, got the people -

MR. W. CARTER: To a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order has been raised.

MR. W. CARTER: I submit to you, Sir, that I agree with your ruling, with respect to my colleague, the member for Grand Falls (Mr. Lundrigan), that maybe he was entering into the realm of debate in his reference to the vacancy that exists in St. John's West. But I submit, too, Sir, that the hon. member who now has the floor -

MR. SIMMONS: The minister did not object then.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. W. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who is now speaking from Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons) is also out of order in that he is -

MR. NEARY: He is never in order.

MR. W. CARTER: - in that he has departed from the issue at hand in his reference to the district of St. John's West.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: It is also dishonest and false.

MR. W. CARTER: I submit, Mr. Speaker, it is unfair. It is untrue,

MR. SIMMONS: What do you mean, it is dishonest and it is false?

Stand up and prove it, boy.

MR. W. CARTER: - and it is certainly out of order.

MR. SIMMONS: To the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is an example of what the Minister of Industrial Development was talking about, where people use points of order to get into the debate. I submit the Minister of Fisheries has entered no point of order whatsoever, but has used the opportunity to participate in a debate and this is no time for debate. Mr. Speaker, I was doing what your ruling earlier permitted the Minister of Industrial Development to do, to make a brief comparative reference to St. John's West. Indeed I had already left the matter and gone back to Exploits, which is the subject of the petition, before I was interrupted.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly the applicable rule is that, obviously, the hon. gentleman must speak on the material allegation, the subject matter of the petition, must be quite strictly relevant to the petition, a passing reference or, you know, a comparison to a matter distinct but comparable certainly as a reference or comparison would not be ruled out of order. To develop further remarks or remarks at any length on something which is not the subject matter of a petition would be out of order. To a large extent it is a question of emphasis and I ask hon. members in this area to remember that a passing reference or a comparison to something related but distinct would be in order. When it becomes more than that then people are speaking on something which is no longer relevant.

The hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Less my reference to St. John's West be misinterpreted, I have said to the Minister of Industrial Development through you, Mr. Speaker, I support his call for an early election in St. John's West. I invite him, Mr. Speaker -

MR. NEARY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Another point of order has been raised.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member persists on defying Your Honour's ruling. Any reference to the by-election in St. John's West, if I interpret the ruling of Your Honour correctly, is out of order, and the hon. member persists in referring to the by-election in St. John's West. I would submit to Your Honour that you ask the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir to restrain himself or name him, Your Honour.

MR. SPEAKER: My ruling there is the same as the ruling I gave a few minutes ago, and that is a comparison, a reference for purposes of comparison to something distinct but related, and this is another by-election in another district, a comparison for point of reference to something distinct but related would not, in my opinion, be out of order. But to develop remarks at any length on that would be out of order as being irrelevant to the petition. It is the same ruling as I gave a couple of minutes ago.

The hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I do not know what all of the fuss is about. I want to briefly support this petition. I could have long since have finished had I not been interrupted on specious, false points of order. I shall depend on Mr. Speaker's as usual to bring me to order if I defy his rulings, as I am sure he will. I do not know why the member for LaPoile insists on wasting the time of the House. Let me repeat -

MR. NEARY: So this is in order, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SIMMONS: Let me repeat, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying a moment ago before I was interrupted; lest I be misunderstood about my reference to St. John's West, let me say just in passing, in comparison, let me say that I support the member's call for an early election in St. John's West, the member for Grand Falls (Mr. Lundrigan) his call for that by-election, My disappointment is that he did not support our call on this side for an early by-election in Exploits. Steve Mulrooney, the member for a brief period demonstrated to the people what an effective can do for them, and that is why we have this appeal

Mr. Simmons:

today, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WELLS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order has been raised.

MR. WELLS: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is going surely, Mr. Speaker, beyond the bounds of what is accepted, standard in this House in support of a petition. The petition is that a by-election should be called in Exploits. That is fine. Any remarks in support of that, but to start campaigning for a candidate, whoever it might be, because that is what this sounds like to me, surely goes beyond the bounds of supporting the petition.

MR. SIMMONS: To the point of order, Mr. Speaker. How, how - I will not say it, Mr. Speaker, it is not parliamentary. But how nonsensical can you get. I referred to a gentleman who served in this House, a former member of this House of Assembly, He is the last sitting and the only member who ever sat for the district of Exploits.

MR. ROBERTS: Hear, hear.

MR. SIMMONS: And I referred

MR. SIMMONS:

to him in a gentlemanly reference to a gentleman, and I resent deeply the implication from the Minister without Portfolio, the part-time Government House Leader, to the effect that we are campaigning.

I have paid tribute to a gentleman who deserves tribute, who represented the district of Exploits very well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY: To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for LaPoile, and then I will hear the hon. minister.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I am inclined to agree with the government House Leader that the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons), Sir, was entering into the realm of debate which is, as Your Honour knows, forbidden under the rules of this hon. House. Again I have to ask Your Honour to try and persuade the member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons), who does not seem to understand the rules of the House, to restrain himself and to stick to the prayer of the petition. If the hon. member persists in breaking the rules of the House, that Your Honour does not have any choice but to name the hon. member and have him removed from the House for a day or two.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Industrial and Rural Development.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: To that point of order. I think that an abuse of any rule in the House is just as bad as breaking the rule. This is something that I have tried to suggest in a number of ways over a period of the last number of weeks, and I do not want to presume that I know the rules. The hon. Leader of the Opposition if he were on this side of the House with his knowledge of the rules would have the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir in his seat ninety per cent of the time, because the hon. member persists in raising points of order, casting little aspersions. I have never seen him quite in order since I have been here and yet -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please!

MR. SPEAKER:

As I ruled earlier today with reference to another hon. member, when a person speaks to a point of order it must be quite specifically to the point of order before the Chair, and that is whether the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir remarks were in order.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: The point that I am trying to make is the hon. member got up, for example, and cast remarks about my hon. colleague, about his representation and how the district has not missed him since he has been away. I do not know if his remarks were either misleading the House, or if they were born out of ignorance or lack of understanding. But the point that I am trying to make, Your Honour is this, that if the Chair permits me as a member, the hon. member as a member, the hon. member for Trinity-Bay de Verde (Mr. F. Rowe) as a member, to persist in breaking the rules of the House, or misusing the rules of the House, or attempting because of the fact that there is a rule in Beausheve which says that one may rise on a question to a point of order or a question of privilege, to air a grievance, or to have the rule loosely applied, then I contend, Your Honour, that the decorum in the House and the general good will and the good debate and practice and procedure will deteriorate. I feel that that in fact is what is happening.

The hon. member usually when he raises his point of order usually scores a point or two and he deliberately does it and I feel that this is the kind of thing that causes aggravation. I feel, Your Honour, that if there is a persistency in breaking rules, if one rises on a question of privilege or a point of order and it is consistently presumed and observed by Your Honour that that is not a point of order or a question of privilege, then the collective disorder of the member should be dealt with forthwith by Your Honour.

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order which was brought up I think essentially boils down to whether the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir in his references to the former member was in order or not. I think that is



MR. SPEAKER: essentially it. Were the hon. member to make a speech on the subject matter of the gentleman who was formerly a member here would be irrelevant, would not be speaking on the material allegation of the petition which is that a by-election be held as soon possible. Again it is similar, it is a question of emphasis. If it is passing reference, certainly there is some relationship between the gentleman who was formerly in this session as a member and the fact that there is now a by-election.

Again is it is a passing reference to make a comparison or to make a specific point, then I do not think one would say it is out of order. But if it is to be the subject of a speech, then it would not refer to the material allegation of the petition which is the request that a by-election be held as soon as possible.

The hon. the member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for that ruling. Without attempting to anticipate, it is fully the ruling I expected because I had just begun, and indeed had not finished the sentence so one could scarcely submit I had made a speech. I just wanted to say that I understand the allegations in the petition, Mr. Speaker -

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! A point of order.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, do I understand the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir is questioning Your Honour's ruling?

MR. SPEAKER: On that point of order, it is not my understanding that he is questioning it, no.

MR. WHITE: No, sit down.



MR. SPEAKER: On the specific point of order raised by the hon. the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary), the hon. the member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir has not questioned it, has not disputed it.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, do I have an opportunity to make my case?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, if it is related to the point of order, of course.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to yield unless he has his point of order.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I am speaking on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: I presume the hon. gentleman is speaking on a point of order.

MR. NEARY: My understanding, Sir, of what the hon. gentleman said was that he looked at Your Honour and said, "Mr. Speaker, I did not make a speech." Now Your Honour had just made a ruling saying that it was not right and proper for the hon. member to make a speech in connection with the petition. And it would appear to me, Sir, and perhaps Your Honour may want to check the tapes, that what the member was doing indirectly was challenging Your Honour's ruling. And there is a proper procedure in this hon. House -

MR. SIMMONS: Do not be so foolish 'Steve'.

MR. NEARY: - for challenging Your Honour's ruling, and I would submit, Sir, that that is the recourse open to the hon. gentleman, and not to defy a ruling just made by Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: Just a word briefly to that so-called point of order, which in my submission has no merit and substance. I do not mind ridiculous points of order because they are raised by members, but absurd points of order, Sir, surely are gone beyond the bounds.

The gentleman from Burgeo (Mr. Simmons) was carrying on with his five minutes which have now stretched to about

MR. ROBERTS: twenty-three, counting all the points of order and so forth and so on that have gone on. Your Honour clearly said when the gentleman from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) began - clearly said - that in Your Honour's opinion the gentleman from Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons) was not challenging Your Honour's ruling, nor was he, obviously. Despite this the gentleman from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) persisted in carrying on in, as I see it, making what I regard as an absurd point of order as opposed to the merely ridiculous, which is more common for members of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The specific point of order raised was that the hon. the member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons) was out of order because he had challenged the Chair's ruling. I have listened to both hon. gentlemen who have spoken to the point of order and have considered my own judgement naturally, and it is certainly not my opinion that the hon. gentleman had challenged the Chair's ruling.

What the ruling was, was that the hon. gentleman should not make a speech with reference to - not that he had, but that he should not - that if he were to make a speech on a certain subject he would be out of order. If he were to make a passing reference or a comparison, he would be in order. I asked him to judge his remarks or to make his remarks accordingly. Then the hon. gentleman said that he had not or did not intend to, or something to the effect, that he had not or did not intend to make a speech on the matter on which he was directed not to make a speech. In my opinion he in no way challenged the Chair's ruling.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Burgeo-Bay D'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It remains for me only then to state once again my complete support for the prayer of the petition from the thousand or so residents of the district of Exploits. They have had good representation in the past, They deserve to have it on a continuing basis. The Premier of this

MR. SIMMONS: Province and his colleague can facilitate that, can do it quickly by calling the by-election without any further delay. Mr. Speaker, that is the issue, that is the prayer of the petition, that is the only issue. If we have made that point this afternoon all of the interruptions will have been worthwhile. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Naskaupi, then the hon. the member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. GOUDIE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition. Actually, in one sense, I suppose, this is a supplement to a petition which I present earlier in the House, about three weeks ago. I indicated at that time that there were other names to be submitted. Because of mail problems in Coastal Labrador the names had not arrived when the original petition was brought in.

The Power Consumers' Committee of Happy Valley-Goose Bay extends this prayer: "Although Labrador is a part of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the people feel that they are treated very unfairly and to a great extent are penalized in that they have

Mr. Goudie:

to pay exceptionally high electrical rates with very poor service. The residents sign below strongly protest these high rates and poor service and request that the government remedy this unfair situation."

The names on the petition total 623, Mr. Speaker. They come from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Mud Lake, Hopedale, English Point, Forteau, Cartwright, West St. Modeste, Pinware, and Capstan Island.

I wish to table this petition, Mr. Speaker, and have it referred to the particular department to which it relates.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. I. STRACHAN: Mr. Speaker, in rising to support this petition, which was collected from all over Labrador by the Consumers' Committee of Happy Valley, I would like to point out some disparities which we on the coast feel acutely concerning the supply of electrical power, especially in the light and in view of the fact that there are great hydro developments being carried out in Labrador and we on the coast can look across at Gull Island and at the Upper Churchill Falls, and then we turn around and find out that on the coast we have communities without electricity in this day and age, communities without electricity, when on the one hand we talk about Churchill Falls, we talk of the Gull Island power, we boast, we heard about it in the newspapers, we hear about it on the radio, and yet on the coast there are communities without electricity, and the communities who have electricity pay the highest rates in this Province, because we are supplied by diesel generators. Furthermore we not only pay the highest rates in this Province but we also pay more, the more we use the electricity. In other words, our rates escalate as we use electricity they do not fall as elsewhere.

Now in speaking to this petition I ask, how you can rationalize these two extremes? There is regional disparity within Canada, we realize that, but there is also severe regional disparity within this Province. Homes on the coast pay \$78, \$80, \$90, \$100, \$110 a month for electricity,

Mr. Strachan:

and remember we live in a part of the Province which has Arctic conditions, and therefore we use far more electricity there than in the Southern part of this Province. Any further increases will cripple the coastal people, many of whom do not exist totally within a cash economy, and therefore do not have the money to pay their bills. I call on the government to take steps to equalize the electricity rates across this Province so that we can all be treated the same, and hold the rates down before real severe hardship makes the people suffer more.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the House of course is very familiar with this problem and this complaint, and as I have explained before in the House the government are doing everything that is humanly possible to help in the situation. But this government and every government, Mr. Speaker, are faced with the facts that have been repeated over and over in this House, in this session, and which are still valid today.

The hon. gentleman from Eagle River (Mr. Strachan) talks about people along the coast of Labrador, and the rates they have to pay for power. They do not have hydro power available to them because, as he knows, it is simply not economic to develop hydro to bring to small communities as there are along the Coast of Labrador, the same as it is not economic to bring hydro power to small communities scattered along the coast of certain parts of Newfoundland. The communities that stretch along the coast of Labrador are not treated any differently than the communities scattered along the coast of Newfoundland who are on the rural electrical system or that are in the areas of diesel power has to be provided. The rates they are charged is exactly the same rates as are charged in other communities in Newfoundland who are on the rural system, who have to be supplied power through diesel generators, through the use of oil. And their rates are exactly the same as those rates. The first 500 kilowatts

Mr. Crosbie:

per month, kilowatt hours used per month is the same rate as hydro,  
and then above that the rates increased because it is just not  
possible for this or any government to finance the extension that  
would be required if the rates were lower.

Mr. Crosbie.

Mr. Speaker, in this year's estimates we are providing \$11,100,000 to subsidize the cost of power in the communities mentioned in Goose Bay, along the coast of Labrador, and in other parts of the Province. In the year 1975-1976 the amount was \$9,839,000; 1974-1975 the amount was \$7,300,000; in 1973-1974 the amount was \$5,992,000; in 1972-1973 the amount was \$4,750,000; in the last year of the Liberal Administration the amount of the subsidy was \$4,312,000. So we are this year asking the House to vote almost three times as much for the purpose of subsidizing the rates that pertain in systems that come under the Rural Electrical authority. That is the situation.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Twillingate.

MR. SMALLWOOD: Would the minister be kind enough to tell us why - these are extraordinarily figures admittedly - why? What is the explanation?

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the main reason and explanation is the increasing cost of oil, and the increasing cost of wages and salaries and other expenses such as that.

MR. SMALLWOOD: And that accounts completely?

MR. CROSBIE: Well, you know, these are the main reasons.

MR. SMALLWOOD: Well, almost completely?

MR. MURPHY: What about the subsidy change?

MR. SMALLWOOD: Wages and oil.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I am giving my opinion that the main reasons for this is the cost of oil -

MR. SMALLWOOD: I am asking, I am only asking.

MR. CROSBIE: Right.

MR. SMALLWOOD: I am not embarrassing.

MR. CROSBIE: Right. - is the cost of oil and the cost of wages and salaries which are two of the principal reasons. So, Mr. Speaker, we

Mr. Crosbie.

are doing what we can. I have met with the representatives of this group from Goose Bay-Happy Valley who have suggested that the rates be lowered. We are looking at that to see what it would cost, and what its implications are. But one of the main problems would be if rates were lowered, apart from the increased subsidy, would be the increased demand that would mean heavy expenditures in capital account to provide more diesel generators and more equipment of that nature which we just cannot reach, because in addition to this \$11,100,000 on capital account we are spending \$5,300,000 this year on the rural system. So we are familiar with the problem. We are sympathetic with the problem. I cannot promise any reduction in the rates. We are having a look at it just to see if there is any possibility at all. We are doing what we can, and it is a problem that every province and every country faces.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Fogo.

CAPT. WINSOR: In rising to support that petition, Mr. Speaker, it is easy to understand the problem that exists in Labrador. We have to realize, of course, the very long and severe frosty Winters.

AN HON. MEMBER: Northern Labrador.

EAPT. WINSOR: Well, not as cold and long Winters as we have in Northern Labrador and around that area of Goose Bay. But, Mr. Speaker, it is a great pity when that agreement was signed with Quebec that there was not a clause included in that agreement to provide a transmission line from the Churchill Falls down to Goose Bay which could have provided electricity for Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Mud Lake, North West River area. That is the great tragedy, I think, if there is a tragedy, of that agreement between the Province of Newfoundland and Quebec, because I think if that agreement had been there, and transmission lines had been provided, the people of Happy Valley, North West River and that area would be enjoying today comparatively the same rates, or perhaps a little cheaper, than we have in Newfoundland.



CAPT. WINSOR:

So, Mr. Speaker, I think, that is a great tragedy because the distance is not all that great, Mr. Speaker, from Churchill Falls to Goose Bay, and this is the reason, and it is going to take some time to correct it especially along the coast. This would not apply to the coast, because there you have to use the diesel power, and that is going to be for a long, long time to come. Even with the development of the Lower Churchill, the diesel power will have to be used along the coast. But, Sir, I can understand the people of Labrador having served them in this hon. House for fifteen years. And I had the problems then as the hon. members are having today, the high cost of electricity, the high cost of living, the high cost of transportation. Everything is much higher. And those people deserve a little special attention, I think.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. ROUSSEAU: Mr. Speaker, I would like to stand and lend my support to my colleague and good friend from Naskaupi. (Mr. Goudie). I certainly know the problem encountered with the question of electricity. As the hon. member for Fogo (Capt. Winsor) said, ~~who~~ represented Labrador for quite a while, it is unfortunate that we do not have power lines from the Upper Churchill to that area of the Province. However, it is going ahead and hopefully in the near future that problem will be solved. But in the interim and on past experience the cost of electricity has been a great one.

These people, many of them, Mr. Speaker, are not rich people. They are people who do not make the same sort of money as people over in my area in Labrador make, and paying these electricity bills are problems for them and a very difficult situation. One would hope that when the figures come in, as the hon. Minister of Mines and Energy says, and we are able to take a look at it, one would hope that something could be done. Certainly I would like to support anything that would lower the costs of these rates, not only in Labrador but anywhere around the Province, but especially in Labrador because I know these have a hard time trying to keep up with the cost of these bills.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of members speak on the matters raised by the gentleman from Naskaupi (Mr. Goudie) in the petition. Perhaps I could say a word or two as well. I have not had an opportunity to look at the petition. There may well be some of my own constituents who have signed it because, of course, Sir, all of the people in the district of the Straits of Belle Isle rely upon diesel generators for their power. And it may very well be that some of the people along the Labrador side of the - I see the member for Naskaupi (Mr. Goudie) is nodding. Were there any people from the Straits district? He nods acquiescence. Well, that is all the more reason why I should say a word or two.

We do not need to say very much, Sir, because the matter has been

MR. FORESTS:

thoroughly canvassed in the House this session. Indeed I would imagine there have been more prints made on petitions about electricity or electricity rates than there have been on all the debates on all the subjects in the House this session. The petition procedure has been used, I would suggest, in a most exemplary manner and has been taken to new heights of relevance and usefulness in making the point about these electricity rate increases. Mr. Speaker, I support the petition. I thought the gentleman from Naskaupj (Mr. Goudie), even more so the gentleman from Eagle River (Mr. Strachan), made extremely valid points. People in Labrador have no option but to use power and indeed they must use more of it in many instances than even people on the Island, who equally have no option, they too must use power. But on the Northern Labrador Coast in particular, the long days, the harsher Winters make the consumption of power even more of a necessity, if anything can be more necessary than anything else.

I sympathize with the Minister of Mines and Energy, but at the same time I think that we must realize that from the point of view of the people concerned, Sir, the minister's statement or the minister's explanation just will not wash. The people in Labrador, Sir, particularly in the coastal communities, but to a not significantly lesser extent in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Northwest River, or Mud Lake if one wishes as well, the four communities there in the Lake Melville area, the people there, Sir, are denied in large measure many of the public services that are available to most of the people of this Province. Maybe they get all the services they can. One cannot build a road to Main, at least not in the immediate future, and so forth. But, Mr. Speaker, the fact that these people cannot get access to many of the services which the other citizens of this Province take for granted, if anything is evidence in support of the fact they deserve more consideration still on this question of the hydro rates.

There is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, but that the rates

MR. ROBERTS:

should be equalized, particularly when the inter-tie is completed between the Churchill development to the West and the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area to the East, and it will go through to Northwest River. I have no doubt, that will take a large load off the diesel generators and put it on the hydro generators. It should be entirely possible, Sir, for the government to provide an equal rate, at least to the first 1,000 or 2,000 kilowatt hours a month. I am not suggesting, Sir, that the people of Nain or the people of L'Anse-a-Loup or in any community along the Labrador Coast should be entitled to get electric heat at diesel generation rates, but I think they should be allowed, Sir, enough power to be able to use all of the modern appliances and all of the modern conveniences without being penalized. The fact remains, Sir, the 500 hour kilowatt point, which is the level at which the rate is now equalized and above that point the diesel rates are infinitely higher and climb rapidly whereas the hydro rates tend to go down, that point, Sir, the 500 kilowatt hour per month point is much too low. It should be at least 1,500 or 2,000 kilowatt hours per month.

So I support the petition, Mr. Speaker. I commend it to the minister, particularly in the light of the fact that within the very near future the Happy Valley and Goose Bay load will be removed from the diesel generation sector and moved into the hydro sector with power from the Upper Churchill and that, Sir, should enable the government to equalize the rates. I hope they will. I think the people in Coastal Labrador, and equally in the smaller communities of Newfoundland who must still look to diesel generated power, these people, Sir, deserve that from the government of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. ROUSSEAU: This is a question, I am on Standing Order 15 again, a question of privilege. It is not that it is that important, it is not a personal thing. I realize newspapers may -

MR. ROBERTS: Oh, it is not a petition.

MR. ROUSSEAU: No, no - may have some indication of how somebody feels, and that does not bother me, by the way, but there is one little report here in the editorial today of The Evening Telegram that I would just like to set straight, only because. Mr. Speaker, the question of spraying is involved. And I thought that this government had made its position quite clear on it, and I just want to clarify it for this record. I could not care less if it is printed in any newspaper, just as long as the House has the record straight.

And the suggestion here is, 'Can we be as ruthless with humans as we were with the wildlife? New Brunswick says yes; Nova Scotia says no; Prince Edward Island has no spraying program this year, and Newfoundland is saying maybe yes, maybe no. Spraying has to be suspended until a safe, harmless solvent is found and a safe chemical to use with it, safe for wildlife as well as humans.'

Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned I thought I made the position of the government quite clear. In a recent interview on CBC, I distinctly stated that there would be no spraying program in this Province until I was firmly convinced that it was absolutely essential. I said I would take a look at it again. In an open newsletter to the Editor of The Daily News this morning I read, and I would like to read into the record of this House, "You are seriously in error when you suggest this Province is permitting or encouraging the cutting of timber which we do not really need. Our timber salvage program is simply a management technique of placing priority on the cutting of insect, diseased or fire killed or damaged timber before it becomes unmerchantable."

AN HON. MEMBER: This is not privilege.

MR. ROUSSEAU: I am saying that I would like to clarify a point in an editorial in The Evening Telegram.

AN HON. MEMBER: That is out of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROUSSEAU: Is it not?

MR. SPEAKER: As I understand it, the hon. gentleman rose on a point of privilege in order to -

MR. ROUSSEAU: To clarify a point.

MR. SPEAKER: - make clarification, presumably something whereby he thinks he was misunderstood or misquoted or some such thing.

MR. ROUSSEAU: I am attempting to clarify a point that I just read. "Surely you will agree with me," this letter is by me, "Surely you will agree with me that the use of a chemical insecticide to control infestation should be used only as a last resort." In block letters, "It is the unanimous recommendation of every forest agency in the Province that no chemical control action be undertaken during 1976 and I support that recommendation. (Witness to the recent situation in New Brunswick). It is the belief of the officials of this Department and officials of the Canadian Forestry Service, and the pulp and paper companies, that we have not reached a critical point where spraying is absolutely essential." Here is my position, Mr. Speaker, quite plainly; if spraying does become essential, and here I might add that I would have to be firmly convinced that such was the case, that we would be prepared to look at it again, and nobody has said that we would and I just want to correct that for the record in case people feel that there is even a question of us spraying in this Province. There is not at this point in time, and I would just like to straighten that out for the record.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) I believe wishes to speak to the petition.

MR. CALLAN: No, Mr. Speaker, another petition.

MR. SPEAKER: Then I should ask are there any further references to the previous petition?

MR. SPEAKER: I had indicated when I recognized the hon. member for Naskaupi (Mr. Goudie) that I would be back and recognize the hon. member for Windsor-Buchans who has been standing on a number of occasions, so certainly I should recognize him, and the hon. member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) will have his opportunity afterwards.

The hon. member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition from the town of Badger. The petition has to do with, so to speak, the opposition in the town of Badger to the system of busing their high school children from Badger to Grand Falls and Windsor.

Mr. Speaker, this petition was sponsored by the Town Council of Badger as a result of representation and solicitations, so to speak, from the people they represent in Badger. The preamble of the petition, Mr. Speaker, is that, "the school pupils of the town of Badger are under the jurisdiction of three different school boards, the Pentecostal Board of Education, the Exploits Valley Integrated School Board and the Exploits - White Bay Roman Catholic School Boards. All three

MR. FLIGHT:

school boards have indicated that the students from grade seven to grade eleven will continue to be bused to Grand Falls from Badger. These students will be housed in seven different schools and must leave home at 8:00 a.m. in the morning and return approximately at 5:00 p.m. in the evening. Travelling to and from school prevents the children from participating sufficiently in recreational facilities both at home and at school. Council believes that the physical, emotional and intellectual well-being of the children will be better served if they attended school in their own community. Given this situation, the town council at Badger wishes to obtain the opinions of the citizens of Badger about the system of education as it now stands and what they should be. Upon completion of this petition a meeting will be held in the town hall with both school officials, our M.H.A., Mr. Flight, members of the various organizations and anyone from the general public who wishes to attend. When the House of Assembly re-opens this petition will be presented by Mr. Flight." The basic prayer of the petition, Mr. Speaker, is that busing be discontinued in Badger and that educational facilities required for the students of Badger to finish grade eleven be established and maintained in Badger.

Mr. Speaker, in presenting this petition and supporting the prayer of the petition I am also familiar with the concerns and the anxieties that the people who supported this petition share in Badger. I suspect also that this petition reflects the line of thought with regard to busing in this Province today. I think it reflects probably a line of thought that a reassessment of our approach to busing of our children is in order right now. Busing may have its merits in certain parts of this Province, Mr. Speaker, but busing per se as we have it is being questioned all over Newfoundland as to whether it is in the better interests of our educational programme.

The students from Badger in particular, Mr. Speaker, must travel twenty miles, 186 students, approximately twenty miles to and from Grand Falls and Windsor. We as a society, Mr. Speaker, question and pretend or say that we are concerned with the moral values, the moral



MR. FLIGHT:

standards of our young people today, while at the same time we support a situation that allows a child to leave home at eight o'clock in the morning and spend until five o'clock that evening away from home outside of any parents' control, parents' jurisdiction, outside of any supervision at all apart from the supervision that he has in the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, the loss to the town of Badger is the fact that the town over years have worked and have provided recreational facilities. Now the crime here is not only of the children not partaking and not benefiting from the recreational facilities as provided by the regional high school that they attend, but they are deprived of the ability of contributing to and benefiting from the facilities that are provided at Badger. They are making little or no contribution to the town of Badger. The students that graduate from grade eleven in Grand Falls will know more about the town of Grand Falls than they know about Badger. We pretend, you know, we say that we must find a way to keep our children in Newfoundland, we do not want our children migrating to Toronto. The same thing applies to a community, Mr. Speaker. I think if we are to follow that line of reasoning then certainly our children should, when they have completed grade eleven and are about to go into university or vocational school, should feel closer to the town that they grew up in than to a town that they were bused into to spend eight hours a day. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the students in Badger today are boarders in their own homes. They leave Badger dark and they return at dark. This is not in the better interest of their education. It is not in the better interest of the educational facilities of the Province. It is not in the better interest of this Province. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that this action by the town of Badger, and this petition supported by most of the people in Badger, will be the spark that will bring about a complete reassessment of busing as we know it in this Province today.

Mr. Speaker, I suspect and I am aware that since this petition and since this discussion started in Badger that communities from

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MR. FLIGHT:

all over Newfoundland have been in touch with the people who have headed up this petition and offered them support and are probably waiting for this type of a movement and this type of a question to be brought in front of this House. I recognize that the building of schools, the capital grants, have to be made through the denominational systems. That is not the issue. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the leadership and the direction

Mr. Flight:

that education takes in this Province must come from this House, It is with this thought in mind that I support this petition, and I ask to have it laid upon the table of the House and directed to the department to which it relates. Thank you!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education.

HON. W. HOUSE: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the petition, first of all I must point out that, of course, the most we can do with this is to have the case aired, the concerns of the people. This petition I knew about beforehand, and I discussed it with some of the people. It was sponsored by the people from Badger, and under the sponsorship of the Council. Their two main concerns, of course, have been very well expressed by the hon. member for Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight). The two main concerns, of course, one of the things is the fact that pupils leaving the community are having difficulty, they are leaving early, getting back late, and they still cannot take the full advantage of the educational opportunities to where they are going.

The second one, of course, is the fact that it inhibits somewhat the town growth, because a lot of people move out of Badger because their children have to be bused to school, who would otherwise, of course, work in Grand Falls possibly and live in Badger, if the school facilities were there.

Now the other thing about the community, as was mentioned, there are three boards operating schools there, and they almost have equal numbers of pupils. They operate three elementary schools from kindergarten to Grade VI.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the reason I did not say specifically I am rising to support the petition is because there is no machinery - and I say this now as I am speaking to the petition, and there are certain aspects of it I can support. The Federation of School Boards last year made representation through a questionnaire stating of course that they thought that busing had gone a little bit too far because of the very reasons pointed out, but there were a lot of advantages

Mr. House:

of course to the high school pupils being bused to better facilities. Certainly they were getting better academic programmes, but I believe one of the things they stated was the fact that perhaps we should cut out as much as possible the busing of elementary pupils.

Mr. Speaker, I just said there is no machinery for setting up a school, for the government or anybody else, except the recognized authorities, to set up a public school in the Province. Hon. members are aware that the BNA Act gives the churches the right and the responsibility for the ownership and the operating of schools.

MR. ROBERTS: Did the minister say there is no way to set up a school except through the churches' ownership in this Province?

MR. HOUSE: Funds are allocated to school boards for building of schools, as we have -

MR. ROBERTS: There is a section in the Education Act, and I know of at least one school that is set up -

MR. HOUSE: Yes, well that is under -

MR. ROBERTS: - in Bide Arm, of living fame.

MR. HOUSE: Yes. The hon. member is referring to Bide Arm where there is a religious denomination there that do not come under the BNA Act. That is a school operated from the department.

MR. ROBERTS: Right! It is probably -

MR. HOUSE: It is operated from the department.

MR. ROBERTS: - the only one in the Province.

MR. HOUSE: Yes.

MR. ROBERTS: But it is in the Act, it apparently has been in the act since the year one.

MR. HOUSE: This is not done for existing denominations.

MR. ROBERTS: No.

MR. HOUSE: Right. So that is why I say the machinery for existing denominations.

Of course these churches appoint and elect school boards, and always these school boards are subserviant to the churches. Consequently there is very little we can do under the present structures, Our

Mr. House:

role as a department, of course, is to provide curriculum standards and to operate under the existing situation.

Now this problem, Mr. Speaker, is something that is, as the hon. member just mentioned when he presented the petition, of concern to a lot of communities in Newfoundland, not so much the bigger communities or certain sections of the Province where they were settled denominationally. But like a community such as Badger with 1,100 or 1,200 people, it is a problem there.

Mr. House.

We have a number of denominations operating schools and not enough of either one of them to operate a viable service. There is, however, a move in several communities to overcome this, and they have been operating school services through a joint service whereby two or more boards will operate a school when they determine that it is to their advantage. And one of the existing boards then would take over the responsibility for operating it. It would be a joint service. But this initiative is going to have to come from the community to the churches and to the Denominational Educational Committee. And I can give a number of cases of these: Fogo Island is one case in point where they have a joint service; Hawkes Bay, Port Saunders is another one, Sops Arm is another one, Port aux Basques is another one - just to name a few. These are very viable operations, but the initiative came from the churches and the people.

I do not know of any joint service where all the denominations have come together to operate a school. I know in Port aux Basques all the denominations go to a school, but it is done under two school boards. So this is the move that I would suggest that these people take to their respective denominations under the joint service, which is the only structure we have. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Education does support these joint services because of the obvious recognized advantages, and it still remains within the character of the present system. That is, of course, the churches will still have their input, and they will jointly operate the school.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Terra Nova.

MR. LUSH: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the prayer of this petition, although I am not sure there is anything that I can add particularly to what has already been said. I just want to say that the whole idea of busing is certainly something that the Department of Education has to take a good hard look at. The buses, of course, were set up,

Mr. Lush.

I think, to bring students basically from smaller areas to larger centres whereby they could be exposed to a better education, a better quality education, but I think the factors or the problems associated with busing, as outlined by the minister and by my hon. colleague from Buchans - Windsor (Mr. Flight) in presenting the petition, I think these factors or these problems, the social, emotional and physical problems, impede, really, students from getting a quality education, and there are many problems associated with it. Many times the students from the smaller centre find it very difficult to assimilate with the students in the larger centre, and the minister already pointed out the difficulty of taking advantage of the entire programme offered by the school. Many of the good things that go on in schools are quite outside the academic arena, and many of the students who are bused in cannot take advantage of this, and consequently do not feel a part of the school.

So I support this petition, Sir. It represents the feelings and wishes of the people of the particular community, and I sincerely wish that the government will see fit to remedy the situation in some way or another. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Before recognizing the hon. member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir, I would wish at the earliest opportunity - and this is the earliest opportunity I have had to consult the authorities to correct a ruling I made earlier. The authority is Beauchesne, page 59: "A point of order cannot be raised on a point of order." So when a point of order is before the Chair, an hon. member cannot, and indeed the Chair should not, entertain a second point of order. It is, therefore, up to the Speaker or whoever is in the Chair to, if you wish, maintain order during submissions when a point of order is before the floor. But it is quite clear that a second point of order cannot be raised while a point of order is being discussed, Presumably, it would then come up when the previous point has been disposed of.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to support the petition so well and ably presented by my friend and colleague from Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight). The prayer of the petition we have heard, of course, and it relates to a very pressing problem as it affects the people of Badger, the students of Badger, and in particular the four hundred or so residents of Badger who signed the petition.

I remember my first visit to schools in Badger in, I believe, June of 1961, and at that time they were involved in high school grades. Indeed I was there in connection with the administration of the public exams. Since then the grouping of grades has been changed somewhat, so that Grades VII to IX for all three groups operating schools in the community, the grouping has been changed so that the Grade VII to XI, I understand about 186 or 187 students, are being bused daily to various schools in the Grand Falls - Windsor and Botwood Highway areas of Central Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, the overriding issue here is who makes the decision as to what school a student attends. As it presently exists now it is not the government, of course, it is not the House of Assembly, and it is not the people of the community concerned. At the moment it is the school board which makes that particular decision, and that brings us to where we are today where we have this situation occurring in the Badger-Grand Falls area.

I raise that point though, Mr. Speaker, not in defence of it or to contradict its validity, but just to draw attention to what other members have stated, including the minister in speaking, that the issue we are dealing with here is one that is very largely in the hands of school board officials, school board authorities, and as some will know, I, like the Minister of Education and others in this House, worked at the school board level



MR. SIMMONS: for a number of years and we wrestled with this kind of a problem many, many times. I think we would be less than honest with the gentleman, whom I am pleased to see in the gallery today from Badger, and less than honest with the people of Badger if we gave the impression that this petition, having been presented here, was going to undo what for the people of Badger is obviously not a very savoury situation. It is a matter that rests in the hands of school boards, in the hands of school board authorities.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make two points and hope that school boards hear me. They are points that I made while I worked with a school board. I believed them then and I believe them now. I believe the overriding issue when it comes to a decision to bus students or to put them in one school or another should not be the matter of cost, primarily, or efficiency or economy; it ought to be the question of educational opportunity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, were we dealing here with one school board - and I think this is the crux of the petition, really - were we dealing with one school board I think that board would be very, very ill-advised indeed to be busing 186 students a distance of twenty or so miles. Because that constitutes a fairly - by our standards - a fair sized high school with a staff of seven or eight or nine or ten teachers in this day and age. I think it should be pointed out that the bind here is that there are three separate school boards involved. And short of legislation amending that situation, which I am not suggesting at all, I am saying - perhaps not being very popular in saying it - but I am saying as honestly as I can, Mr. Speaker, that I believe this issue, while it is one that we can give our moral support to, is an issue that has to be resolved among the three school boards. Only if you got co-operation among those boards are you going to get a solution to this problem.

I believe firmly, Mr. Speaker, having said what I have just said about where the responsibility lies, I believe firmly that the educational opportunity of these 186

MR. SIMMONS: students would be served a lot better if they were in Badger rather than being bused as they are bused, as described by my colleague from Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight). They would be a lot better off in terms of educational opportunity.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate the point made by my friend and colleague from Terra Nova (Mr. Lush), that it is time that the school

MR. SIMMONS: boards and the Department too, together re-thought the whole school busing proposition. I believe too often school busing has been used as a false economy. Boards attempting to balance budgets have often looked to the area of school busing as a way of doing things. I say 'false economy' because if you follow the finances all the way through you will find that busing has not been cheap or inexpensive, but in point of fact, and the experience shows, that busing has become itself and albatross insofar as school board financing is concerned.

Two points in concluding, Mr. Speaker; in terms of the educational opportunity of these students, it is my opinion they would be well served to be accommodated in the town of Badger. In terms of achieving that, I would be less than honest if I did not reiterate again publicly that there is only one way it can be done under existing law, and that is to seek the active co-operation and collaboration of the three school boards involved. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I shall recognize the hon. minister, then the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: Oh, sure!

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, just a few short words from me on this particular matter because I am very much interested in what is happening with the busing system generally in the schools. I was in the House when this great step forward was made by the government of that day to enable at that time students in smaller areas to perhaps get up to Grade XI where a great number were only reaching Grade VII or VIII. It was a great concept at the time, and I had my own reservations because of the fact of some of the fears expressed now. Because a great part of my feeling of education was not only the book learning that they were getting but the other extra curricular activities that were taking place, Sir, such as athletics and this type of thing. In my own district of St. John's Centre perhaps I have one if not two of the largest — at least one of the largest high schools, Holy Heart of Mary,

MR. MURPHY: right there on Bonaventure Avenue where you can go down and see literally dozens of buses parked there, and at four o'clock or thereabout, you will see a stream of young students come out and climb aboard these buses and they are whisked off, I think, to all parts pretty well of the Eastern Avalon Peninsula. I think they go to the Conception Bay South area, Torbay, so on and so forth.

I often thought what advantages these young pupils were losing with not being able to take part, perhaps, in basketball, the soccer and the hockey and what goes with it. Now I am not an expert nor have I any experience whatever in the educational field such as some of the people who have spoken today who have been teachers and this type of thing, but if we look at the academics, possibly the great stress at that time was laid on the fact that they could not get teachers, I do not think, to go into an area because, I think, from Grade VII up you might have had fifteen or twenty pupils that would be perhaps in one - and some of the gentlemen who taught outside St. John's might know what I am talking about.

The only reason I am speaking now, Sir, is that I sympathize greatly with a lot of these people who have to leave their homes at very early hours of the morning and perhaps - and I brought this up at one time in connection with another matter, daylight saving, where a lot of these kids were brought back in buses, particularly in November month, in the dusk and left off and had to walk certain distances to their homes. I am just wondering now, Sir, and I am looking forward to the feelings of our government, the government I represent, on this matter because it is becoming rather a moot question all over the Province on busing and this type of thing - just what attitude can be taken? And I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that our government is very much concerned with what is happening to these pupils, and what system we can have.

Perhaps an overriding matter today, and it is extraordinary, I believe we are spending in the area of \$11

MR. MURPHY: million to \$12 million on busing today which is an enormous sum of money that adds to the cost of education without even teaching the kid his ABCDEFG, that we were not talking about ten, twelve, fifteen years ago possibly. It is a very emotional matter I think, and it is something perhaps in view of all the representation that has come to us, perhaps we as a government, and I say this and I am not a member or a part of the Department of Education, but we should have a long, hard look at it and together with all the members of the House decide, can we get back safely to where we were without sacrificing the educational standards that our young people need to groom to go further on, not only up to Grade VII, IX, X or XI, but perhaps on to university. If that is possible I do not see why we cannot perhaps have a hard look at what is happening with buses. Are we really going overboard with busing? Perhaps that is the question we are all talking about today. I think everybody - it is not an Opposition matter, I do not think, to raise - I think everybody has the same problem and I think if we have, and I say this and I am amazed, we have 225,000 children in this Province under the age of eighteen that are actually receiving the baby bonus or the family allowance today. That is an awful lot of

MR. MURPHY:

people we are talking about, not 50 per cent but perhaps 40 per cent of the population of this Province are today under the age of eighteen and in many cases - perhaps up to Grade XI, perhaps eighteen is a little high - but I would say the great majority are still into school, either from kindergarten right up to Grade XI. So it is a very important question and I would like - it is very difficult to say I support the thing because I, you know, I cannot say that we should quit the busing in Badger, but I am very much in sympathy with what is happening with busing generally today in all parts of the Province.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, every now and then I despair about the petition process and think perhaps we should adopt the Ottawa rule that only the member who presents the petition may speak in its support. But my thoughts along those lines are usually very short-lived, because then we get a process such as we have just seen on this petition now, the one presented by the gentleman from Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight), my friend and my colleague, who seems to have left the House now that he started the process going.

I would like to speak in support of the petition. I do not need to add to what has been said, and I do not speak as a professional educator. For once I am probably on much the same wicket as my friend from St. John's Center (Mr. Murphy). In my own district, which is very spread out and I suppose is as diffuse as any district in the Province - there are fifty-four separate communities in the Strait of Belle Isle district - some of the children are required to travel distances that may not seem long when measured in miles but given the condition of the road, are very, very long.

Out of this discussion today I would hope, Mr. Speaker - and I think this is the sort of discussion which justifies the petition

MR. ROBERTS:

procedure and indeed perhaps it should be used even more often in the House although hopefully not on Private Members Day. It is five o'clock and we have not yet begun the Question Period. I hope my friend from Eagle River (Mr. Strachan) will at least get to finish his speech today, an excellent speech as it is. But, Mr. Speaker, there are two points that will come out of this today.

I think the first is the very legitimate and very real need of the people from Badger who are concerned about the conditions under which their children receive their education. I think that is very relevant and very much to be heeded and very much to be looked into. But equally out of that, Mr. Speaker, I submit there is the much larger concern, and I believe my colleague from Terra Nova (Mr. Lush) first raised it, and my colleague from Burgeo-Bay D'Espoir (Mr. Simmons) seconded it, and the gentleman from St. John's Center (Mr. Murphy) has added his voice in the non-expert sense, which is the way I add mine.

I think the time has come, Sir, when the Minister of Education, who is not responsible for running the schools in this Province but is responsible for the government's activities in the field of education, the Minister of Education should initiate a very thorough review of this whole question of busing to schools. It was a great step forward in the mid-1950's when it began. I believe the Queen Elizabeth High School at Foxtrap was the first school in Newfoundland to which children were brought regularly by bus. That was in the mid-1950's.

MR. SIMMONS: 1954.

MR. ROBERTS: 1954 my friend from Burgeo-Bay D'Espoir (Mr. Simmons) tells me, twenty odd years ago now. It was a great step forward and I think it certainly was for the better, the whole concept of busing. But we have either gone too far or our ideas have come further. Particularly with respect to elementary school children I think the day has come when we should cry halt. There are communities - they are in my district. I can name them in other districts too-

MR. ROBERTS:

but there are communities where children leave home in the dark and get home in the dark, children of six, seven and eight years of age. I do not care what any professional or any expert says, common sense tells us that cannot be justified. It cannot be right.

The minister is not directly responsible. He operates no schools except the unique exception which I happen to know about because it was formerly in my district, the community of Bide Arm, unique in many, many ways. But under the act it is perfectly legitimate, approved by the DEC and all the way up, an amazing series of events. But the minister can take the initiative on this. I think it is a major issue. I know in my dealings with people, Mr. Speaker, this probably raises more comments than any other aspect of education, with the single exception of the school tax, which is a different question altogether, but that



MR. ROBERTS:

is one of finances. But I think every member runs into it, particularly the rural area. Parents are wondering what can be right about a system that sees young children leave home early, so early in the morning - seven thirty in the morning is when they leave in Cook's Harbour in my district to go into St. Anthony. That is not just elementary, those are the high school children. They rarely get back before five or six or seven o'clock at night. Now there is no way, Mr. Speaker, that that can be good in the educational sense. There may be some benefits that are gained by bringing those children to St. Anthony, but they are far outweighed, I would submit, by the harm that is done. So out of this petition I would hope, Mr. Speaker, will come not only the legitimate and proper concern of the people of Badger - I share that and support it. Their member voiced it eloquently and we agree with him. But out of it I hope will come the much broader question which I would hope the minister will follow through on if we ever get to his estimates. We may never get to them. We may very well end up seeing \$800 millions or \$900 millions of expenditure go through in three minutes in the Chair under the rules of this guillotine procedure and given the wastefulness we have seen in the Committee of Supply. But if we ever get so that we could talk about it, if not I think the minister should still look at it and perhaps at another time, perhaps when he speaks to the Throne Speech he could give us his thoughts. But it is a major concern of people in the Province today, of parents with children at school. I think it is a valid concern, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CROSBIE: Order!

MR. ROBERTS: While the Minister of Mines and Energy may not have children at school, Sir, and his constituents may not have children who go to school by bus, Sir, there are very few members in this Province who do not have constituents who do not have children involved in this and who are not concerned very deeply and very directly. I support the petition, Sir, and I would hope it will lead to the type of review which has been suggested by my friend from Terra Nova, my friend from Bay d'Espoir, the gentleman from St. John's Centre, who is my friend although not in the parliamentary sense,

MR. ROBERTS:

and which I have attempted to support as well. I hope even the gentleman from St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), Sir, in his wisdom and in his compassion - a new quality for him, Sir, compassion and concern - I hope he, too, will support it, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Conception Bay South.

MR. NOLAN: I rise, Mr. Speaker, not to delay the proceedings of the House in any way but it is a matter that I do feel very strongly about, and I am sure that the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) does, strengthened by his dictionary. I support, obviously, the prayer of the petition as submitted by my hon. friend from Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight). And I was particularly attracted, frankly, by some of the comments by my hon. friend from St. John's Centre (Mr. Murphy) in view of the fact that it seems that with every advance we make governmentally, that we suffer some as a result, and I think this is an indication. The busing situation, of course, was a great advance forward, I thought, and started off - I forget what the figure was. I am sure our hon. friend from Twillingate (Mr. Smallwood) may recall how much it might have been.

MR. SMALLWOOD: A half million dollars.

MR. NOLAN: A half million dollars. And now, of course, it has gone to almost astronomical figures, and I do not think, and I suppose there is always a danger when you talk like this that you are going to be accused of anti-busing or something like that, and I certainly am not. I think the situation that I find, and I think the hon. member has certainly put his finger on it, is the situation that children in our desire - and I mean us collectively - to provide the necessary transportation are - and I do not think we could eliminate it in every case in the Province; even if we could do it today we would not do it, obviously - but there is a situation where we have taken young people and transported them many miles, and we are taking up a substantial portion of their life going to and from. For example, you will often hear criticism nowadays, and I am sure the Minister of Education has heard it, concerning the fact that discipline is no longer the same as it was say some years ago in the schools. But what happens - and

Mr. Nolan.

I am sure the kids in the schools are not going to go carrying placards so that they can be disciplined to remove the buses - but all I am saying is that teachers cannot keep kids in after school any more the way that they did previously. And another matter of real concern to me, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that although we have spent, and will, I would assume, continue to spend many thousands and millions of dollars in recreational facilities to the various schools around the Province, I submit,

Mr. Nolan.

and I state this on the basis of information from a physical fitness director for a big school board in Newfoundland, that kids today are not in as good a condition physically as they were twenty or thirty years ago. I would suggest that my hon. friend, for example, the member for Grand Falls (Mr. Lundrigan) was in better physical condition when he was a kid going to school than many of the kids are today. I am not suggesting for one minute that we were any more ambitious than the kids today. All I am saying is that the system was different. We had to walk to school. We had no choice, and many of us were lucky to have shoes, let alone buses. And now we have a situation where kids, because of the system that has grown up, cannot take advantage of the facilities that we are providing in the schools.

And we also have the situation, Mr. Speaker, when even those that are engaged in, say, playing hockey, pee-wee hockey, skating, figure skating, badminton or whatever.- what is happening? Kids often times, and not just by the buses alone but by parents' cars, are driven to and driven home. And this obviously does not contribute to better physical condition for the children. And I think, and this is in no way any kind of a criticism - I would hope he would not interpret it as such - towards the Minister of Education, but I would hope that at least we can take a look-see at some areas where perhaps we could bring about some kind of corrective action. Never mind one big massive programme or something like that. That is the trouble. We should not be getting into that in the same way that we have, perhaps, in the past. But we have a situation here, I feel, where we have a great responsibility. Parents, I am sure, have been to ever member in this House at one time or another expressing the situation and the sentiments expressed by our hon. friend, for example, from St. John's Centre. And I feel, - for example, I was at one time, I remember it was brought home very forcibly to me, those of us who lived close to or near the St. John's

Mr. Nolan.

area have, I believe, or many parents felt that they had to go to some big school in St. John's to get the best possible education. Now this was misleading. It might have been well-intended, but it was misleading, and I mention this because only a few years ago I was talking to a young father and mother who lived some distance from St. John's, and I found myself saying to them, "Well, you know, how do your boys and girls get in to school?" And they said, "What do you mean, get in to school?" "Well," I said, "in to St. John's?" And I might say that the family I am thinking about could certainly afford it. It was not a matter of financial restrictions. They could have hired a chauffeur to ship them back and forth if they wanted to.

He said, "We do not send them in there. He is getting a better education in the system in this community. He walks to and from school"- or the children do - and as far as he was concerned they were much better off than if they had gone the route that I had questioned him about. So what is the situation? I hope we can take a look at it in some way because no one is going to argue about the validity, the necessity and so on for buses, no one! But there is an area where perhaps if, you know, we had not been noted perhaps in this current session of the House for working together, for functioning properly perhaps as we should, maybe this is an area where we could agree to sit down together and take a look at the situation based on the experience that every member here knows as it exists in his own community. And I think it is something that would be a good job, a good day's work, if we gave some more thought to that, and not only that but to encourage and support the minister on any programme or programmes that he may bring about to help to resolve a situation that was brought about, well-intentioned I am sure, but there is a problem there. And I think we have to try to correct it, and in consultation, of course, the school boards, the parents and so on. I did not mean to delay the House, but there were a few things that I felt I wanted to say on that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SMALLWOOD: I remember vividly the day I asked Mr. Gordon Pushie, who was on my staff, to go to Nova Scotia and see the Premier, and to New Brunswick to see the Premier there, and to Prince Edward Island and see their Premier, to seek the advice of those three men for me on the question, should Newfoundland adopt the policy of providing school buses? All three Premiers told Mr. Pushie to advise me strongly from them that Newfoundland's Government ought not to go in for school buses; that they had done so, they were sorry they had done so, and if they had their time back they would not have school buses.

But, Sir, we went into school buses, and the hon. member from Conception Bay South (Mr. Nolan) referred to it, and wondered what it had cost. I think at first it was a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year, a quarter of a million, a half million, three-quarters of a million, a million dollars, two million, three million, four million, it rose, it kept increasing steadily.

Now, Sir, let the House consider whether or not this Province can afford not to have regional high schools, but in every settlement have the equivalent of a regional high school, with the same qualities, the same standards, the same levels of excellence in every little community, never mind your regional, never mind your central high schools; have a hospital in every settlement, never mind having central hospitals; have an industry in every settlement, never mind having to get aboard of buses and go twenty, thirty, forty miles every day to go to work. None of that. Decentralize, and never then do you need a school bus system. Now who is going to advocate that?

I do not see—I concede there are cases, of course there are cases where it is better not to have a school bus system, there are cases—but I do not see how, it would not make any sense at all to do away, you would have to start by doing away with your regional high schools, you would have to do away with your central high schools, The very idea of a regional high school and of a central high school is to have a lot of students, a lot of teachers, high quality teachers, and bring kids into that school, where you cannot go into every little

Mr. Smallwood:

nook and cranny and give the youngsters there, who are just as much entitled to good education opportunities as any other youngsters, if you cannot go and give it to them there you must bring the children to where the facilities are. And that is what the school bus system is. I hope no one is arguing or suggesting that that system can be done without, To argue that is to argue that there are regional high schools can be done without, or central schools can be done without, that the trade schools, there should not be seventeen trade schools, there should be seventy-seven, one hundred and seventy-seven, three hundred and seventy-seven trade schools. What kind of nonsense would that be? There has got, whether we like it or not, in hospitals, in schools, in trade schools, in health clinics, in industries, in all kinds of things in Newfoundland, whether we like it or not, there must be centralization; and if you have centralization then you have got to have a means whereby people can get from where they are to where they have to go. That means buses.

MR. SIMMONS: That should not become an end in itself, though.

MR. SMALLWOOD: Of course not an end in itself, I remember well the day in Cabinet when we discussed the matter and made the rule. We would not - at that time I think we used to give half the cost of a bus system - we would not agree to a bus system except that we would pay no more than half, and not even that, Mr. Speaker, unless there was a saving on the treasury. How could there be a saving on the treasury by the government giving half the cost of a bus system? In this way; I remember the case of Petty Harbour coming up, and they wanted a bus system to bring youngsters from Petty Harbour up to the highroad where there was a fine big school. And we said, but



MR. SMALLWOOD: We cannot afford to carry on the same as usual in Petty Harbour and at the same time take on the additional cost of paying half the cost of a bus system. So if there is a saving, if one room is closed in Petty Harbour, then the saving on the treasury for that one room, if that is enough to pay half the cost of a bus system, we will do it. And we carried out that rule that the bus system had to pay its way. Every dollar spent represented a dollar saved in the actual physical operation of schools or even, perhaps, only of school rooms. It might not be a whole school, it might only be one form, one grade that would close and all the students be bused up there.

I am in absolute sympathy with the prayer of this petition provided -

MR. WELLS: Would the hon. the member for Twillingate (Mr. Smallwood) be -

MR. SMALLWOOD: The youngsters, the little youngsters constitute the problem. Older youngsters get used to it. Look! We are living in a mobile age. Who would have thought twenty-five years ago that men would get up out of bed in Carbonear and wash and shave and have breakfast and get aboard a car and come to work here eight o'clock in the morning, five or six days a week? Who would have thought that, you know, twenty years ago? You have today in Newfoundland thousands of men who travel twenty, thirty, forty miles every day to go to work. Where do you suppose the men working at Come By Chance came from? Not just Come By Chance, not just Sunnyside, no, Sir; they came from all around Conception Bay, part of Placentia Bay, the Southern Shore and a lot of Trinity Bay. People are mobile now. And while it may be a hardship for little youngsters to get up that early in the morning and catch a bus - the mothers are uneasy about it, they do not like it, they would rather have the youngsters go to school right there where they can keep an eye on them, so to speak - but when it reaches the



MR. SMALLWOOD: point where a youngster to get a good education has to go to a good school - by good I mean, you know, with qualified teachers and well paid teachers, maybe a school or twenty, thirty or forty rooms with a teaching staff of maybe forty or fifty teachers - to go to that kind of a school. You cannot put that kind of a school in every little nook and cranny. If we had the Bank of England we could not do it. But we must have that kind of school. We must have a certain number of them, a limited number regionally located, and to get the youngsters to those schools, what, are they going to walk? You cannot let them, they have to go by bus.

Now, I do not want to say a word against this petition. If it refers especially to youngsters, little children, I am in very much sympathy with it. But if it refers to growing students in a mobile Province where everybody is getting to be mobile, where today you have 100,000 motor cars where you did not have 5,000-you have 100,000! We have buses in hundreds. I suppose you must have a couple of thousand buses operating in Newfoundland today, not counting school buses. In that kind of a Province to argue against school buses would be - well, it would be lacking in vision, to say the very least.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to address myself to the petition just very briefly. A few statistics might not hurt at this time, since the debate or support or non-support given by hon. members of the petition presented by the member for Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight) has produced or stimulated so much discussion. In 1964-65, there were 276 school buses, they had a number of pupils transported 12,420 for a total cost to the government of \$800,482.

MR. SMALLWOOD: In what year?

MR. PECKFORD: 1964-65. In 1974-75 there were 870 school buses, transporting 73,136 students -

MR. SMALLWOOD: Daily?

MR. PECKFORD: - right - for a total cost to the government of \$8,170,000. And in the estimates for the Department of Education in this present year I think it runs somewhere around \$11 million, From \$800,000 to \$11,000,000 in a decade.

Mr. Speaker, in the particular case of the petition presented by the -

MR. SMALLWOOD: Mr. Speaker, could the minister tell us what the alternative would have cost? If there had been no buses and the schools had to be provided, how much would that have cost?

MR. PECKFORD: I do not want to address myself to that question right now but I might touch upon it in the few remarks I want to make.

Mr. Peckford.

in the particular case of Badger versus Grand Falls vis-à-vis new school buildings, more facilities for students in Badger, I am not altogether convinced in my own view which way that should go. So I am not clear on whether I should support or not support the petition. That is my position, a non-position. However, I would like to say, as a former teacher, and having been involved in education for a number of years and sort of interested in it still, that number one: Big facilities, modern facilities do not mean better education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PECKFORD: No way! The three most important elements in education, in formal education, in any part of this world are; pupil, teacher, parent, and perhaps in that order. I believe that there is no black and white in school busing policy. I believe that you must have a mixture of both. I believe there are areas in this Province where school busing occurs where it should not, and that does not mean that you must build a great edifice, education edifice in every tiny little community in that particular bay, inlet or cove. You can have a very common ordinary building, wooden structure building, and if you have fifty students or whatever and can split the rooms up right and have the proper lighting, with the proper materials -

MR. SMALLWOOD: And qualified teachers.

MR. PECKFORD: - and with well qualified, not only well-qualified -

MR. SMALLWOOD: Well paid and well qualified teachers.

MR. PECKFORD: - not only well qualified and well paid, not qualified in the sense -

MR. SMALLWOOD: Well spirited.

MR. PECKFORD: - of degrees from the university, but well motivated and a sensitivity and a creativity for the profession, which everybody wants to

Mr. Peckford.

call the teaching profession, but which has difficulty getting into vogue in our vocabulary these days, because there are quite a few people in the profession who do not have those kinds of qualities. They have all the degrees after their names, but they do not have that sensitivity that is needed and the creativity that is needed. So that my position regarding school busing and so on is simply that there are many places in this Province where we have to be selective, where we have to look at the very local conditions that prevail, and in some cases school busing is wrong. In other places it is absolutely correct. And I do not for one minute want to discredit the regionalization policy of the past on school busing. For the most part I think it was correct. But we must not look at it in a black and white situation, that it is either/or because it is not.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PECKFORD: And the most important segments in education has nothing to do with the building at all, nothing. Some of the best schoolrooms I ever saw were bedrooms and kitchens and living rooms of people's homes where they had the wherewithal to spread out before their children, the magazines and the books and whatever that was necessary to help broaden that youngster's education, and the kinds of relationships existing between the adult and the children to stimulate them into other thinking processes so that they would be better citizens.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER The hon. member for Trinity - Bay de Verde, and then I will recognize the hon. member for Bay of Islands after.

MR. ROWE: In the interest, Sir, of getting the true function of Private Members' Day back on track I move that the Orders of the Day be read according to Standing Order 21.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the Chair, -

MR. WELLS: In fact this motion, as I say we have been consulted on it, this motion in effect dispenses with the Question Period, and then we would proceed into Orders of the Day which being Private Members' Day would be the resolution, and the hon. member would, of course, finish his speech, and we, of course, would be very happy to agree.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the Chair is that the Orders of the Day be read, and it is undebatable, so I shall put the question. Those in favour "aye." Contrary "nay." In my opinion the "ayes" have it. We are, therefore, on the Orders of the Day, and it being Private Members' Day, motion 8, the debate was adjourned by the hon. member for Eagle River.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STRACHAN: I thank the hon. Minister without Portfolio for agreeing to let me go ahead, although I have one or two statements later on here which he may not quite agree with and may wish that he had not given me this privilege.

Before I get going, there were some requests from hon. members opposite for some copies of my speech and I will give them to them at a fee of \$100, except for the hon. member for Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow) who has agreed to return the \$100 to the Liberal Party funds to make up for the \$100 lost in the Shaheen Come By Chance refinery deal.

MR. ROBERTS: Put it in the Eagle River travel fund.

MR. STRACHAN: Mr. Speaker, there is one further point, if I may ask leave of the House, I do think that I have got about fifteen minutes, ten to fifteen minutes left, and since I ought to recapitulate a little bit over last week, I may run a little over that. I do not know if I have to ask leave of the House for permission to carry on over that period. It will only take me five minutes more at the most.

MR. WELLS: We will see if you are a good boy.

MR. MURPHY: If you do not become abusive we will let you carry on.

MR. STRACHAN: I will cut that piece out. You will recall that last week I outlined the physical aspects of Labrador in relation to the possibility of future oil developments there. I also put forth, I hope in a strong yet reasonable manner, a case for the inclusion of Labrador coastal people into the overall scheme of things, an injection which would create four levels of involvement. Firstly, the people of the coast in a form of a regional authority; secondly, the provincial government; thirdly, the federal government; and, of course, last but not least, the oil companies themselves.

I concluded my remarks by discussing the possibility of creating each of these groups not at different levels but in the form of a partnership, and there has been some questions about this form of partnership and I will explain.

This partnership is not on an unequal partnership but a co-partnership,

Mr. STRACHAN: with each partner fully respecting the values and the worth of the other. Now I know all too well that oil companies can and will take care of themselves in this partnership, having much experience and skill in arguing their case and for their share.

Similarly the federal government has great skill, having much experience in dealing with the oil companies and other provincial governments elsewhere in Canada, such as Alberta. I trust that the provincial government of this Province can also quickly obtain skill at negotiating what may well be the most dramatic development ever to hit this Province. It would be extremely partisan of me not to give praise in this regard to the previous Minister of Mines and Energy, Mr. Leo Barry, who was foresighted enough to travel the Labrador Coast explaining possible oil developments, and who laid the groundwork for the provincial position. It was, in my estimation, clever work and regardless of party politics one must give credit where credit is due.

Similarly I have deep respect for Cabot Martin, who as well as having the brilliance and tenacity to prepare the provincial position has also exhibited something sadly lacking in many others and that is soul, that is an understanding and a feeling for the ordinary people which he exhibited on the Labrador Coast.

Notwithstanding what I have said, however, I ask you this question: Who is going to argue the case for the Coastal Labrador people who have no input or real bargaining strength? Who is going to ensure that they are included equally in the scheme of things? I would be failing in the position in which the coastal people have placed me if I therefore did not take it upon myself to present a reasoned, well-thought-out position and constantly keep it in front of you until we are taken seriously.

Now let me discuss this concept of local people being co-partners in an oil and gas development, because this is where I seriously differ from the opinion expressed by the Minister without Portfolio.

MR. STRACHAN: The minister states the same argument that I have just put forward, and I am quoting him, "that oil and gas development must be a partnership involving the federal and provincial government, the companies and the people." So on the surface we agree. But the argument presented by the minister fails because he is not willing to allow the local people something they need in order to bargain with, and that is some form of control. What sort of partner does the minister think the coastal people can be when they have nothing to be partners with? How does one become a partner in any type of development?

MP. CROSBIE: We are on the same position, are we not?

MR. STRACHAN: Yes, I understand the provincial position as well. I will refer to that later.



Mr. Strachan.

How does one become a partner in any type of development? One can surely only become a partner if one has something that is of benefit to others, something others need, something, a talent, or whatever it is, only obtainable by negotiating and combining on a businesslike basis. Obviously the federal and provincial governments can enter into a partnership with oil companies provided this dispute is dissolved. Each has something the other needs, either in the form of ownership, exploration or exploitation permits or legislative control. But what have the local people got? How can they be partners? How can they participate in such a development with a feeling of equality? They cannot unless they have something the oil companies want, and the only thing they have is the land and the control over it. Given some legal authority over the land, they can then be in a position to bargain with oil companies to protect their environment, their communities, and their way of life as much as possible. For the tremendous losses they will be forced to sustain some form of payment should be made by the oil companies. But unless the local people have ownership and planning control vested in a regional body, then they will receive nothing but the little perquisites which the companies will hand out to them. The Shetland situation, which I saw recently, as did the Minister without Portfolio, briefly, illustrated this point very, very well. Oil companies on realizing that their first landfall for the oil pipelines would be the Shetland Islands offered all kinds of tidbits to the Islanders. Do you want a sports complex? Do you want a hospital? Do you want an airstrip? Or we will build a wharf for you. Offers, plenty of offers, but nothing costing more than \$500,000 or \$1 million, but geared to get the local people to bite.

Shetland got together, got organized and said, flatly, "No! We will deal with you on an equal level and a businesslike fashion. Never mind those little crumbs that you are offering us now. We will present you with a package deal in which we will control our land, our environment, and we will not be unreasonable with you, but we will negotiate with you as equals."

Mr. Strachan.

The minister also stated that we have to be careful of talk, of the people scaring the oil companies away. I do not agree with that. The only reason the oil companies will leave, pack up their bags and go, is if there is no oil and gas in commercial quantities, and I believe - and make no mistake about it - for that reason, and that reason only. I cannot imagine companies spending \$100 million in exploration, between \$35 million and \$50 million this year alone, more \$100 millions on developing wells, still more millions on production platforms, giving up because the 150 people of Rigolet at the mouth of the Hamilton Inlet want them to move their pipeline ten miles north through another valley because their planned route would run through their trapping and hunting ground. I do not believe they would give up.

Let me, then, return to some of the points, final points concerning the oil and gas developments. I have been told, rightly or wrongly, by reliable sources that the pipeline routes for oil from the Labrador Coast have been preliminarily surveyed across Labrador to Montreal. Whether this has been done or not it is not the point. But there is only one way for that oil to come and that is not into Quebec. The oil must be piped one way and one way only, and that is across the Straits through the tunnel to the Island part of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STRACHAN: We must never again be held to ransom at the Quebec border. Quebec held us to ransom for Churchill Falls power because of its geographic position. I believe that the federal government - and I am not that knowledgeable about the details at that time - but I believe the federal government was desperately wrong and abdicated its Canadian responsibility in allowing Quebec to hold us to ransom for the Churchill Falls power. Quebec cannot and must now be allowed to hold us to ransom again. Labrador cannot have oil refineries. Tankers need to reach the refinery on a year-round basis, and the Labrador ice

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totally prevents that as well as presenting tremendous environmental hazards to the tankers. The Labrador Coast neither wishes to be spoiled by a huge refinery . That oil, therefore, can come only one way, and that is to the Island of Newfoundland. Never again

MR. STRACHAN:

should this Province be held to ransom by Quebec eager to get its hands on Labrador's resources. We can supply the Eastern Seaboard with finished products as easily from our industrial belt situated around Come By Chance, and certainly at greater profit to this Province, than from selling crude to the Montreal giants at dirt-low prices because Quebec thinks Labrador belongs to them. Let us not just make this Labrador oil. Let us make it Newfoundland and Labrador oil, and Newfoundland and Labrador gas and fuel, supplied finished from this Province. Let us join this Province in a total resource package. Let us plan, as I have said before, with imagination. I note, and again not knowing the details, that Federal Canada was looking at the Come By Chance refinery as a possible long-term investment. Maybe, and I do not know the finances of this, but this Province could maybe look at that as well as a long-term investment. Thus maybe, out of this mess, Labrador oil and Newfoundland refineries can change this into a real "have" Province. The economics of this we are prepared to discuss at a later date.

Finally, we need long-term planning. But we need also, and I talk to the moment, to satisfy our own Labrador people that they also can share the wealth of this Province, not only when they have something to donate, such as oil, to the wealth of this Province, but when they also have, as now, little in economic terms but much in cultural terms. We need immediately, and I believe this strongly, a major redistribution of funds within this Province now. If you wait until you see that Labrador has something that this Province needs before money is spent to upgrade the social services, the public services, the transportation and communications in Labrador, then people will see us for what we are - greedy, selfish, taking care of Labrador only when they have something this Province needs. If that happens - lo and behold! - because this Province is in real political trouble, in danger of falling apart! I believe that strongly because of the feelings in Labrador and I ask you to mark my words on this point. Do not misunderstand me. I do not believe that injustices of the past can be corrected by separation or disunion, since by

MR. STRACHAN:

doing so the cure is worse than the disease. I will fight for unity until I can fight no more.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STRACHAN: But unity can only come by a realization within this House that there are injustices on the Labrador Coast.

AN HON. MEMBER: Right.

MR. STRACHAN: Just look at the distribution of funds for the moment. I could go to any department. The one particularly that I did look at was the Department of Transportation and Communications: \$59,977,000 allotted for new roads this year and only \$625,000 for airstrips, the very first one that we will have. Surely that is not just and equal sharing. But as soon as there is oil development, or uranium development, then there will be airstrips everywhere as in the case of the uranium mine now being done behind Monkey Hill in Makkovik. Now that uranium is there we have to fly the uranium out, so all of a sudden we are going to have an airstrip. But to serve the community there is no way we can get airstrips. Is that just and fair? Should we have to wait until we have something the rest of the Province needs?

MR. R. WELLS: Will the hon. member permit a question?

MR. STRACHAN: Yes.

MR. WELLS: In thinking about this, and it has occurred to me and I would like the hon. members thoughts on it, when you think in terms of the kind of control that seems to work so successfully in the Shetland Islands, but if you translate that to the Coast of Labrador where there is very little in terms or has been invested in terms of - well I hate the word but - infrastructure -

MR. STRACHAN: Yes.

MR. WELLS: - do you feel that if this kind of control was given to an authority which would have to be created, of course, on the Coast of Labrador, do you think there is a degree of expertise, of knowledge of administration, of this sort of thing to enable, starting from scratch at this stage, to enable the sort of thing to happen that happened in the Shetlands, or do you think that it might take perhaps even five, ten, fifteen years to develop

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MR. WELLS:

the kind of expertise that would be necessary? The other thing that interests me, too, and I have wondered about myself, when you think of the North Sea exploration and development you have in Norway, Denmark, Scotland, not to a great extent in the Shetlands, I grant you, but all these places, you have a very strong background of technical expertise and knowledge, and

MR. WELLS:

yet we in Newfoundland have so little of that, and on the Coast of Labrador almost none. How do you think these factors are going to affect the sort of thing you are speaking of?

MR. STRACHAN: I think on the first point, as I explained last week when I was talking, if we give authority vested in a regional body, or a group of people on the Labrador Coast, then I think that what I am talking about here is that it must be a partnership in which the provincial government and this Province assists them, helps them to develop. If we are just going to give them this kind of authority and allow them to run their own affairs and run ahead, then I think we are looking for nothing but chaos, absolutely. There are not people there with the education, the skills, the negotiative skills, the abilities and so on to be able to hold their own in any negotiations. We might as well face it.

But I think at the same time that these people can and are very willing, and are obviously expressing it by their political unrest and their feeling of wanting to do something, I think they can in partnership with the Province be given such control from the Province and helped along, educated, and be assisted in this kind of development. But I think it must very carefully be a partnership between this Province and the people.

MR. ROWE: They do not want authority imposed on them.

MR. STRACHAN: Yes, I agree to the point there. I think we are not looking for somebody to tell us what to do. We are looking for someone to advise and to assist us through this morass.

I think the other point that I feel about is that I do not think that the people will ever be unreasonable in their demands. I understand that many people get frightened by local groups having this amount of power. But in essence this amount of power will be vested in them from this House. And I think that if people ever become unreasonable to the point that it is against the provincial interest, then I am sure that this House equally could deal with it.

MR. STRACHAN:

But I think only in this way are we talking of a level of partnership which is meaningful to the people in which they are not totally left out, they have some form of control and feel that them themselves are getting somewhere in dealing with the companies and the governments involved.

As far as the technical skills are concerned, I do not think I could answer on this question because there is a great deal of discussion on the Coast that many people do not want to have anything to do with oil development. They do not want to see oil development in the communities. Many people do not want to go to work for two weeks or three weeks spells on oil rigs, it does not matter how high the pay is. They just do not want to do that. They have never been trained to do it. Their culture leads them an entirely different way.

But I think what we are asking for is that we respect the fact, not that they do not want to work, but the fact is that they have a different way of looking at things. We have to respect that attitude of mind that they have which they have been brought up to over hundreds and hundreds of years.

MR. MURPHY: How would they sustain themselves?

I am just wondering. I would want a job myself.

MR. STRACHAN: Maybe if I could tell a little story - it is a true one - just to briefly indicate to you some of the situations there of the people. Last October 15 a Labrador Airways Otter aircraft went into Davis Inlet, which is a community of Naskaupi Indians, and picked up ten Indian people, two families - grandfather, father, wife, children, the youngest six years old, the oldest sixty-two years old. None of them spoke English so they were flown into the country and they pointed out to the pilot the lake that they were supposed to be landed at where they were going to spend the Winter trapping. Unfortunately the pilot misunderstood them and flew them to a lake 110 miles further North. But they could not argue with the



PT. STPACHAN:

pilot because they did not speak English, and moreover they are shy people who feel that we with our technology are always correct. So they did not argue. The plane landed on the lake at a place 100 miles inside Main on what we call the Fraser Canyon or the Tessialuk Lake. They dropped out, the families were left, the plane took off and that was the end of them. That was October 15. Just before

MR. STRACHAN:

this House met on November 19, I finally managed to get the Newfoundland Telephone Company, who agreed to take a helicopter in to check on these families. When we flew over the first time, we did not land. These families were gone, there was nothing there. But their tents were there. The second time we landed. They said they were fine, they were doing okay, they were trapping, but it was not the country that they wanted to be in, it was an Eskimo part of the country. The Fraser Canyon is a canyon which stretches right from the Labrador Sea and stretches right back almost to the Quebec Border. So it is a very long canyon. No planes can land there with Westerly winds because the planes cannot get up out of the canyon and over the mountains. The mountains on each side are 2,000 feet. So the family remained there. We felt they were okay, and we came in here.

November passed, the first week in December, the second, the third week in December, then Christmas time when I got home there was still no word of these families. Nobody had ever heard of them. In January, just after the New Year, we decided that we would load some ski-doo's and komatiks and track into the country to find them and bring some food supplies to them. We were getting ready to leave on January 4, now they were dropped on October, on January 4 these families were spotted on a bay twenty miles to the south of Nain walking out on the ice, on the sea ice, in the usual fashion, the man in front, the grandfather and then the children. They had walked - from November since we left them - they had walked a distance of 180 miles with the youngest boy being six years old, and the oldest one being sixty-two. They had walked in the middle of winter right across the country following caribou, eating the caribou and trapping foxes on their way, and then decided it was time to head out and taking their time they walked out and arrived at Nain.

The man, Sam Napeo, did not think anything about it, and when I approached him and asked him if was short of anything, he said he was short of cigarettes. He did not have any cigarettes for three

Mr. Strachan:

weeks, and he has been smoking Labrador tea, Indian tea, which is frost-dried and you roll it. It is very bitter, but it satisfies you if you inhale. It is slightly hallucinogenic, too.

MR. ROWE: It is legal too, is it?

MR. STRACHAN: It is legal, yes.

MR. SIMMONS: I would love to market it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did you not try to get the government helicopter to look for them?

MR. STRACHAN: Well, why are you trying to get a helicopter, because they are fine.

MR. ROUSSEAU: What about October and November when you were wondering?

MR. STRACHAN: No, I was in House here, and nobody had reported it from the Coast because everything was fine and they were doing okay. People's mentality on the Coast is, why bother them, they are doing fine. It is only fellows like us who worry about families who are gone for three and a half months. This is the indication of their attitude to it.

The point is that Sam Napeo, this fellow, would be upset intensely if he knew that I was discussing him here, because he would be extremely embarrassed by it. And these are the people who I feel are the unsung heroes, because they do not want the publicity, All they want to do is just live and be let live. Now I am not indicating that we want to return to nature. I am not a romantic by any means, and I know that these people will, in a period of time, be wiped out. As such their culture will change and we are changing it fast.

But what I am indicating and trying to get across is that these people measure time, distance, values-even for a six year old child-in an entirely different manner than what we do. And it is this that I have been trying to indicate when I have been bringing up matters of caribou regulations. Because how do you enforce caribou regulations on a family who are walking through the country at thirty below following a caribou herd for three months? You cannot do it. How can you impose any form of licencing on them? So this is the point.

Mr. Strachan:

I am trying to get across. That is the way of life that we have, or a great deal of people have. Many other people are moving out of that. Many other people do not know where they are, so they are in a cash economy and try to go back - for their salvation, many lines - back to this way of life. Some one who has been drunk for a month, for six weeks, beating the place up, will all of a sudden take a tumble to himself and disappear. And you will not see him for a month, and he will come back a fine man, excellent. Then sometime later he may do the same again, because we impose values that we do not know we are imposing, which upsets them. These are the people that I feel, not particularly these people there, but many people on the Coast who are wanting a place in this society, who are wanting a place within this Province, or wanting to do something, they want to take their place and they need to be encouraged, helped and assisted. And I think we have got to give them some rights so that they are assisted equally, that we do not give them welfare, that we do not take them into a social form, that we not treat them as peasants, or we smile or laugh at them or whatever it is.

MR. MURPHY: How many are you talking about, a few hundred maybe?

MR. STRACHAN:

No, we are talking about something in the region of twelve, fourteen hundred total.

MR. WELLS: If offshore oil and gas is ever found and brought to shore there, their way of life, the way of life that you have described, I suppose will disappear forever and quickly, do you not think? It would be almost inevitable. They would become like us.

MR. MURPHY: Oh, do not wish that on them.

MR. WELLS: No, I do not mean that, I know. But they would become part of the modern industrial society. They would have to be. Is this what the hon. member foresees likely to happen, or inevitable?

MR. STRACHAN: Well, I think that changes are inevitable. There is nothing so constant as change. I think that it will affect them and they will change. But what is happening now is that for many years the people have been lost. I would say the last ten, fifteen years the people have been lost. That is why many of them take to alcohol or other forms in order to get rid of frustrations. But there is occurring now a new force among them in which they are wanting to protect some of the old values of life and at the same time try to accept some of the new ones. They understand it has to change. They need rifles and sleds. They need gas. In order to get gas they need cash. They understand these kind of things. But they still wish to protect to a fair extent their way of life. I think this is the right that we have to give them.

CAPT. WINSOR: Is this brought about by better education, getting educated a little better than they used to be?

MR. STRACHAN: I believe so. I believe education will make a difference, and a great deal of difference. Now where was I.

AN HON. MEMBER: Call it six o'clock.

MR. STRACHAN: I am almost finished. Stepping aside from that for a moment, I again would like to address the Minister without Portfolio because I was absent from the House when you gave your address to this House on the problems of the Labrador Coast. I obtained -

MR. WELLS: Needless to say, I do not hold myself out in any sense as an expert. These were questions that occurred to me that I felt should be raised.

MR. STRACHAN: Well if I could maybe indicate, because I obtained a copy of your speech. I read it over and over again. I must honestly say that I was deeply, deeply saddened by what you said. The more I read it the more unhappy and sometimes angry that I got, until suddenly I realized that you, like most others in this House, did not know what you were talking about. You had never been there, and therefore was presenting a case based on advice from others. All I can assure you is that you have been extremely ill-advised. You talked of millions of dollars pouring into the Labrador Coast, of the infrastructure, of the economic underpinnings and so on. But I say that, very well, because I have lived, hunted, fished, trapped with many of the people up and down the Coast. I have eaten caribou and seal meat for weeks at a time. I have travelled for five days continuously by snowmobile. I have lived in many a snow house. I have built a snow house, not a pretty one, but I can build a snow house. I have gone without food for four days, holed up, in a fierce storm. I say that in reading your speech I feel that you are desperately, desperately ill-advised. But because you are ill-advised I believe there is hope. I sincerely offer to you and any others in in Cabinet or elsewhere in this House an invitation to come and see what I call the real Labrador coast, the people's coast, the Labrador coast that I know. I do not believe that it is too late to learn. I extend that quite sincerely to most people because they make statements based on information, not based on first-hand experience.

Finally I indicated that we need, therefore, to plan not in short-term but in long-term. I indicated we need to plan with feeling, with compassion, understanding and tolerance; not to plan with selfishness and greed. We need therefore to drop our old hide-bound, ingrained attitudes, our patronizing, colonial, superior attitudes, and we need a breath of fresh air, what we call a Chinook wind, or an Indian Summer. The words of the motion, "Whereas it is in the public interest that our citizens be afforded

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every opportunity to participate in the growth and development of Newfoundland and Labrador, now be it therefore resolved that a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the prospects of Newfoundland and Labrador." I say let us therefore plan, but plan with feeling, with understanding. Oil may make this Province rich. It may make this a "have" Province instead of a "have-not" Province. But let us not let that happen at the expense of its people, its culture and a way of life far richer, in the long-term, than any other single material thing this Province has. I think it can all be well summed up in a saying from the Gospel according to Matthew, if I may get biblical for a moment, "What use if we gain the world if in the end we lose our soul." I think it is very important, and worth remembering that. "What use if we gain the world if in the end we lose our soul."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. House Leader.

MR. WELLS: Mr. Speaker, I do move that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow, Thursday, at two o'clock in the afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn. Is it your wish to adopt the motion? All in favour "aye", contrary "nay", carried. This House now stands adjourned until two of the clock tomorrow, Thursday, April 8, 1976.

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PRIVILEGE

Mr. Rowe objected to the coverage of House proceedings contained in The Daily News of April 7, 1976. 5023

Spoken to by:

Mr. Lundrigan	5025
Mr. Roberts	5025
Mr. Neary	5028
Mr. Speaker's ruling.	5028

Mr. Hickey gave notice that he wished to raise a matter of privilege because of statements contained in an article in The Evening Telegram of April 6, but since the article in question involved a case before the courts he felt that comment should not be made until the case has been disposed of. 5030

Mr. Roberts	5031
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Mr. Hickey	5040
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Mr. Speaker's ruling.	5042
Mr. Hickey proceeded with his point of privilege.	5043

PRESENTING PETITIONS

By Mr. Roberts in behalf of some 1,000 voters of the District of Exploits asking that a by-election be held as soon as possible so that the district will have representation in the House of Assembly. 5046

Spoken to by:

Mr. Lundrigan	5047
Mr. Neary	5051
Mr. White	5053
Mr. Wells	5053
Mr. Simmons	5054

By Mr. Goudie in behalf of the Power Consumers' Committee of Happy Valley-Goose Bay protesting high electrical rates and poor service. 5063

Spoken to by:

Mr. Strachan	5065
Mr. Crosbie	5066
Capt. Winsor	5069
Mr. Rousseau	5071
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By Mr. Flight in behalf of residents of Badger who object to children of the community being bused to high schools outside the community.	5076
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Mr. House	5080
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