

PRELIMINARY  
UNEDITED  
TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
FOR THE PERIOD:  
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
TUESDAY, JULY 31, 1979

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (SIMMS): Order, please!

The hon. Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development.

MR. GOUDIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. Is this the appropriate time, I wonder, to do it?

MR. S. NEARY: Is it a privilege of the House or personal privilege?

MR. GOUDIE: Well, I am not quite sure if it can be classified as privilege of the House or personal privilege. A personal privilege, I would think, would be the more appropriate term to use.

MR. NEARY: That is going to be handled by the Committee.

MR. GOUDIE: No, that is the other point that may have to be clarified,

Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Hon. minister.

MR. GOUDIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege arising from a quotation attributed to me during a meeting of committee yesterday morning. I assume I can raise this point of privilege in the hon. House of Assembly.

MR. NEARY: I do not think you can.

MR. E. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Your Honour, I have no objection at all to the-

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order, the hon. Opposition House Leader

MR. E. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has not made a point of privilege. If he were making one, I had no right to interrupt him.

MR. NEARY: Let him finish.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. E. ROBERTS: He began by saying, Mr. Speaker, that he was raising a point of something that happened in committee. And I simply wished to remind Your Honour, as I think Your Honour is fully aware, that a matter cannot be raised in here until it has been raised in the committee and the committee

MR. E. ROBERTS: must report to the House. That is the way I understand it works. I have no wish to block the hon. gentleman raising any point he wishes to raise. I would give him every opportunity, as I am sure every hon. member would.

MR. SPEAKER (SIMMS): On the point of order, I think I will allow the hon. minister to raise his point of privilege and then I will make a ruling as to whether or not it is in order.

Hon. minister.

MR. GOUDIE: Mr. Speaker, my point of privilege relates to the front page story in the Daily News as of this morning. The headline reads, and hon. members may all have read it, "People do not feel they have to repay. One in three default loans." And I go on to quote from the article, Mr. Speaker, "Asked by Mr. Barrett to give reasons for the high rate, Mr. Goudie said, 'Philosophy is a very large part of it.'"

"He said many people consider a government loan as something to be written off."

That is not an accurate statement and when the minutes of the meeting are printed I think it will be obvious what the article is suggesting to me as a minister is that I am attributing motives to anyone who applies and receive a loan from the Department of Rural Development. A completely wrong, completely false motive attributed to me, and there are other members of the committee whom I have spoken to this morning who agree with the points that I make. I do not know if it is appropriate to ask that the Daily News or the appropriate person - Susan Newhook is the name on the article here in the Daily News - to make the appropriate correction because I think it is going to damage any relationship that the department may have had with people who have already obtained loans and people who may wish to obtain loans.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I thank the hon. minister. In my opinion I would have to -

MR. F. ROWE: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. F. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I assume that Mr. Speaker has ruled that this is a point of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER (SIMMS): No, I am about to rule.

MR. F. ROWE: May I just comment on that, Mr. Speaker? May I speak to it?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: No, I think if the hon. member would take his seat I am prepared to make a ruling at this stage. I would not determine that that is a point of privilege. However,

MR. SPEAKER (Simms):

it is obviously a point of clarification on a matter relating to what someone may have said, or attributed to the hon. minister and I would not consider it to be a point of privilege as such but rather a clarification of comments attributed to the hon. minister.

MR. ROBERTS:

Mr. Speaker, may I raise a further point of order? This is the first time this type of matter has arisen. We are in the habit, as Your Honour knows- I think it is improper but, so what? I mean, it is not my view that counts- but we are in the habit of members who feel they have been misquoted using the House in an effort to try to correct a quotation through a so-called point of privilege. But that is not the point here. The point here is that what the hon. gentleman is raising happened in Committee. I do not question for a moment the hon. gentleman's version of what happened in Committee. Indeed, I understand my friend from Trinity-Bay de Verde (Mr. F. Rowe) who was at the Committee, you know, would say the same thing. But the fact remains, Sir, that it is not proper, and I do not think we should set a precedent without at least arguing the matter and Your Honour making a ruling. It is not proper to raise a matter of privilege based on something that arises in a committee; it is not proper to raise it here in this House unless it has first been dealt with in the Committee and the Committee reports to this House, and that I think is an important point of principle. I would refer Your Honour to section 76 in the red Beauchesne, the fifth edition, which says simply, and I will read it in its entirety, Mr. Speaker, "Breaches of privilege in committee may be dealt with only by the House itself on report from the committee." And I think the important words for the purposes here are, "on report from the committee." I think unless we wish to change our rules we should reaffirm that point so that the practice is clear and if matters do arise now that we have committee that they are dealt with in the right and proper way.

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): The hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: On that point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would concur with the citation just read to Your Honour with respect to it. The minister rose on a point of privilege, which is the normal way in which we have done it in the past in connection with a newspaper report even though it is not strictly a point of privilege, but a point of clarification as Your Honour has said. But because committees are new to the House in the nature in which they are now, I think it is perfectly understandable; this is why the hon. minister rose. But I think it is quite clear for guidance in the future that breaches of privilege in Committee may only be dealt with by the committee and then if the committee decides that there has been a breach of privilege then they report to the House and the House decides as to how it is going to deal with it. That is the procedure which should be adopted, I would suggest, in the future but I think as all hon. members will realize because of the committee system and the way it is now it is perfectly understandable that the hon. minister would get up at this time because this is the way.

MR. ROBERTS: Right, but from now on we follow Beauchesne

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! I would tend to agree with both hon. members and would tend to rule that

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) these cases, as stated by the hon. members citing Beauchesne, Section 76, would be perfectly in order.

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

MR. JAMIESON: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries (W. Carter), welcoming him back from his sojourn in Ottawa, I believe it was. Clearly, and we are talking here, I gather, about newspaper reports about which there is no question of their accuracy, namely, that the Minister of Fisheries of New Brunswick, I believe it is, has called for an outright ban on all salmon fishing off the coast of Newfoundland. May I ask the hon. minister is that in fact what happened yesterday and how does he feel about that particular recommendation or demand on the part of New Brunswick and what will the posture of the Newfoundland Government be?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. W. CARTER: That is basically what the hon. minister from New Brunswick proposed to the meeting, to the federal minister and others, that there be a ban imposed on the commercial and sports fishing in terms of salmon fishing, and that other restrictions would be imposed as well. I can only assume that the hon. minister was acting in good faith and, obviously, on the basis of information supplied to him by people in his department and others. Certainly, for my part I am not convinced that that kind of strigent action is necessary. If, of course, it is found that only a total ban will save the salmon, well, then of course we will have to give some very serious thought to a total ban. But certainly I have to be provided with a lot more scientific, biological information before I could recommend to my colleagues in Cabinet that we follow suit, at least follow the advice or the recommendation made by the federal minister. And that, Mr. Speaker, I presume, will be the position of our government. We recognize there is a problem. We know that

MR. W. CARTER: the salmon catches are down, but we get comfort from the knowledge, Mr. Speaker, that the reduction in the salmon harvest from four and one half to two and one half million pounds, for example, in 1978 and 1977, and I believe around that figure this year, that is not at all out of line with the harvest that occurred in the Province back in the forties and the fifties and in fact even earlier. So it might well be this is a cycle and that there is no real cause for concern. But certainly we are looking at it and, I repeat, the moment we are supplied with information to the effect that the minister in New Brunswick is in fact accurate in what he is saying, well then we will have to think about it and act on it.

MR. JAMIESON: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MR. JAMIESON: Well, Mr. Speaker, it certainly does not auger well for the new era of great co-operation between the four fishing Atlantic Provinces when at their very first meeting we find that the Newfoundland and New Brunswick ministers are diametrically opposed to each other, or appear to be in any event. But in regard to the qualifications which the hon.



MR. JAMIESON: to the qualifications which the hon. minister has put upon his answer, namely, that if it is shown that a ban is necessary - I suppose we can fall back on the old expression, 'a ban if necessary but not necessarily a ban' - but obviously, what is clearly going to happen in this case is that it is going to arouse, obviously again, concern as to the livelihood of the fishermen, particularly on the Newfoundland coast, that a ban conceivably could be in the works. I want to ask the minister if he has in those circumstances either already made representations to his federal colleague that some form of compensation be paid to fishermen who for one reason or another lose the livelihood out of the salmon catch or, if he has not done so, will he now undertake to the House to do just that?

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, let me first of all clear up the preamble to the hon. gentleman's question that certainly there is no disagreement. While I think the minister in New Brunswick appreciated the position that I took at the meeting, I certainly appreciate his. We left as good friends as we met. I can only assume that he is acting, like I said, on the best advice possible and what he thinks is in the best interests of his fishermen, and I shall do likewise, certainly in terms of compensation, we did discuss that, but I suspect it is a rather hypothetical question right now, because there has been no decision made to put a ban on salmon fishing or to do anything else. There is a suggestion, of course - and this, I suppose, started almost since the beginning of time - by New Brunswick fishermen that Newfoundlanders are intercepting salmon bound for the Miramichi and other rivers in New Brunswick, but like I said, what else is new? That has been a charge levelled at the Newfoundland fishermen almost since day one. I do not accept the position - certainly not the figures quoted by the minister. Again, the advice I am getting would indicate that there is far less salmon intercepted by Newfoundlanders on the Southwest Coast than they would have us think there is, for example, on the basis of the figure submitted. But again, it is something that we will look at and we will

MR. W. CARTER: not be unreasonable. We are as conservation-minded as anybody else and we will do what has to be done.

MR. JAMIESON: Mr. Speaker, I further supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER (Simms) A further supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. JAMIESON: No one is attempting at all to diminish the seriousness of the problem, but it seems to me also - and I would like to ask the hon. minister this question - that there is some necessity here for rapidity of decision. For example, hon. members opposite, as well as some on this side, have been urging that licencing procedures be expanded not only in other forms of fishing, but restrictions on salmon licences, for instance.

MR. D. JAMIESON: Now, for this season it is clearly probably past the crucial point. But is it likely, may I ask the hon. minister, that this issue, from his experiences of yesterday and perhaps other meetings, that it will be resolved well enough in advance of the season of next year that one of two things will happen, either that there will be a clearly spelled out licencing policy or, if there is not going to be such a licencing policy and expansion and there is going to be a ban, that something will be put in place in lots of time before we get into a very dicey and very difficult situation in the Spring?

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER: Yes, I am confident that the new minister will, in fact, take whatever action is necessary to bring this thing to a head. In fact, I know he is determined to take a hard look at the whole broad spectrum of licencing, especially salmon licencing, and other matters too pertaining to the salmon fisheries.

So answering your question, Mr. Speaker, the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. D. Jamieson), I am convinced in my mind that whatever action is necessary will be taken before the next season, next Spring.

MR. F. ROWE: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, the hon. member for Trinity - Bay de Verde.

MR. F. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, you know there is no doubt about the fact that there is a problem with respect to the salmon stocks and I do not swallow for one minute Mr. Bird's conclusion that the problem is because we are intercepting the salmon here in Newfoundland. I was wondering if the minister has made any initiative, or in his discussions with his federal counterpart in Ottawa over the last couple of days, has any idea when the Federal Government will be sitting down with the United States and with Denmark to consider the catching of the salmon

MR. F. ROWE: off Greenland? As I understand it, approximately 50 per cent of the salmon that usually spawn on the Eastern sea board in Canada are indeed caught off the coast of Greenland. I was wondering if the minister could indicate what progress has been made to identifying that particular problem, what initiatives he is taking to try to get these negotiations going on between the Federal Government and the United States and Denmark in that respect?

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, that is a question that would be better asked the federal minister, but I think I can answer it in part in that that is a concern of the Federal Government. In the matter of the Greenland situation, the fact that salmon distant for Canadian rivers and waters are intercepted by fishermen off Greenland, that is something that is being looked at very closely and I get the feeling that it will be part of an overall approach, a package approach, as you might call it, to the whole problems of the salmon fishery and the suggestion that it is being depleted. I suppose the federal minister would be anxious to be in a position to demonstrate to the world and to the Greenland people that Canada has got its house in order in terms of proper

MR. W. CARTER: conservation measures, a reduction maybe in the number of licences and so on. And then, of course, I am sure that the necessary approaches will be made to the countries concerned. But in answering the question, yes, that is very much on the minds of the federal authorities, especially the federal minister.

MR. F. ROWE: A further supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): A further supplementary, the hon. member for Trinity-Bay de Verde.

MR. F. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries over the past number of years has been advocating greater jurisdiction, if not total jurisdiction by Newfoundland and Labrador over the matters pertaining to the fisheries in this particular Province and his counterpart now in Ottawa seems to have rejected that particular policy or philosophy and is calling for greater consultation. We have seen the results of consultations amongst the Atlantic Provinces over the past couple of days and we have already had a flare up over the salmon situation. I was wondering now if the present provincial Minister of Fisheries has changed his policy or philosophy or ideas with respect to having greater jurisdiction for the Province over matters pertaining to the fisheries and can now see the reason why we need a strong central federal presence in matters pertaining to the fisheries as long as we do have, of course, that necessary consultation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, my views on the question of jurisdiction has not changed. I still believe that the Province should have greater jurisdiction over the fisheries. Certainly the matter of consultation is something that is needed and I am happy to tell the House now that our wishes in that regard appear to have been heard and the federal minister is quite willing now to consult. In fact, I repeat I have spent more time with the new minister in Ottawa the past four weeks than I did with the previous minister in Ottawa for four years.

MR. W. CARTER: The results of our meetings and the new attitude that has emerged I am sure will be quite evident over the near future in terms of fishery development, fisheries policy, the matter of jurisdiction, consultation. We have a very good relationship and, Mr. Speaker, it is refreshing to be able to pick up the phone and call your federal counterpart and to at least have him do the same thing when he is seeking your advice or -

MR. JAMIESON: He says no with a smile.

MR. W. CARTER: No. No. That is not the case, Mr. Speaker. I know how it must grieve the hon. members opposite to see this kind of relationship develop. They are not used to that kind of behaviour, of course -

MR. MORGAN: That is right. They are not used to it over there.

MR. W. CARTER: - on the part of federal ministers, and I say that with great respect to the former Minister of External Affairs, but certainly they are not used to having that kind of dialogue with certain ministers in the House, ministers who are important as far as Newfoundland is concerned.

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): One final supplementary, the hon. member for Trinity-Bay de Verde, then the member for LaPoile, then the member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. F. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, when we ask questions of the Minister of Fisheries, we do not want to hear how refreshing the meetings were and how cordial they were and how congenial they were, we want answers to the questions that we are asking.

MR. JAMIESON: What kind of music did you play?

MR. F. ROWE: Nor what kind of music you played or what was consumed.

MR. F. ROWE: I wonder if the minister could indicate to the House, Mr. Speaker, what initiative he has taken in trying to increase the federal vote for the purpose of salmon enhancement not only in this Province but in the other Atlantic provinces as well? I understand the federal vote is approximately \$2 million now and that representation has been made to Mr. McGrath by, I believe, Mr. Richard Whittegar representing the East Coast Salmon Association to try to have that vote increased from \$2 million to \$5.5 million for the purposes of further salmon enhancement. I was wondering what initiatives the provincial minister has taken to have that particular request realized?

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, we are encouraged by statements coming out off Ottawa from our very good friend and former colleague, the new minister, with respect to the enhancement programme. He has been to British Columbia looking at their enhancement programme and apparently he is very impressed with it. And that will be part of the overall package that will be put together and presented to the Canadian people shortly in terms of the salmon industry. But that kind of an enhancement programme, I suspect, will be put in place and as a Province of course we would encourage it. But I can only inform my good friend opposite me, Mr. Speaker - and he appears to be having some problems in recent months as to jurisdictions, respective jurisdictions - but the matter he mentioned, I think, is pretty well a federal responsibility but, he that as it may, we are going to encourage it and make the necessary representations to Ottawa to ensure that a proper programme is put in place in that regard.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the other day I put a question to the hon. the Premier, Sir, in connection with Eastern Provincial Airways and the hon. gentleman answered my question

MR. NEARY: by giving me a lecture on the private enterprise system, so I am going to try again, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. gentleman tell me if he has found out since I put the question to him if Cabinet approval was necessary in order to bring about a private transaction whereby the ownership of EPA was shifted from Mr. Andrew Crosbie to Mr. Harry Steele?

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked that question the other day. Yes, Cabinet approval was sought and granted for that transaction and it was done, if the hon. member wants to know, it was done on November 22nd.

MR. NEARY: I said it was November 22nd., so I was not too far out.

A supplementary question,

Mr. Speaker.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No, I think it was in the news as a matter of fact, on the 15th or 16th.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Speaker, it was not .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! The hon. member for LaPoile,

MR. NEARY: A supplementary. It was not in the news, Sir. I took a stab in the dark the other day, I said November 16th. I also want to ask the hon. gentleman now if the ground rules regarding a \$6 million loan to Eastern Provincial Airways, if the ground rules were changed when approval was given to transfer the ownership from one party to another, and if



MR. NEARY:

so, how drastically were the ground rules changed?

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No, I cannot answer that question directly, but I will undertake to get it for the hon. member in the next day or two and provide him with the information. Because, you know, I do not think it is reflected here in the Order-in-Council, so I would have to check with the Department of Finance to see whether any ground rules were changed which were incorporated in the Order-in-Council in the sense that when this Order in Council is issued the ground rules will be changed. So I cannot answer the hon. member directly. All I can say to him is that I will undertake to get it in the next day or two as I undertook to get an answer to his original question to which I have the answer. I am glad he asked me the question again today because I had the answer here ready for him.

MR. NEARY: A supplementary, Your Honour.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. the member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: I am not complaining. I want to ask the hon. gentleman if there is anything in that Order in Council that he has in front of him there to indicate whether or not Eastern Provincial Airways was going to send a letter of intent to the Ministry of Transport to purchase Mordair? And if it is not in the Order in Council, would the hon. gentleman indicate if Cabinet approval had to be sought before Eastern Provincial Airways could send such a letter of intent?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I do not have a clue, Mr. Speaker, off the top of my head, but there is nothing in this Order in Council which has reflected anything to do with E.P.A. purchasing or making a bid for Mordair.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: A final supplementary, the hon. the member for LaPoile, then the hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman has the Order in Council in front of him. Would he indicate if approval was granted via that

MR. NEARY: Order in Council to allow E.P.A. to pay a dividend resulting from the sale of a Boeing 737 aircraft when they declared a dividend of - let me see what it was - almost \$3 million, close to \$3 million they declared a dividend - because prior to that they were barred from paying dividends - so that the transfer of ownership could take place?

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No, I cannot answer that. There is nothing here in the Order in Council.

MR. NEARY: Could I have a copy of The Order in Council?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, No!

PREMIER PECKFORD: I do not know if I am - you never table an Order in Council, I do not think.

MR. NEARY: Yes, they have been tabled.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Well, perhaps they have been tabled.

MR. E. ROBERTS: An hon. minister or the Premier as the case may be recently (inaudible).

PREMIER PECKFORD: Oh, yes, yes!

MR. S. NEARY: Can I have a copy of the Order in Council?

PREMIER PECKFORD: I will defer that decision for now. I am not going to respond to the hon. gentleman until I find out whether it is proper so to do. In this circumstance, I do not know if I am breaking anything to do with the company or whatever.

MR. S. NEARY: No.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Well, I am not just going to take the hon. member's word, I am very sorry.

MR. S. NEARY: Well, you can take my word for it.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I appreciate the hon. gentleman's expertise in all matters dealing with the Province of Newfoundland regardless of whether they are legal, constitutional, transportation policies, social policies or resource policies. I recognize that there is a lot of expertise between the ears of the hon. gentleman but whether, in fact, it goes so far as to suggest and to recommend to which I could agree readily the tabling of the Order in Council, I am not prepared to accept at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (SIMMS): The hon. member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. G. FLIGHT: Mr. Speaker, my question was originally meant to be a supplementary based on the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition, so I have to refer back, but I will ask the question because it is important. I believe it affects a fair amount of the people of this Province. And at the same meeting where the minister opposed the ban and came in and said that he did not have the information available from the biologists and other people that would put him in a position to approve a ban at this time, he did make the statement - if the statement attributed to him in the press is right - "but Mr. Carter said he thought he could live with the limit of two grilse" - those are a small salmon - "a day placed on the sports fishery."

MR. G. FLIGHT: Now, realizing that the sports fishery, Mr. Speaker, contributes a fair amount to our economy, the Department of Tourism is depending on it for a fair few dollars, a lot of our domestic people want to salmon fish, does the minister have the advice and have the information available to him that would put him in a position to say that he would support the sports fishery of this Province being reduced by 50 per cent, from four salmon a day to two salmon a day?

MR. SPEAKER (SIMMS): The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, for one of the few times in my life I think I have been misquoted by the press. I did not suggest that I could live with the placing of the limit of two. I had no authority, of course, that would have to be the decision of my colleague, the Minister of Tourism (Mr. Morgan). But that was one of the recommendations made by the minister from New Brunswick. In that regard, I said I would have to defer to the minister and that would be his decision with the consultation of Cabinet. But certainly I did not, I have no recollection of having agreed to there being a pacing of a limit to fish per day on our rivers.

MR. G. FLIGHT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. member for Windsor - Buchans, then the hon. member for Lewisporte.

MR. G. FLIGHT: Since the meeting obviously dealt with the ways of considering the reduction in the salmon resource and looking at means of stopping the reduction, or replenishing the resource, then obviously the sports fishery of New Brunswick, because the minister indicated that they are prepared to go to two salmon per fisherman per day; my question to the minister at this point then was Newfoundland, was he as the Minister of Fisheries for Newfoundland, asked to consider the same reduction in the sports fishery as New Brunswick is prepared to implement? Have we been asked as a Province to implement that change and to reduce the catch limit for sports fisherman from four to two?

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, that was one of the recommendations made by the Minister for New Brunswick and made to the federal minister, with a request, I presume, that that kind of regulation have almost universal application in the Atlantic area. But, Mr. Speaker, the minister in the Government of New Brunswick, they have a very real problem. I think most reasonable people will agree that they have a problem. I am not sure that the recommendations made by the minister are the answer. In fact, I do not think we could live with certain recommendations made by him. But I do not wish to downgrade the Government of New Brunswick for having made those recommendations. Obviously they are acting out of a lot of concern for the salmon fishery and from what I hear they have good reason to be concerned. Salmon fishing in that area is in danger of depletion, so I guess it is up to them as a government to take whatever steps they see fit to ensure that that will not happen.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Lewisporte.

MR. F. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Environment and it relates to the widespread destruction of trees and shrubs along the Trans-Canada Highway and other side roads in Newfoundland by the Newfoundland Light and Power Company Limited, Newfoundland Hydro, and the Department of Transportation and Communications who are engaged in applying a chemical called Picloram which destroys the biological makeup of the trees and shrubs. And if I could elaborate, Mr. Speaker, there is some concern that this drying out not only destroys the tourism aspects of it but also it could result in forest fires being caused by cigarette butts or whatever, this drying out. I wonder if the minister could tell us whether or not any restrictions are being

MR. F. WHITE: planned to be placed on any of those spraying activities.

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): The hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs and the Environment.

MRS. NEWHOOK: Mr. Speaker, the only thing I can say right now is that these companies operate under a licence or a permit and they have to receive this in order to use these chemicals and I have had no notification that anything is being used unwisely. But I will certainly check into this situation and perhaps on tomorrow or another day I can come back with an explanation.

MR. F. WHITE: A supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) Supplementary, the hon. member for Lewisporte.

MR. F. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. lady drove along the Trans-Canada Highway in recent days, she would know that lots of things are being done unwisely in this regard, but I will defer to her to get the information, Mr. Speaker, since I plan to give notice of debate in this on the Late Show on Thursday.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Baie Verte - White Bay.

MR. T. RIDEOUT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. J. Dinn). The minister will know that twelve or fourteen months ago there was a tri-party committee set up to study the recommendations, very specific and very important recommendations, brought forward in the Selikoff Report on the asbestos dust problem in Baie Verte. The minister's department, the company and the union set up a committee to study those recommendations and we have not heard very much about that committee since. Could the minister tell the House whether the committee has indeed studied the recommendations of the Selikoff Report and whether the government and the company are preparing to take any specific and appropriate action on a number of those recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Labour and Manpower.

MR. J. DINN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, with all the things that have happened in the Department of Labour and Manpower over the past several months, I have not had an opportunity to get into that specific report but I will endeavour to find out what the committees have done and report to the House in due course.

MR. T. RIDEOUT: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, the hon. member for Baie Verte - White Bay.

MR. T. RIDEOUT: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the minister's dilemma with the other problems he has been facing in that department recently but could I ask the minister whether or not any decision has been taken yet - and I think this is one of the most important recommendations of the committee - to set up in the Division of Occupational Health and Safety an asbestos registry whereby every person who has ever worked in an asbestos environment in the Province would be registered for the purposes of Workmen's Compensation and so on many years down the road, God forbid should that come about? I think it is important that that action be taken rather quickly. And could the minister tell us whether that has been done yet or not?

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) The hon. Minister of Labour and Manpower.

MR. J. DINN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of registering people that have different occupational health problems in the Province, not the least, of which, of course, is the asbestos one. We are doing a registry on that now. The problem that we have had, basically, with respect to the registry, is that we have been, number one, attempting to get all the groups together with respect to Occupational Health and Safety into one division and, also, we have the problem of preparing right now for a move to a new building, but we are in the process of preparing a registry of people and I will also endeavour to get further information on that aspect of the department for the hon. member and report to the House.

MR. T. RIDEOUT: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, the hon. member for Baie Verte - White Bay.

MR. T. RIDEOUT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his information. And one final question, a double-barrelled question really; could the minister tell me whether or not all the divisions related to Occupational Health and Safety have yet



MR. T. RIDEOUT:                   been transferred into the Occupational Health and Safety Division of his department, and secondly, could the minister tell me whether or not this tri-party committee- union, company and government- is meeting on a regular basis studying the recommendations of the Selikoff Report?

MR. SPEAKER:                   The hon. Minister of Labour and Manpower.

MR. J. DINN:                   As I said, Mr. Speaker, in answer to the second part of the question as to how often the committee has met and what the status of it is, I will get that for the hon. member. With respect to the first part, the answer is yes. All the different sections for Occupational Health and Safety are now together in one division, albeit they are spread to three or four locations throughout St. John's, They will be all in one building in another month or so but they are all together under one division.

MR. SPEAKER:                   The hon. member for Port au Port.

MR. J. HODDER:               Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Industrial Development (Mr. L. Barry). I understand that a DREE study which was completed on the Bay St. George's area of the Province and looking at the resource development of that study was completed sometime in April and I was wondering if the minister plans to make that study public, make it open both to the public and to the House of Assembly?

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

MR. L. BARRY:               I apologize, Mr. Speaker, I missed the question.

MR. SPEAKER:               The hon. member for Port au Port.

MR. J. HODDER:               Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister if the DREE study on the Bay St. George's area would be made public and whether we would receive copies in the House of Assembly?

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms)  
Development.

The hon. Minister of Industrial

MR. L. BAREY:

Mr. Speaker, it is the policy of  
this government to make available all information that is  
consistent with the orderly and efficient running of departments.  
Now, there are certain reports and studies

MR. BARRY:

that are prepared for the internal use of a department which is not appropriate to make public and I am not sure where this particular report falls -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): Order, please!

MR. BARRY: - but I undertake to find out and to give the hon. member an answer tomorrow.

MR. HODDER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. member for Port au Port.

MR. HODDER: A supplementary to the Ministers. I understand that this particular report, and I have heard that the report deals with both the fishery and the way the fishery should go in the district of Port au Port and in the Bay St. George region, and it also deals with the limestone resources of which at the present time the markets are very, very good.

I believe the report also states that these resources should be pushed by the government. Has the minister been moving along these lines and has he, since the government has had it since April, has he made any move to try to find markets for the limestone resources of the area?

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

MR. BARRY: Mr. Speaker, I have not stopped since I got in the department along those lines.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): Before calling Presenting Petitions, I would like to make a ruling on the petition presented yesterday by the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary), and I would like to quote a couple of references. First of all our own Standing Orders, 91 (a) states that "A petition may be either printed or written," etc., and the practice in this House has been to accept petitions that have at least three original signatures. Reference is also made to the Speaker's ruling on May 15th., 1979 which says, "The point of order brought up was whether the petition was in order with respect to having the required signatures on the front page. Many signatures are in fact what appears to be a photostatic copy. There are however on the first page what I understand to be four original signatures. The hon. gentleman has assured me there are four original signatures so in my opinion that would bring it within the requirement of original signatures." And further a reference to Beauchesne, the fifth edition, page 210, paragraph 676 which states in part, "A petition must have original signatures or marks, and not copies from the original. The signatures must be written upon the petition itself and not pasted upon or otherwise transferred to it." Therefore, bearing in mind those references, I would have to rule that the petition presented by the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) is not permitted to be tabled in the House.

PRESENTING PETITIONS:

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: This being my first opportunity since yesterday to address myself to the question of that petition, and now that Your Honour has ruled that it is not acceptable -

MR. SIMMONS: On a point of order?

MR. SPEAKER: On a point of order? Is it the understanding that the minister is standing on a point of order?

MR. HICKEY: I am standing on a point of order, Your Honour -

MR. SIMMONS: Oh, he did not say that.

MR. HICKEY: - and I am asking if the House would give me leave to clear the names of a family within my constituency which were connected with this debate yesterday. Now that I do not have the opportunity to speak in support of the petition or against the petition or whatever, I am asking leave of the House to clear the names of those people whose characters were maligned by inference, if not by name, and, Your Honour, I ask that I be allowed to do that. I think that is a reasonable request.

MR. SIMMONS: On that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): On that point of order, the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) according to your ruling, Sir, has presented a copy of a petition. We all know that the original of the petition exists, exists in the hands or the records of the member for Mount Pearl (Mr. Windsor), and if my friend from St. John's East Extern (Mr. Hickey) wants an opportunity to speak to the petition then he ought to talk to his friend from Mount Pearl to get him to present the petition to the House, which should have been done in the first place, and then we will all get in on the act.

MR. SPEAKER: On the point of order, I really do not consider it to be a point of order. Members really are not permitted to get into debate at this point in the proceedings and I would therefore have to rule that it is a difference of opinion between two hon. members.

The hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of privilege.

MR. HICKEY: The privilege of the House being that my hon. friend from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) brought in a copy of a petition yesterday and in introducing it, or asking that Your Honour make the decision as to whether or not it be acceptable, went beyond the limits

MR. HICKEY: insofar as by inference, as I have said, casting reflections on the characters of a particular family in my constituency, and in relation to my colleague from Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons) I have no intentions of

MR. HICKERY: going to my colleague in Municipal Affairs and waiting for the petition and going through the routine of presenting it all for the purposes of clearing the names of those people. I think I rise on a point of privilege of the House and I clear it in this manner. Your Honour, the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) should have done a simple check before bringing in a copy of that petition. The facts are, Your Honour, there was nothing wrong with, there was no petition -

MR. NEARY: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER(Simms): I have to wait until the hon. minister makes his point of privilege and then I will rule. ..

MR. NEARY: I think you heard enough now.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, there was no petition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: That would be up to me to decide that I guess.

Order, please!

MR. HICKEY: The hon. gentleman, you know, was quick to take stabs at people who are not in the House as well as people who are in the House. But when somebody wishes to clear their names he is not so keen on hearing the facts. The facts are, Your Honour, there was no petition presented, there was an application which does not require, Your Honour, signatures, it requires to have the names listed of those people who were going to take advantage of that water supply, point number one. Point number two, the people who were listed on that application were in -

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, this is very improper.

MR. NEARY: The decorum of the House is going down.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! I have ruled that the hon. minister may make his point of privilege and at that time I will rule whether or not it is in order.

The hon. members know full well that they are not able to question the Chair on that particular point.

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms)

I ask him to make his

point of privilege.

MR. HICKEY:

Your Honour, I am standing

on my rights as a member of this House. I am doing the same thing, simply, as the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) did yesterday. He stood on his rights in presenting a petition thereby casting reflections on people in my constituency. I am rising on a point of privilege of the House. Your Honour will then rule whether it is acceptable or not. But I am attempting to make a case that the privileges of this House were indeed violated inasmuch as the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) came to this Chamber with a document and without any investigation at all, Your Honour, concluded and alluded to wrongdoing and naming a lane which is commonly known in that community as Day's Lane and thereby reflecting on a family by the name of Day. Now there are a number of families down there. The only problem here, Your Honour, and I will conclude it quickly - there is a difference of opinion between a couple of members of a family and that difference borders on politics. And, Your Honour, this is no place to discuss it, nor is it the place for anyone to come in here with a petition, a copy of a petition alleging wrongdoing without knowing what he is talking about. There was no wrongdoing. Everything was in order. That well is drilled. The people involved can use it. The gentleman whose property the well is on has given authority and permission for those people to use it and therefore I suggest, Your Honour, that the privilege of the House has been violated.

MR. SPEAKER:

On the point of privilege.

The hon. member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. ROBERTS:

Yes, Your Honour, only to

the point of privilege and then I will raise a further one because, I think, the hon. gentleman from St. John's East Extern (Mr. Hickey) is deliberately abusing the privileges of this House.

Mr. Speaker, the procedure

on privileges, I would suggest, is well known. The hon. member has the



MR. ROBERTS: same right as does any member to raise a question of privilege. He must state it briefly and Your Honour will rule whether it is a prima facie case. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman made a statement of a point of privilege, if so I did not hear it and I was listening intently. In any event he failed to do what he ought to have done which is to say he is prepared to move a motion.

The facts, I would submit, Sir, to speak to the - the so-called facts he brought forward are these, My friend from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) received a document which, Your Honour, has only now ruled is out of order. So my friend from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) could hardly be blamed for presenting it when Your Honour as of yesterday did not know it was out of order. Your Honour made the ruling today and that settles that matter. The document alleges that public monies were spent on what amounts to a forgery. Names were affixed without the permission of the person whose name was -

MR. HICKEY: That is not true.

MR. ROBERTS: That is what the document alleges. I am not saying it is true. I am simply saying, Mr. Speaker, that the statement made by my friend from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) was that six people said to him, that their names were affixed to a document without their knowledge or permission or consent. And if I understand anything about law, and I understand perhaps just a jot and a tittle, perhaps just a little bit more than the gentleman from the Extern (Mr. Hickey), that amounts to forgery. Public money was spent on that. That is all my friend from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) was saying and I submit, Sir, there is no question of any point of privilege in that.

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) I appreciate the hon. member's debate. I believe I have heard enough argument on the point of privilege and I would have to rule that it is not a point of privilege at this time but merely a difference of opinion

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms)

between the two hon.

members.

MR. NEARY:

A point of order. A point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HICKEY:

He has changed his mind now.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of privilege. The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY:

I have not changed my

mind, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

If I may. Order, please!

I would like to ask members to please make their points of order or make their points of privilege as quickly as they can so we can get to the rulings.

The hon. member for

LaPoile.

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, my point of

privilege, Sir, is in connection with a couple of untrue remarks that were made by the hon. gentleman when he raised this so-called point of

MR. NEARY:

privilege of the House. The hon. gentleman said that I took stabs at people outside this House and that I maligned people outside this House. That is not true, Sir, and the hon. gentleman should be asked by the Speaker to withdraw and apologize to this House for abusing the privileges of the House. That is not true. I read the prayer of the petition. The petition is the document that stated that the signatures had been forged. I did not state it, I read from the petition. And I was doing my duty as an elected member of this House in presenting that document to the minister and to the members of the House as I was asked to do, after a thorough investigation, I might add. And the hon. gentleman may kick up all the fuss he likes and he may be smarting under the fact that public money was spent improperly. That is the hon. gentleman's problem. He will have to sort that out with the minister. But my point of privilege now, Sir, is what the hon. gentleman said is completely untrue and Your Honour should ask him to withdraw and apologize to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: (Simms) On the point of privilege, may I say that I do not think there is any further discussion or debate or argument required on this particular point, it is obviously and clearly a difference of opinion between two hon. members.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. MARSHALL: Committee of Supply.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole on Supply, Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Butt) Order, please!

Under the Executive Council, Head 3, 307-01.

MR. F. B. ROWE: Mr. Chairman.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. SIMMONS: I will yield to my colleague for Trinity-Bay de Verde.

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

MR. F. ROWE: Yes, I would like that because I sort of just got started the last day we were considering the Head,

MR. F. ROWE: Resource Public Relations programme -

Is that the Head, Mr. Chairman? - 307-03, correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Butt) 307-01.

MR. F. ROWE: 01 - well, we are still on the salaries so we can get into generalities.

Mr. Chairman, the last day I only got into this heading for several minutes because we were reaching one of the clock and the Premier indicated that he would bring some information to the Committee - if I can get the Premier's attention, Mr. Chairman - he would bring some information to the Committee relating to the Special Action Group. Now, Sir, what I wanted to know basically was this: What is the origin and the reasons for the establishment of the Special Action Group? And I ask the Premier in particular whether or not the government had requested a public relations firm or a consulting firm to indicate to the government ways in which it could enhance its image prior to the setting up of this Special Action Group? I put that question directly to the Premier, whether or not the government had asked a consulting firm or a public relations firm to indicate to the government methods and ways of enhancing the government's image at that particular point in time, and if they had asked this of a particular firm, namely, McConnell Advertising, I believe, and that McConnell Advertising as a result of this request had indicated to the government that the Special Action Group be formulated and formed. And of course, we had the result

MR. F.B. ROWE: that the Premier called with great fanfare, called a special T.V. programme, a half hour programme, I believe it was, for the purpose of making a great announcement in the great interest of the People of this Province and that announcement was the establishment of the Special Action Group.

Now, what I would like to know is whether that Special Action Group was set up upon the recommendations of that public relations firm, number one. And number two, in view of the fact that this year there are \$382,000 being voted for resource public relations programming and, of course, there were expenses voted last year into the revised estimates of \$601,000 for a total in excess of - well, to add it up, \$982,100, have been spent for resource public relations programmes - what I would like to know is whether McConnell Advertising did get that advertising and if they did not, who did get that advertising and whoever did get that advertising, under what circumstances it was gotten.

In other words, were public tenders called for this public relations programme? I ask that in the spirit - and the Member for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) knows full well the importance of that particular question being asked because the member for St. John's East removed himself from the Cabinet over this whole public relations tendering business. This was one of the reasons that he removed himself from Cabinet at one point in the game. And the sums of money being voted here are in excess of the amount that calls for public tendering. So I submit, Mr. Chairman, that public tenders should have been called and bids made and the government, of course, given out contracts to presumably the lowest tender.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to make this point, that the Premier may think he is gaining some grounds and some advantage with the public of this Province by - in Answers to Questions in Committee stage or in the House of Assembly - by giving the appearance of removing himself as far as he possibly can from the former Premier.

MR. WHITE: I do not blame him for that.

MR. F.B. ROWE: I would not blame him for that but the fact of the matter is, Sir, that the hon. the present Premier was a minister of that Cabinet, that administration. So was the present Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins), so was the present Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn), so was the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer), so was the - who is the Minister of Social Services now?

MR. NEARY: The roadrunner.

MR. F.B. ROWE: Yes, so was the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey), so was the Minister of Health (Mr. House), so was the Minister of Lands and Forests (Mr. Morgan), the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. W. Carter), the Minister of Rural, Agriculture and Northern Development (Mr. Goudie), the Minister of Transportation and Communications (Mr. Brett), of Public Works and Services (Mr. Young) and of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Mr. N. Windsor). Twelve, counting the Premier, Mr. Chairman, were members of the administration that set up the Special Action Committee.

Now, I do not wish to refer to the contract, Mr. Cole's contract. I must say, if I were in Mr. Cole's position, I would have grabbed that contract as fast as I could. It was a good deal and I congratulate Mr. Cole for having gotten that contract. The question now is whether, in fact, it holds up in law. I am not questioning that aspect of it, what I want to know is whether or not McConnell Advertising made that recommendation to the government, at the request of the government, for the setting up of the Special Action Committee, and whether or not McConnell Advertising or any other public relations firm got this advertising that is being voted under this heading, and whether or not public tenders were called.

I hope the hon. the Premier does not get up in answer to this question and say that this was done by the former Premier and he has no knowledge of it whatsoever. Because,

MR. F.B. ROWE: Sir, anything done by that  
administration had to be done collectively or by Order-in-Council.

MR. F. ROWE: There was a famous accusation made of the former former Premier that he had signed an agreement or a contract on his own. The hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) knows full well what I am talking about and there was a great kerfuffle about that particular contract or agreement when the former former Premier was accused of having made an agreement on his own without consulting or without the knowledge or without the agreement of the Cabinet. And I would suggest, Sir, that when we are talking about the expenditure of millions of dollars, which is what we are doing over a number of years, that this should have had full Cabinet approval. And not only that, Mr. Chairman, not only full Cabinet approval but the approval of this House of Assembly. The hon. member for St. John's East, Sir, on many occasions and I think the hon. member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) on many occasions when they were casting criticisms back at the former administration, one of the criticisms that they brought up quite often was the fact that too many big decisions involving the expenditure of the taxpayers' money were being made at the Cabinet level without the knowledge of the full House. And I would submit, Sir, that the Premier should be in a position to indicate the answers to the questions that I put to him now and I hope that he will stand up and answer them or we shall stand again and keep asking until we get the answers. And I further point out, Sir, that after the money has been committed, now, this year, we are asked to vote an additional half million dollars and I would not be surprised in next year's vote, even though the Action Group is gone, we will be asked to vote another sum of money. So I sincerely hope that the Premier will see fit to answer the questions that I put to him.

MR. CHAIRMAN (MR. BAIRD): The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. member for Trinity - Bay de Verde (Mr. Rowe) for his comments on this subhead, 307-01. He asked me a number of questions which I will try to address.



PREMIER PECKFORD: The hon. member asked me whether McConnell's recommended that the special Action Group be established. Now, I do not know. I do not think one will find it in Order-in-Council nor in any papers written but as I remember it the former Premier was concerned about the process of getting applications approved and getting small businesses off the ground and this kind of thing and he thought it appropriate that some special agency be designed, as I understand it, and then it was in those parameters that other people got involved in it. So I do not know if I could find—I could search for the hon. member and see whether there was anything in writing but I doubt whether there was as I remember the former Premier had the idea himself as it related to doing something, as it related to small businessmen in rural Newfoundland and this is what came out of it, so that he had the concept and then it was just given some flesh, if you will, or some meat by McConnell's and other people who got involved in it. Now, if the hon. member has information to indicate different than that I would be very interested in perusing the information. But as I understand it that is the way it happened. I will check it out and see whether there is evidence to the contrary, but as I remember it that is the way it was.

McConnell's Advertising are involved here under that resource programme. The reason why that is so high is simply because it is bills outstanding from last year. It does not represent any new programme as I indicated in my opening remarks on this whole question of Executive Council and the various divisions under it. So there is no new money in here for a resource public relations programme, it is part of the programme that was adopted last year and approved by the House as it related to ads and so on that would be placed to publicize, if you will, the special Action Group and the various loan programmes that the government had in existence.

MR. F. ROWE: Is that the total vote now? Is that finished?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes, that finishes it off, exactly. Now McConnell's got the contract, if you will, or got the work. And the Public Tendering

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Act does not apply here. There have been numerous opinions from Justice on this, that the Public Tendering Act - government has the power or

PREMIER PECKFORD: the authority or whatever to award work to public relations firms, and this has been so for quite some time. So McConnell's were awarded this work as it related to the ads on this resource public relations programme and they have done all the work on it up to now. As I have indicated to the hon. member, there is no new work. McConnells are just finishing off whatever was agreed to under last year's programme and I have suspended any further work in this field. Altogether the government will review now in the next five or six months whether, in fact, it is advantageous at this point in time for us to get involved in any additional public relations activity. It would be my inclination that if government does decide, it would be much reduced from what it was in the past. I do not even know whether we should get involved that much in it, but if we do and we have to get involved in some kind of agency, then I think the calling of proposals would be in order. It is difficult to put detailed specifications in place, but I think we can put specifications in place to the degree whereby proposals could be called for. And on the basis of those proposals than government could choose one of the agencies and hopefully we could get it done locally.

MR. F. B. ROWE: (Inaudible). tender?

PREMIER PECKFORD: I am trying to speak and the hon. member is making it difficult. I will listen to his question - even though it is out of order - when I finish. All I am trying to say is I am trying to do it for the benefit of the hon. member, so I hope he does not start thinking about another question before he listens to my answer, because then I feel he is not listening to my answer and, therefore, I am wasting my time and I should sit down and let somebody else speak. All I am saying is that I do not know whether we will get involved next year in a public relations programme of any sort like it was in the past, I doubt whether we will. There might be some public relations necessary as has been the practice in the last number of years. In the United States there have been a number of agencies involved in publicizing the development opportunities in the Province; that has been cancelled now in this Budget

PREMIER PECKFORD: and we are reviewing that whole sphere. But if we need to do any film and any specific ads as it relates to putting it on locally, then I would think that number one, we would call proposals and number two, that we would put some kind of local preference provision in there, that if it can be done at all in the Province by local industry, local ad agencies who are trying to get off the ground, then we should keep it within the Province. That would be the way I would like to go.

MR. F. B. ROWE: Would the Premier permit a question?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes - and just until I finish. I am sorry. While I think of it, in the Department of Industrial Development - and this will come up in the Estimates committees - there is money for public relations activity as it relates to development opportunities which are separate from the allocation here under the Special Action Group, which deals with the pursuit of advertising the Province to potential investors around the world.

MR. F. ROWE: While the Premier is still on his feet, Mr. Chairman!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes, sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Butt) The hon. the member for Trinity - Bay de Verde.

MR. F. ROWE: I am not quite clear as to whether or not proposals were called for with respect to public relations work or whether it was just handed over to McConnell's, and I am also not quite clear as to the reasons why the Public Tendering Act does not apply to this particular situation.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Well, on the second point I would have to bow to my learned friends, but there has been a legal opinion given on it on a number of occasions. Perhaps the Public Tendering Act needs to be changed, I do not know, but it is pretty difficult. I know other jurisdictions have had this problem to try to put specifications in place so that everybody is equal on doing it. There are factors involved here which are pretty difficult to put into tender documents, to specifications unless you do it real ad hocly, but I think proposals, perhaps, should be

PREMIER PECKFORD: called in the absence of a public tendering thing which would require very specific specifications which might be impossible. Whether proposals were called on this, as I remember it, I doubt whether there were. I do not think there were proposals called - you know, I cannot say categorically but I do not remember that any proposals were called. I think this firm was available and was capable of doing the work.

MR. F. ROWE: They were available before the Action Committee was set up.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Well, they might have been doing work before that point in time, I do not know. I was not that close to it and I am not that familiar with it, but I am not sure whether proposals were called. We can easily find that out.

I think the hon. member also got into the question of - there are a number of reports on the activities of the Action Group that the Action Group has

PREMIER PECKFORD: reported to the Premier on a number of applications received February 1977, October 1977, from February 1978 to October 1978 and so on and how they were handled, this kind of thing. There were a fair number of calls came in.

My approach to it, as the hon. member knows, is that I think the same number of calls can come in but they can go directly to the department, I do not think the need is there now for this group, otherwise, of course, we would not have eliminated it in the Budget. But there were a fair number of calls over the period of time that it was in operation and there were a lot of people, no doubt, who got a lot of help from the group during that time. And from February 1977 to October 1977, for example, the number of applications received were 289 and the number of applications approved were 168, to give you some idea of it. And it was in February 1978 to October 1978, it went to 468 and 370, so there were a fair number of calls coming in. I think one can still get a lot of calls coming in to the department, we just have to advertise the number and the department can deal with it then directly. I think that is most of the questions that the hon. member asked.

MR. R. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Baird) The hon. member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. R. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, while we are still on the subject of the Special Action Group, that terminology is a little different, Originally it was called the Action Group and it has taken on the connotation of special. No question, it is special, Mr. Chairman. I hope it is special to the point of being unique, I hope it never happens again. I hope it never happens again that a group of sane, reportedly sane men sit in Cabinet and allow the public's money to be so blatantly squandered as was the instance right here. I hope it never ever happens again. It has got to be

MR. R. SIMMONS: special in that sense, it has got to be unique in that sense, Mr. Chairman, that one man, we gather now, we are being told if you believe the script of the new Tory administration, that one man, Frank D. Moores, was the strong man, he came in and he shoved it all down their throats and now they have been busy ever since, Mr. Chairman, shaking him off. It does not say much for them, Mr. Chairman, does not say much for the crowd in Cabinet that they only began shaking him off after he had left, It does not say much for their strength of character, does not say much for their intestinal fortitude that the guy they want to disown now, the guy they want to disown now was the guy whose dictates they danced to all the while he was there. If you believe the official script now, 'Frankie Baby' was the bad boy, 'Frankie Baby' rammed Action Group down their throats. But they are going to shake it off now, they are going to become reformed, they are not going to do those silly things any more, they are just going to blame it on one man 'Frank'. Not so lightly, Mr. Chairman, not so easy as that. The public of Newfoundland, the taxpayers, are not quite that stunned, they are not quite that gullible. They know the system of Cabinet in Newfoundland. They know the matter of collective responsibility. They know that it was a Cabinet as a whole that agreed on this thing, that agreed to spend more than \$1 million to McConnell in Montreal. It was not just one man, One man showed the leadership, however misguided, but there had to be some followers.

Are these men, Mr. Chairman, the same men who are now going to rid themselves of this albatross, one Frank Moores? They are going to have the fortitude it takes now to rid them.

How can we, Mr. Chairman, be expected to believe that they have that kind of fortitude to do that now when they had none to stick up to him a year ago? There is a

MR. R. SIMMONS: contradiction there somehow, Mr. Chairman. The same brave souls who are going to chart a new world of courage and independence now are trying to have us believe that at the same time they were led as lambs to the slaughter before. They went along against their will, they were dragged screaming to make some of these decision-we are told. A very severe and even deceitful contradiction in terms there, Mr. Chairman, one that needs some explaining.

I am glad that



MR. SIMMONS: the Premier has decided to do with this Action Group what we told him a year or so ago they should do with it, get rid of it, get rid of it. It must be the most expensive telephone number in the world, the most expensive telephone number in the world. I appeal to the Premier, I appeal to the Premier now with his reputation for candidness to apply to this situation here and to develop a reputation also for consistency, a consistency of candidness. I appeal to him now to tell us the true story behind the Action Group, who rammed it down whose throat? Who decided it? Was it a fait accompli when it came to Cabinet? Did it ever come to Cabinet? Who approved the 'Cole' contract? Were the people in Cabinet used as rubber-stamp people there too? Was that a fait accompli when they heard about it as well? Was it something they had to go along with just for party solidarity, for the sake of the good old party? Or are we to believe that knowingly these men who were in Cabinet went along with that atrocious deal that the Premier now wants to disown? I hope the members of the Committee follow me that somehow you cannot have it both ways, somehow those who would now say, "It was a very wrong thing, we have to get rid of the 'Cole' contract if we can; we have to do something about it; we have to walk away from it", those people who are saying that now on the government side must have some reconciling to do with the decisions they made earlier on this same subject. I recognize the Premier is gone, Frank Moores is gone, he is gone, but there are 16 or 17 others over there, Mr. Chairman, who were there and who were part of the decision. I believe the present Premier owes it to the Committee to be candid on this point, to tell the Committee what his role was in it, if any, I do not know if there was a role. Perhaps he was physically absent from Cabinet; perhaps he was never apprised of it. I know that he was not one of the inner circle of the last Premier and that is to his credit, to the present Premier's credit, and perhaps when the present Premier was physically absent from Cabinet some day those who were in the inner circle of the former Premier, Mr. Moores, got together and rammed this one through, and

MR. SIMMONS: perhaps the first that the present Premier heard about it was when it came before the House and we began asking questions about it. I do not know, but I do know, Mr. Chairman, I do know that on this particular one, for whatever reason, for whatever reason, the Premier, today's Premier knows more than he is telling us. He knows more than he is telling us about this Action Group, about how it came about and I would hope that he would continue his reputation for candidness and tell us who it was, who it was cooked up this cockeyed concoction, this harebrained scheme called an Action Group. Were the ministers all sound asleep the day that went through Cabinet? I leave that with the Premier and I do hope he will address himself to some of the background of this Action Group, how it came into existence that we can pass some fair judgements on it.

One other word, Mr. Chairman, while I am on my feet about another subject. New members of the House yesterday afternoon were in for a special, special shock. They will have that shock again several times during the House and they will find in time that what they abhorred yesterday, what they abhorred yesterday I say to government members of the House, the procedure with which we whipped through \$225 million, do you realize what we did yesterday at six o'clock, realize that the fiscal management of the government was so bad that in the eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute, if you like, they had to rush it through to get the money to pay the cheques? Do you realize that, in effect, what happened, and I say to anybody who has a small business or a large business around this Province, what we did here yesterday at five-thirty was the equivalent of saying to your company president or whoever signs the cheques, flying him back from Spain to walk down to the bank to draw out a thousand dollars so you can pay your payroll for the week. That is what we did yesterday. If you ran

MR. R. SIMMONS: a business like that you would not be in business very long. But that is the way we ran the Province yesterday, that is exactly the way we ran the Province yesterday. And this honourable crowd, Mr. Chairman, wants a billion dollars to spend? I would not trust them with a cent! I would not trust them with a cent. If that is the way they handle the payroll for one month I would not want to see what they would do behind closed doors. Not that I do not trust them in the honour sense I do not trust them in the confidence sense. If they are that stunned about handling a payroll God help me, the taxpayer when they are handling all of the money that goes into the Public Treasury in the run of a year. It was an insult, I say to the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) what happened here yesterday, an absolute insult what happened yesterday. They knew some weeks ago they would need Interim Supply. You do not have to be very bright to look at the House schedule to see that we could not get the Budget debate over and the Estimates through the Committee by yesterday, we have known that for two or three weeks. And so a week or two weeks ago we could have had the bill that we were asked to ram through yesterday. But in his usual fashion the Government House Leader has once again insulted the whole procedure of this House and I say to members on the Government side what you abhorred yesterday you will be taught to condone and then embrace. What you found so abhorrent yesterday you will be condoning by the next session and by the session after you will be embracing as a way of getting through with the parliamentary session as fast as you can.

I say to hon. members on both sides there is more to it, Mr. Chairman, than just getting through the schedule. I would like to see amounts like \$225 million dealt with in some deliberate way rather than being told at 5:30 that the gun is to the head and you had better shove it through by 6:00 or the payroll will not be paid. Well, we got it through by 6:00 but it raises the larger question of who fumbled? Who fumbled? Did the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) fumble? Did the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) fumble? Who fumbled to bring us to 5:30 yesterday afternoon when we

MR. R. SIMMONS: could have been doing that kind of thing days and weeks ago? Of course, my real point is this, I say to members on both sides of the House, you are being toyed with. You are being toyed with! Toyed with by the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall)! Toyed with in the matter of many, many millions of dollars.

I will clue up on that point, Mr. Chairman, my time having run out but we will probably have another whack at it. I would hope that the Premier in time will speak his thoughts on the background of the Action Group. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN (BUTT): The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to delay the proceedings of the committee, Sir, but I believe it will be very worthwhile to spend a half an hour or so talking about the Special Action Group even though quite a bit has been said about it over the last year and a half to two years. I do not know if there is anything else that we can say about it other than, Mr. Chairman, to our amusement at the government, at the Premier, the born-again Premier now coming in and telling the House and the people of the Province that confession is good for the soul. We confess we were wrong. We made a colossal blunder and now we are going to try to buy our way out of the contract with Mr. Bob Cole. I mean this is all highly amusing, Mr. Chairman, very amusing indeed, if it did not cost the taxpayers of this Province so much money. I said the other day and this was just an opinion right off the top of my head, that I thought that the Cole contract would cost the people of this Province an arm and a leg. I thought it was valued at three quarters of a million dollars but I have since been reminded by people in the know that the pension benefits of that contract alone are worth a half a million dollars. The pension concessions, the pension benefits are worth somewhere between a quarter of a million and a half million.

MR. S. NEARY: So, Mr. Chairman, I have to revise my original estimates, that the contract is probably worth \$1.5 million to \$2 million. No one man is worth that, Mr. Chairman! And as my hon. colleague indicated, the present Premier or the members sitting on the Government benches at the present time who were members of that corrupt Moores administration can weasel their way out of it. They cannot do it, Sir! It may be interpreted that we are aiding and abetting the present Premier and the administration of putting the distance between themselves and Mr. Moores, well I would say so be it. We cannot help that, If there are people who are narrow-minded enough to interpret our intentions that way, so be it, we cannot help it. These people know full well, if they are intelligent people, if they are thinking people, that the present Premier and some of the people sitting on the Government benches were members of that Cabinet that made that decision. Maybe the message is not getting out to the ordinary people but that is our fault if we are not getting the message across. We had a whole election in order to do that and we let the hon. gentleman get away scott free by coming out and telling the people of this Province, We are born again, we have been living in sin for the last seven or eight years. but now we are saved. And we let the hon. gentleman get away with it

MR. NEARY:

while at the same time one of his chief henchmen, one of his hatchetmen, Mr. Crosbie, was going around the Province condemning the former Liberal Administration that went out of existence in 1972. 'Step into the future with Peckford,' we were told. Forget the past. Sweep it all under the rug. Forget about it, not worth bothering about. And his chief spokesman, bully boy Crosbie, up in Ottawa was going around condemning Mr. Smallwood and the former Liberal Administration and got away with it. How he ever got away with it, Sir, is beyond me. The hon. gentleman has to accept his share of responsibility for this dastardly act.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) yet?

MR. NEARY: I am talking about the special Action Committee. This dastardly act on behalf of the Moores Administration - the hon. gentleman was a senior minister in that administration when that decision was made and the hon. gentleman, although not a member of the administration, was supporting that administration in this House and the hon. gentleman has to take his share of the blame. There is no way, Mr. Chairman, they can weasel their way out of it. And if the message does not get out to the people that all these gentlemen that I am referring to were members of the administration that made that decision, Sir, then that is our fault or the fault of the people up over my head that I have been referring to for the last several days.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nobody there now. All gone!

MR. NEARY: Well they are listening, do not worry. They are listening inside. They have their little earplugs in.

MR. MORGAN: (Inaudible) a word you say, not a word of it can they hear.

MR. CHAIRMAN (BAIRD): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, one thing about me, Sir, here on the floor of this House, that I do not care if one word that I utter gets reported. I do not care! As long as I do my job in this House, that is all that counts. And every other member should keep that in the back of his mind, that there is no way, Mr. Chairman, there is no way that I am going to sit here - and I have been here now seventeen

MR. NEARY:

years and I have seen a lot of members come and go - there is no way, Sir, that I am going to let this hon. crowd sit over there and wash their hands. Now all of the sudden they have become saved and they are going to disown Mr. Moores and the former administration even though, Sir, they sat around that table down on the Eighth Floor of Confederation Building. They cannot do it, Sir. Under the British Parliamentary system if a minister does not like a decision that is made in Cabinet he has one of two things that he can do; he can keep quiet, he can sit in the House and let the announcement be made, let the decision be made or he can resign. I did not hear of the hon. the Premier resigning over the special Action Group and Mr. Cole's contract. I did not hear tell of the hon. gentleman resigning. So I can only assume that the hon. gentleman went along with it with his eyes wide open.

And, Mr. Chairman, as I say, it will be unfortunate indeed if the editorial writers and the newsmen in this Province let the hon. gentleman get away scot-free with saying, 'Ah, I am going to investigate this and I am going to cancel this and I am going to do away with that to try to leave the impression of honesty and integrity when the hon. gentleman himself has to share the blame and the responsibility for that decision. It was made when the hon. gentleman was a senior minister in the Moores Administration. And it is a terrible decision and it is going to cost the taxpayers of this Province a fantastic amount of money to get out of that contract.

The hon. gentleman told us the other day that he sent for Mr. Cole to come in. He wanted to talk to him. He said Mr. Cole was not in the Province. At the time Mr. Cole was up in Labrador with the former Premier of this Province, Mr. Moores and Mr. Dobbin, the helicopter magnate, all up salmon fishing and he was not in the Province, the hon. gentleman told us.

MR. WHITE: Still a part of the Province.

MR. NEARY: Pardon?

MR. WHITE: Still in the Province.

MR. NEARY: Still in the Province. Labrador is still in the Province as far as I know.

MR. MORGAN: He is allowed to go fishing.

MR. NEARY: Sure he is allowed to go fishing but the hon. the Premier told us, "I sent for Mr. Cole. He is out of the Province." Well I do not know if up in Ablatok or up fishing in the salmon rivers in Labrador is out of the Province or not. I did not hear of Rene Levesque taking over Labrador yet.

PREMIER PECKFORD: How did you know I was referring to Labrador?

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman said Mr. Cole was out of the Province.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Right.

MR. NEARY: Well, what I want to know now, Sir, is has the hon. gentleman had the opportunity to sit down yet with Mr. Cole to



MR. S. NEARY: see how much it is going to cost the taxpayers of this Province to get out of that contract?

The hon. gentleman should give us an updating. And if we stay on this one item for another week or so, if we have the time, until this matter is settled, I would say we have done a good turn here in Committee of the Whole. And I would like for the hon. gentleman to get up now and tell us where we stand as far as the Cole contract is concerned. And hon. members, I do not have to remind hon. members that I like Mr. Cole. He is a good hockey announcer. I think he is great, he has done wonders for Newfoundland broadcasting the hockey games. But one thing you have to remember, that he was only a part-time Chairman of this Special Action Group. For that he got paid \$0.5 million for ten years or he will be paid, plus a senior deputy's appointment after his contract expires, plus the use of helicopters, plus the use of aircraft, plus the use of motor vehicles, plus a very generous pension plan. Now, I think the Premier has sat there long enough and remained silent. I think it is time he got up now and apart from just making a confession, brought us up to date on what is happening to this Cole contract. Where do we go from here and how much is it going to cost us, the taxpayers, to get out of this contract?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. W. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, just a few words on the remarks that have been passed by the three previous speakers, just merely to draw to the attention of the Committee the nature and weight and the extreme weight of their remarks themselves. And before I do that, Mr. Chairman, I would hasten to indicate that I am not attempting to tell the Opposition how long they may speak, what the members of the Opposition may speak about and what the depth and the breath of what they say. But I

MR. W. MARSHALL: would like to draw to your attention that the hon. gentlemen have chosen to talk in the vien of talking about a vote that really is no more. They are talking about an action committee that is no more. They are talking about a measure that was in the past. They are talking about a group that the government has indicated is no more and the only purpose of this vote here is to make payment for those items for this year before the group was actually disbanded. The group has been disbanded and was disbanded when the Budget Speech was given. It was indicated in the Budget Speech itself. And I do not see any point in the hon. gentleman there opposite talking about, like the hon. member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. R. Simmons), talking about the born-again administration, the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. S. Neary) talking about a group, as I say, which is no more.

The fact of the matter is that this is a new administration. It is an administration that is prepared to make changes, it has made changes and one of the changes, Mr. Chairman, has been in this Action Group itself. Now, we are here before this committee, I suggest, for the purpose of examining expenditures which the government proposes to make and not for the purpose of talking about expenditures that the government has already indicated it is not going to make.

MR. D. JAMIESON: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Baird) The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. D. JAMIESON: With the greatest of respect to the hon. House Leader (Mr. W. Marshall), he is putting an extremely narrow interpretation, first of all, on what the Opposition's rights are and secondly, what the purpose of Committee of the Whole is. And the second thing he is doing is, of course, confirming what the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. S. Neary) has said and that is that it is perfectly obvious that they want to put as much distance as possible between the decisions that they have now made and propose

MR. D. JAMIESON: to make for the future and those that were made in the past. Now, it is not necessary for me, I was not a member of the House at that time, consequently my colleagues are far better able than I to assess what that particular organization or particular group to which we are now referring, whether it was effective or not. It appears from the government's decision to disband it, that it was not effective and that everything

MR. JAMIESON: that has been said by hon. members on this side, is in fact true, But apart from that, this idea that in some way or other we ought to turn the key on something that is outstanding, whether the hon. member is talking about expenditures for things that went on before the Budget or whatever the case might be, there is a continuity here, and with the greatest of respect and whether my hon. friend from Lapoile (Mr. S. Neary) is correct in the precise figures that he has quoted or not, I am not sure, but I can say that it surely was a very rich kind of arrangement that was made. And to this day, to this minute so far as we are aware, there is no indication (a) that it has been formally terminated, or (b) that it has been formally terminated in a manner that is not going to be enormously expensive and costly. If the hon. the Premier can say that legal means have been found through which the Action Group is ended, the contract no longer stands, that there has been no necessity or no reason to, in a sense, buy out the contract, that it has terminated as the hon. the House Leader has said with the Budget, with the Throne Speech or whatever it was, if that is the case, then that is one matter. We have invited the Premier to answer whether or not (a) he has had his meeting with the former Director; secondly, what kind of a conclusion did that meeting come to. Surely, Mr. Chairman, it is not either unreasonable or improper nor are we attributing motives when we say that here is a situation in which a government entered into a ten-year contract. I assume. I can only assume in the absence of any assurances to the contrary, that it was something which had the approval of the Executive Council or of whatever name one wishes to apply to it, the Cabinet or whatever the group is. I can only assume that that is the case. Therefore, once again it is surely reasonable and fair and just to point out that there are hon. members opposite who participated in that. Now, for my part, I repeat that its effectiveness or otherwise is not the issue. The disposal of the group in terms of their absorption in the service or being let go is not the issue. The issue is not even, insofar as I am concerned, the propriety and the rightness of the government changing its mind. It has every right

MR. JAMIESON: to do that. Consequently, on all of those scores, I am not in the slightest bit concerned with prolonging this particular debate. There is, however, an outstanding issue. There was a quite remarkable contract signed. Everybody is aware of that. The details have been published. What we want to know is very straightforward and very simple and that is whether or not that contract itself has now, in fact, been terminated and what, indeed, are the terms of settlement, if any? Now, if we can get an answer to that particular question then all of the rest of it, it seems to me, becomes irrelevant, but the basic issue is that one and I think the hon. Premier, I have no doubt, will try and I am sure will do his best to limit, if you like, the amount of exposure, perhaps end it totally, but it is not, I suggest, Mr. Chairman, appropriate - it may be appropriate for the hon. the House Leader to say what he wishes - but I have had on these last three or four days this feeling all of the time that in some way or other there is something dastardly about the business of asking questions, that yesterday and without repeating at great length what was said by the hon. member for Burgeo Bay d'Espoir (Mr. R. Simmons)

MR. JAMIESON:

what was not said in the debate - Why? - because we are stopping the clock in order to do it, was that, in fact, there was no awareness on our part ahead of time that the government was in the particular bind that it was. I, again appreciate that the Premier was not himself, as he indicated to the House, aware of these circumstances. I have said that I appreciate the fact that he has indicated that that kind of thing will not happen again, but let us not have a situation in which every time an Opposition, which after all is elected for that purpose - and as I said in my opening comments in this House some weeks ago, that every time we ask reasonable questions that in some way or other we are (a) delaying the work of the House or that (b) there is something inappropriate about what we are saying.

Now, hon. members opposite and the hon. House Leader (Mr. Marshall), most of all, has put together a set of rules on which we worked, on which we co-operated and which we, as I said at that time, would abide by. Now, we have certain hours which are attributed to this Opposition and if we choose under the proper heading and in the appropriate way to spend all of that time on a particular item, then we are entirely free to do so. And I regret deeply that it may interfere sometimes with the nice tidy mind of the hon. the House Leader on the government side (Mr. Marshall), but the truth of the matter is that we have not breached nor do we intend to breach any of the rules or the regulations and that this is quite an appropriate comment for us to make.

MR. MARSHALL: Would the hon. member permit me a question?

MR. JAMIESON: Of course.

MR. CHAIRMAN (BAIRD): The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: It surely is competent for a member of this House, even the House Leader, to pass upon the quality of the Opposition in the same way as the general public would and has in the past.

MR. JAMIESON: Oh, there is no question about that. And if the hon. gentleman wants to put in that kind of snide remark let him be aware that it is perfectly possible for all of us on this side to do exactly

MR. JAMIESON:

the same kind of thing. Nothing wrong with commenting on the quality. In fact, I was commenting on the quality of the hon. gentleman's intervention as being not very good basic awareness of parliamentary procedure when he talked about it because he went beyond the quality, he went far beyond that, he went to the point of questioning the appropriateness of our kind of intervention. That is the point, not the quality. That was not the issue, and my hon. friend, if he reads the Hansard, will realize that I did not address myself to any of those points. I did not! I said that the issue was whether or not we were appropriate in discussing this under this particular Heading. That is all I said and that is the question I ask now. And I emphasize once again that I am merely saying to the hon. members opposite that this is surely a perfectly legitimate question for us to ask.

If the hon. Premier wants to say that he has not resolved this issue as yet, obviously, there is nothing more we can do about it nor would we wish to. But all I am asking is whether or not this matter has been resolved and the manner in which it has been resolved. And that is all my hon. friends are asking.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN (BAIRD): The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: There is only one problem with what the hon. the Leader of the Opposition just said and it is this, that - and I am sorry that he sees fit to condone the actions of a number of his members. It just so happens that the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons) and the hon. the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) with whose comments the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to be associated, is condoning comments that were made by the member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir. Of his ten minutes, the hon. member spent about one minute talking about the contract of the Chairman of the Action Group. The rest of the time he stood in his place and talked and used words like deceit and lack of character. And his implication was clear, that there were many people on this side of the House who were part of a former administration

PREMIER PECKFORD:

in which there were things done that were not right. That is what the hon. the member for Burgeo -Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons) was talking about and he was not addressing himself to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Jamieson) would have us believe that he was addressing himself to, and that was the question of the contract that Mr. Cole has. And if that is the only question that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has or any members on the opposite side, well fine, that is fine. But the problem was that the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) got up in what I would call 'Neary's Lament' and talked about and apologized for the fact that the Liberal Party lost the election just recently and the reasons for it which had very little to do with Mr. Cole's contract or very little to do with the Special Action Group.

Now, I think that is the point that the President of the Council was talking about, it was the quality of debate as it related to the relevance to the special section here now in the Executive Council. That is the point, that the two hon. members who came before the Leader of the Opposition talked very little about the whole principle. Mr. Chairman, if we are going to talk about the Special Action Group we should be talking about, what are the ways and means in which government can expedite applications from entrepreneurs around this Province. Is the present system, is this act by the government of eliminating the Special Action Group going to in any way inhibit or mitigate against small businessmen in this Province? Is it



PREMIER PECKFORD: enough for the government, is it enough for the government of this Province right now, this new administration that has only been elected three or four weeks, is it enough for them to say they are going to eliminate something that was part of another administration? Is it not proper for that new government to indicate new initiatives that it intends to take? Will the Department of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development be able to accommodate and expeditiously handle all the requests that are going to come in now that the Action Group has been disbanded? Will the Department of Industrial Development be able to, with the existing programs it has, with the existing staff that it has, now be able to handle it? Are we going to see some opening up of the Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation to put in place of this special Action Group which had, over the last number of years, somewhere in the order of 12, 544 phone calls? If I was on the Opposition side of the House, Mr. Chairman, I would be asking some very serious questions about the role that the government, this new administration, intends to take to ensure that those thousands of phone calls and those millions of dollars which were expedited by an Action Group are now going to be able to be accommodated in the existing departments of government, or will we just see more creeping bureaucracy and more red tape in government? That is the approach that I think, Mr. Chairman, that the President of the Council would like to see the Opposition take. That is the kind of an approach that I would like to see the Opposition take, to debate on the principle of whether government is doing enough and if we have to do it ourselves, if we have to criticize ourselves, Mr. Chairman, that is what we will do. And I want to question now today and I want to say to the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development, I want to say to the minister he better be very careful over the next while, because he is going to have additional phone calls, and I do not want to get calls from the constituents of

PREMIER PECKFORD: Green Bay. I do not want to get calls from the constituents of Green Bay saying that their application was held up unnecessarily and that they should have kept the Action Group. I want to address a question and an observation to the Minister of Industrial Development (Mr. L. Barry) and indicate to him that I hope that he has arranged his department so as to accommodate all of these additional calls that will be coming in and that no entrepreneur will be unnecessarily hung up so that we can get on with the mandate of creating jobs in this Province and making sure that rural Newfoundlanders, even though they are not as well educated as some people in urban areas, still will get a chance to get their sawmill going and get their timberjack and get their new fish processing plant in place. And I want to make sure that these ministers do that, and I apologize, Mr. Chairman, I apologize that this institution called the House of Assembly in this Province, has not to this date since we started today, seen fit to have members on the opposite side to fully and constructively criticize government for a major departure in policy as it relates to industrial development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Butt) Order, order!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. JAMIESON: Mr. Chairman, I have seen some diversionary tactics in my time but I will tell you that that has to be the most diversionary of all and if the hon. member wants to let the house leaders, between now and whenever the appropriate moment is, let them get together and I will be delighted to take department by department, assign as much time as is necessary to this particular Head, and to discuss for as many hours as the hon. Premier wishes the whole information strategy and policy of the government. I make him that offer now, I make it to the House Leader. We will assign as much

MR. JAMIESON: time to it as is necessary. We will, instead of the rhetorical questions that the leader of the government has been putting here this afternoon, we will get to ask those kinds of questions that he is speaking of. My own impression was that we would, of course, be doing that as my colleagues have been doing it in the Committees of the House in the last two days, and we will be continuing to do that under the various Heads as they are presented to us. But, Mr. Chairman, in the last analysis as I sit, may I just ask this question, "In all of that magnificent piece of rhetoric, what about the contract?"

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Baird) The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: The Leader of the Opposition is apologizing for his members and the fact that they did not obviously ask the right questions and debate the right issues because he wants more time. Now, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition is going to have to work within the rules that we have established and to ensure that his members on his side of the House constructively criticize government, and for that I offer no apologies. The time is there. If the hon. member for Burgeo Bay d'Espoir (Mr. R. Simmons) did not see fit to do justice to this Subhead, if the hon. member for Lapoile (Mr. S. Neary) did not do justice to this Subhead, I am very sorry but that is one of the things that the members on the opposite side are going to have to learn that when these things come, they are going to have

PREMIER PECKFORD: to criticize them in a constructive manner. As for the contract, it is under negotiation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Baird) The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the -

MR. D. JAMIESON: Will the hon. member -

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. D. JAMIESON: I did not hear the last part.- It is under negotiation?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes, I am in the process of meeting with the leader of the Action Group.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, we heard the hon. the Premier there a few moments ago, Sir, give his rebuttle to the criticism that was leveled from this side of the House, especially by my colleague, the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. R. Simons), and myself. The hon. gentleman created a house of cards that can be so easily knocked down, Mr. Chairman, because what the hon. gentleman said about all the phone calls and all the industry and all the business has no more to do with this Action Group than the hon. gentleman going to the moon, has nothing to do with it. It was just a figment of somebody's imagination, Mr. Moores I would think, Frank D. Moores, who was making a sweetheart deal with one of his buddies using the taxpayers' money, \$2 or \$3 or \$4 million of taxpayers' money, down the drain, you may as well have taken it and thrown it out the window of Confederation Building. That is what we are talking about, Mr. Chairman. It has nothing to do with whether the hon. gentleman is going to get calls from his constituents saying the application is delayed or criticizing him for this. It has nothing to do with it, Sir, nothing at all. The government would have been better off if they had taken the \$2 or \$3 or \$4 million and given it to Dial-A-Prayer. They would have gotten the same results.

MR. MORGAN: They keep saying the same things over and over and over again. You said the same thing yesterday as you said today.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, we are going to keep saying the same things. The only way that you can remedy and rectify mismanagement, abuse of power, corruption, sweetheart deals is keep saying it over and over and over and over again and I will say it over and over and over again if I have to to save the taxpayers of this Province a dollar. Because, Mr. Chairman, one of our prime purposes for being in this House is to protect the Public Treasury. One of the main reasons for us being here as members is to look after revenue and expenditure of taxpayers' money and when we look around us and we see the taxpayers of Newfoundland spending \$2 million and \$3 million and \$4 million on their buddies, then, Mr. Chairman, we have every right to criticize. That money could have been better spent in my opinion, building houses for poor people in this Province. Mr. Cole did not need the money, he was doing quite well at the CBC plus what he was making in broadcasting hockey games. He was doing quite well for himself, was quite successful until Mr. Moores grabbed him and I am sure now that Mr. Cole is sorry for his bargain with all the unfavourable publicity that he has gotten. And that is rather unfortunate! Mr. Moores had a tendency of using people. He used the hon. Premier who is sitting there right now and he used the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests (Mr. Morgan) and he used the former Minister of Public Works - he used two former Ministers of Public Works. And we all know what happened to them, they are no longer with us. We all know about the Commission of Inquiry, the Mahoney Commission. We all know about fires!

And so, Mr. Chairman, if the hon. gentleman wants to debate this matter then he is going to have to put up with a little bit of criticism because as I have said before, the hon. gentleman was a senior minister in that government and the hon. gentleman is as

MR. S. NEARY: responsible as much as Frank Moores of diverting that money, \$3 million or \$4 million from the Public Treasury to Mr. Bob Cole and the Action Group. And as I say, that money could have been better spent, buying wheel chairs for cripple people, for cripple children in this Province. The money could have been better spent buying crutches for little children. The government has no programme of providing crutches for cripple children but they have programmes for their buddies, for Mr. Bob Cole and we are not allowed to talk about that. The government would have been better off allocating that money for prescription drugs for senior citizens who cannot afford to buy prescription drugs that they need to look after their health.

MR. STAGG: What a red herring!

MR. S. NEARY: The hon. gentleman talks about red herrings - he should talk to his hon. colleague, the Premier, who just dragged in not a red herring but a red whale into the debate when he talked about all of the phone calls, and all the load that is going to be on Rural Development. As a matter of fact, the hon. gentleman should have read yesterday morning's newspaper and see that the

MR. NEARY:

Rural Development allocation has been reduced by \$500,000. They are in the process now of phasing out that programme that we have been telling them is nothing but a slush fund for the last six or seven years. That is all it has been, a slush fund for the government.

Mr. Chairman, I am glad, I am happy that the policy is changing, that there is going to be no more expensive sweetheart deals with your buddies. I will be very happy to see the hon. gentleman do away with the helicopter contract that is costing the people of this Province \$4 million or \$5 million. And as I said to the hon. gentleman the other day, the hon. gentleman can deal with all the minor details that he wants, Mr. Cole and Mr. Nutbeam and the rental of office space down at Atlantic Place but he also has to deal with Mr. Dobbins and the helicopter contract and he has to deal with the scandals in connection with Labrador Linerboard. The hon. gentleman just cannot pick and choose the minor stuff and let all the major stuff go by. Then I would say the hon. gentleman is sincere in trying to show that he is trying to bring integrity into his administration and honesty and trying to be truthful with the people of this Province.

We worked over two years trying to persuade this crowd to get rid of the special Action Group, over two years. And now all of the sudden they come into the House of Assembly and they say, "Well now we are going to do it". And we say, "That is well and good. That is fine." But how much is it going to cost? So far we do not have a figure on it. The hon. gentleman just told us a few moments ago they are in the process now of negotiating with Mr. Cole. Well, I say it is going to cost an arm and a leg and the hon. gentleman who occupies that seat has to accept the blame for that. He cannot weasel his way out of it. He did not resign from the Cabinet. He stayed in the Cabinet and he has to take his share of the blame. So even though the hon. gentleman may think in his mind that he is doing a wonderful thing, no doubt he is. I do not know how much it will save the taxpayers if it will save them a cent, I do not know. But the hon. gentleman at the same time

MR. NEARY:

should be prepared to get up and say to the taxpayers of this Province, who pay the highest taxes in Canada, that I am sorry, I was a part of that administration, I made a gigantic blunder, I am sorry, I will try to do the best I can now to remedy it and rectify it. And it has nothing to do, Mr. Chairman, with new direction, new policy.

We heard all about the government's policy and their direction in the Throne Speech that did not have an original idea in it. Why, Mr. Chairman, this crowd that are now getting up



MR. NEARY: and telling us they are born again, that they have been saved, did not create one industry in this Province. They did not open one mine; they did not build one fish plant; they did not build one hospital.

MR. MORGAN: Do not be so silly, do not be so silly.

MR. NEARY: Well, why does not the hon. gentleman participate?

MR. MORGAN: No fish plants built in the last seven years?

MR. NEARY: No, Sir, no fish plants. The one down in Arnold's Cove is the only one that is in the process of being built by private enterprise. The former administration had a hand, I am talking about the Liberal administration, had a hand in building every fish plant that was built in Newfoundland, every one, bar none; every one, bar none. There would be no fishing industry in this Province today only for the Smallwood administration.

MR. MORGAN: The 'burn your boat' policy.

MR. NEARY: Ah, Mr. Chairman, listen to 'chawmouth'.

MR. MORGAN: 'Burn your boat' policy.

MR. NEARY: So, Mr. Chairman, the hon. gentleman just gave us a very vague answer in response, reacting to the Leader of the Opposition, brushed it off by saying, "We are in the process now of negotiating". Mr. Chairman, I often wonder who governs this Province. The hon. gentleman is Premier. This particular gentleman is under contract. He can be directed, ordered, grabbed by the scruff of the neck, hauled into the Premier's office and say, "Look, I am the Premier of this Province. We are the government. We are elected into the Legislature of this Province and, by God, you had better smarten up, you better smarten up". We have to take the guff. I suppose in one way, we are looked upon as a joke by the people of this Province because of one man. We have had to take it from the university for the last several years. They refuse to give us their budget in this House and now we have one individual. The government is spending all its time

MR. NEARY: trying to track down Mr. Cole to get him to come in to have a meeting. Why, if it was me, if I became Premier of this Province, not only would I cancel the Action Group but I would make sure that Mr. Cole found an office down in Mary's Harbour in southern Labrador somewhere. That is where he would be sent, and he would not be long backing out of his contract. That is the sort of treatment. We should not have to crawl or kowtow or bow to anybody, and the hon. the Premier should not have to do it. The hon. Premier should lay the law down and if he does not get in here, he should have been in here the next day, and if he does not come in then transfer him up to - and I was going to say Makkovik but that is a beautiful spot up there in my hon. friend's -

MR. SIMMONS: Lapoile.

MR. NEARY: No, put him down in - give him an office down in Grand Bruit and send him down there for a while and I guarantee you it will not be long before he will be in asking to get out of his contract.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Baird) The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Chairman, I will not talk as long as the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. S. Neary) spoke, but -

MR. SIMMONS: The whole ten minutes?

MR. WARREN: - I hope not. I hope to ask the Premier a couple of questions relating to the Action Group.

In Committee this morning on resources it came from one of the staff of Rural Development that approximately 10 per cent, approximately 10 per cent, of the phone calls from the Action Group contributed to loans approved or disapproved. Now, the Premier is saying the Action Group had something like 12,554 phone calls. Now, it is only 10 per cent of these phone calls that are attributed to loans approved and disapproved, 125 phone calls. Mr. Chairman, that is a lot of phone calls for an Action Group that is costing the taxpayers a heck of a lot more money. Mr. Chairman -

AN HON. MEMBER: Twelve hundred phone calls.

MR. WARREN: Twelve hundred phone calls, I am sorry, twelve hundred phone calls out of 12,500.

MR. SIMMONS: No, he said 1,200, 'Gerry', he corrected himself after, 'Gerry'.

MR. WARREN: Twelve hundred, to be corrected.

Okay, I also wish to relay a further question to the hon. Premier. Of those four special project officers, will they be going back to their original positions within the public service and, if so, what will happen to presumably the four - at least I know that there are three - who are already occupying these positions? Where will these go? Mr. Chairman, I believe the idea for the administration to get rid of the Action Group is a good idea and the quicker we can get rid of it the better, because I believe and I know because I have worked with the Department of Rural Development in Goose Bay, and I have received many phone calls from the Action Group during that stay, and the phone calls were just saying, "Look, how about so and so in Mary's Harbour?" And already we have a request from this guy in Mary's Harbour, and the same thing over and over again. I would say the maximum there were probably two or three calls that had not already come through the Department of Rural Development. It actually was a defeat of the Rural Development - of their plans. It was delaying their process, because all it was doing was getting John Jones, or whoever the case may be, going through another committee in order to get his loan approved or disapproved.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to stop now because I think one of my hon. friends wish to make further comments, but as I said earlier we need to get rid of the Action Group and get rid of it as fast as we can,

MR. WARREN:

but I am just worried about all this money that is going to be paid for this contract that was signed - the people of Newfoundland, the money that belongs to the Province.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I wish to simply answer a number of questions put by the hon. member -

MR. CHAIRMAN (BAIRD): The hon. Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: - because he asked a number of questions for which I feel obligated to give answers because they were specific and they were worthwhile. From January 27, 1978 to June 30, 1979 there were 12,544 telephone calls and the group in turn made 13,114 telephone calls to lending institutions and other agencies. That is the figure that I was quoting earlier.

The project officers that came from the departments, they were seconded from the departments and they returned there. The other people who were not seconded and did not work with the department previous to the Action Group, therefore, will be laid off. I think that answers the question. The third point was simply that, you know, I agree with the hon. member, that is why we are getting rid of the Action Group, that we do not think it is necessary any more. And the whole question of the contract is under review and we are going to do all we can to get the best deal we can for the Province.

On motion 307-01 carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN (BAIRD): Shall 307-02-01 carry?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. JAMIESON: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, but I seem to have been - are we on 308?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, 307-02-01.

MR. JAMIESON: Oh, I am sorry. You are still in the subheads. Please, yes, go ahead. Yes, all carry.

On motion Heads 307-02-01 through 307-03 carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shall 308-03 carry?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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MR. JAMIESON: Mr. Chairman, I keep saying, it is not that my eyes are getting worse, it is my arms are getting shorter. I am going to have to suggest that they increase the size of the print. I want to take the suggestion of the hon. the Premier of a few moments ago on this question of the Economic Council of Newfoundland and Labrador to say a few words in support of the concept, and to, at the same time, make some observations with regard to the effectiveness or lack of it of this kind of organization. I think our experience, all of us in this House who have been in public life for any length of time, is that the batting average, if I can use that term, of these kinds of organizations is not even by any manner or means. The general idea sounds like a very good one and there have been, in other jurisdictions and here in Newfoundland, a number of groups put together which are basically designed in one form or another to provide the government and, presumably on occasion, the Legislature and the public of Newfoundland with good advice, good recommendations, things of that kind.

The two pitfalls, it seems to me, that it will be necessary to avoid if this group is going to be successful, are first of all, to ask and answer the question, how will this group function in a manner that will be complementary to the government's own planning processes and to various departmental groups whether they be in fisheries or in industrial development or the forestry sector? How will they complement what is being done? And the second question is, to what extent - and I realize that no government can possibly bind itself in advance to take the advice of an Advisory Board - but how will this board's recommendations be dealt with? There is the real danger in this kind of structure that a whole series of recommendations will be brought forward. The reports presumably - and I will ask this question parenthetically if I may - will their reports be made public?

There are a whole series of recommendations that come forward on occasions and with groups such as this, the public becomes aware of them and instantly, unless they are totally in conformity with what the government intends to do

MR. JAMIESON:

and with the government's capabilities, economic and otherwise, expectations are aroused or conflicts are started which can be immensely destructive.

I also would like to ask the hon. the Premier, what the structure of this organization is going to be in relation to its predecessors? I do not want to go thirty years back into history but I suspect that if you looked at the record we have had a range of these kinds of bodies, one talking about the economic prospects of Newfoundland, another on the forestry sector. The previous Liberal Administration had a range of groups. In those days, I believe, they used to call them mostly - I am not even sure what they were called actually - but I suppose Royal Commissions would be the right way of going about it. But in any event, the real problem is that the public, I think, has by and large lost faith in the capability of organizations such as this, that for everyone of these quasi or extra parliamentary organizations that have been set up that has brought effective results, there have been ten or a dozen that have wound up gathering dust on the shelf or in one way or another have simply been incapable of being acted upon.

These are just some of the questions. I would like to ask one or two more. Is the group, for instance, going to work exclusively on assignment or will it have initiative powers of its own? I make this point because, of course, as history shows, recent history both here and elsewhere, you can have a group like this which can - and I am not again suggesting this is the intention - become a convenient pigeonhole for a difficult problem. I might get up in the House some day and say, "What is the hon. the Premier going to do about the forestry situation or something?". "We are referring it to the Council on Economic Development", and, therefore, the whole thing from that point on, for God knows how long, becomes the stock answer.

MR. JAMIESON:

The other problem, however, is equally serious and I suggest it from the government's point of view and that is a very dangerous, in my opinion, likelihood, provided the structure is not correct, in which this group can become so independent that, in fact, it becomes, in a way, an extra parliamentary government. And this diffuses, first of all the responsibility. From an Opposition point of view it is particularly harmful in the sense that it is not answerable to this House in the manner in which a government is answerable. Therefore, this issue of whether or not - and it is a very thin line - this group should have the independence to initiate authorities, inquiries or activities of its own is one that I wonder if the government has addressed itself to or whether it is still something that is open for discussion and debate? I say it is a thin line because, as I am sure the hon. the Premier (Mr. Peckford) recognizes, there is always the danger that it will become merely a tool of the government, on the one hand, without the ability to express independent opinion in which case it becomes a laughing stock after a time or, on the other hand, we have a situation in which a Throne Speech is introduced or a Budget or some particular kind of industrial initiative and we suddenly find that this council is declaring itself as being in total opposition to the manner in which the government is proceeding with regard to, let us say, hydro development or some other very important and very basic thing.

A final question, because I suspect my time must nearly be up now - I hope the hon. the Premier does not think I am patronizing in putting these questions in this form. The other thing is the makeup of the group. I have had a good deal of experience, if I may say so, with this kind of organization. And the natural first instinct when something like this is being established, is to make it a special interest kind of group. You say, it has got to have management on it, it has got to have labour on it, it has got to have this group on it, the other group on it. The problem then arises - incidentally,

MR. JAMIESON:

that premise is a perfectly defensible one but they ought not to be on it in a special interest or a vested interest role, because the danger with that is that if a man is, let us say for want of a better example, a representative of the Newfoundland Fish Trades Association, just to pluck that one out of the air as perhaps one of the more dangerous examples, he simply goes with a brief from his particular constituency and has no capability of passing independent judgement on whatever happens to be before the Committee. And the end result is that you suddenly find a voluminous report coming out at some point with about four pages at the front which reflect the unanimity of the group and the remaining thirty or forty pages declaring the special reservations of this or that minority interest.

So I would be interested in hearing whether or not the Premier has thought through, and his colleagues, any or all of these questions. I may say, by the way, I do not expect him to answer in detail today, I am just stating the support for this. And in conclusion let me say that unless it goes in some of the directions that I have been suggesting, it will be no more successful than its predecessors, and all we will have will be a situation in which honest, decent Newfoundlanders from the private sector spend a lot of time, put in a lot of effort and consider themselves to be doing a job of significance and importance only to have themselves disillusioned at the end



MR. JAMIESON: because what they have produced either cannot be done in the context of what the government is aware and what the government, in a sense, has by way of capabilities, or because it basically is in disagreement with government policy. A brief and final comment in this regard and that is I would also like to know what powers this organization is going to have with regard to access to information? Once again, it is my judgement of the utmost importance that if this group is going to be effective that it, at the very least, have as wide access as the law or whatever the strictures on government may be in that regard, because if it has not that I can again refer hon. members opposite to, I would venture to bet, reams of reports which down in the libraries downstairs simply say, "Of course, we were not able to answer this question because the information was not available". So, therefore, I have put before the House, I hope, in keeping with what the admonitions were of the hon. Premier earlier, that the Opposition should be constructive, I hope I have not only asked some questions but that I have given some advice that may be worth taking to heart.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Butt) The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Chairman, may I thank the Leader of the Opposition, I think the Leader of the Opposition has given perhaps the best speech so far in this session of the House, not only by himself but perhaps by any hon. member here. I think the comments by the Leader of the Opposition on this Subhead were excellent and his analysis of such economic advisory groups was equally good and I intend to get a copy of what he has said so that I can look at it in more detail.

In introducing the whole series of Subheads here early on a couple of days ago when I started, I generally gave just the parameters within which I was talking. There is nothing hard and fast in here and I would - and one reason why I will get the Leader of the Opposition's speech on this is to just look over it again because I think he made a lot of real good points, is because we are fairly open on how we are going to proceed. I was not, Mr. Chairman,

PREMIER PECKFORD: overwhelmed by the direction of the previous advisory council that was established. I think its terms of reference were too narrow, it started getting into sort of land policy and things which were more specific. What I want to try to do, and I will try to address myself to some of the points that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, was to have a group made up of different sectors of society, the labour movement and so on, who hopefully will not be, inasmuch as we can do it, reflecting just the special interest group from which they came but will be there to try to bring input just from their point of view. As each Budget is brought down, as each Speech from the Throne is read, as each policy is enunciated by government by a minister, then that this Economic Advisory Council will be independent to be able to comment upon various initiatives being taken by government, the state of the economy and to make recommendations on changes that should be made, recommendations on new initiatives that should be made, and that they should publish a report every year, at least once a year, an annual report if not more often, I am open on that, I do not know if they can do it more often, whether it would be really good in quality if they do it more often than that, but along those -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) public.

PREMIER PECKFORD: - exactly, and to make it public to which government then can respond and the various political parties can respond and so on,

PREMIER PECKFORD: so that it really gets the kind of airing what is happening now and I know the Leader of the Opposition understands this and the Opposition House Leader understands it well being a member of a government some time in the past. You have the Federation of Labour which presents a brief, you have the Canadian Legion which presents a brief, you have the Board of Trade which presents a brief and all in their own way are good and sound from their point of view and they cover a multitude of things. For example, the Board of Trade will not only get involved in economic policy in what should be done here, there or somewhere else or make recommendations on legislation but they also get involved in social policy. And the Canadian Legion not only gets involved in social policy but also gets involved in economic policy. You get briefs coming from all over the place which are all good, do not get me wrong but then the ministers and the ministry and the government has to respond to 150 recommendations from this association and 250 from that and there is a lot of time spent in the bureaucracy responding to some of these recommendations, some of which are great, others of which you can almost discard out of hand but you really cannot, you have to give a response to it. There must be a better way to have a group who are independent, who can have access to all of the information that is normally sought, except, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows, in very exceptional cases where you cannot do it, to be able to sit down and comment upon and to initiate. I do not think it should be necessarily one of assignment, I think it should be to initiate and to comment upon the policies of the government and the state of the economy and changes that should be made. That kind of an approach!

But I am very flexible on it. I wanted to change what had been there before because I thought it was restrictive and the composition was restricted also. I want a large section of society represented on it so its powers, it would have lots of powers, to have access to information. The make-up is very important and I think it must reflect labour, small business, big business, ordinary

PREMIER PECKFORD: citizens, get a good group of around ten on it who have an executive director who can have access to information from government and can use reports that government is getting done and then compile their report based in that way.

So I am in agreement with the Leader of the Opposition on most of the points he made. I also recognize and appreciate the cautionary notes that the Leader of the Opposition put in because I think they are excellent and I know, his experience being greater than mine on this topic, that what he says holds a lot of weight and should be very carefully considered. I would very much appreciate hearing from the Opposition as we go along in the next number of days and weeks on this and on other subheads or in the normal Budget debate or Address In Reply, because nothing is hard and fast here. I think we need that kind of commentary upon society generally and upon our economy and we will be ready and willing to listen to suggestions made by members on the opposite side.

Just to clarify again, Mr. Chairman, I would not see it as some of the things in the past, special inquiries or, for example, the Royal Commission on Economic Prospects or the other things that the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred to. This would be a permanent group of people who would report at least annually and would have access to all of the information and would be structured by representing many aspects of the community outside of government and would produce an annual report which would be public. These are the main sort of parameters in which I am working now but I am quite willing to hear suggestions on it and look forward to more debate on this whole idea in the debates which will follow in the next number of days. And I thank the Leader of the Opposition very much for his suggestions or the address that he gave because I think it was excellent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (BUTT) The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. D. JAMIESON: There was just one other question, if the hon. the Premier would permit, and I neglected to include it in my original remarks. The Economic Council of Canada was asked by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador some time ago to undertake a very comprehensive assessment and I meant to ask where these two organizations interface, if at all, because I gather this task is going to take another couple of years or more. Presumably this organization will be in being and I meant to ask what the relationship was between them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Chairman, I do not know what - hopefully the new council when it is established will be able to get information from the Economic Council of Canada, data and statistics and so on. But the Economic Council of Canada is more wide-sweeping in its powers and has, I guess,

PREMIER PECKFORD:

a fair amount of money to do its research and so on. But I see our own group is being smaller in its scope in the sense that it would report directly and -

MR. JAMIESON: (Inaudible) study.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No.

MR. JAMIESON: That is the danger.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Exactly. Well the special study that is underway was done specifically to get a whole lot of information.

There is no other way to get it at the present moment, no other agency around. This group would be more provincial in nature and more commenting upon the economy each year and the initiatives or the lack thereof of them by government. If we had the experience of that kind of council in existence for a number of years perhaps it would have gained enough competence or whatever to this study. I doubt it myself and do not see the role of this council that we are now suggesting to be of the magnitude to undertake in this kind of study now that is started.

MR. CHAIRMAN (BAIRD): The hon. member for the Straits of Belle Isle.

MR. ROBERTS: My friend from Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons) I know wishes to speak. I will yield if he wishes.

MR. SIMMONS: No, that is okay.

MR. ROBERTS: Okay, well I will just take a few minutes and then - I think we hope to clear this up by six if the Committee so agrees, Mr. Chairman. I have listened with a great deal of interest to what my friend, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Jamieson) said and what the Premier (Mr. Peckford) has said and I think that each of them has contributed greatly to refining what could be and what might be a most valuable organization. I certainly have no difficulty in agreeing with the government's request for, I think, it is \$10,000 which is more or less a token amount, in effect, an approval in principle of the idea, that is really what we are being asked by the government to vote at this stage and there is no difficulty at all with that.

MR. ROBERTS:

I think that what my friend, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Jamieson) said, had, as the Premier acknowledged very generously, quite an amount of information and quite a lot of experience. Any of us who have been involved in government over the years - I have been involved in one way or another in the process of governing this Province, not always in the government, not always with the government but in the process of governing - are very much aware that this issue, the issue that, this council issue, is really the central issue. Heavens knows it and the world has witnessed it. Mr. Smallwood and I have had our differences of opinion. We have entertained the entire Province on occasion with our political differences. We have helped to keep, not the present administration but their predecessors in power because of some of our differences. But I think Mr. Smallwood, let it be recorded, was very much right when he said repeatedly as he said so repeatedly as only he could say repeatedly, that jobs, jobs and more jobs are really the issue in public life in this Province. I think we saw this throughout the Minister of Finance's (Dr. Collins) Budget Speech.

You know when we take all the excuses and all the delays away, what he is really saying is something with which everybody can agree. We may not agree on the proper path to be taken, the solution to the problem, I think we could all agree on the statement of the problem, that unless we can create jobs in this Province and unless we can develop the Province's resources, human and physical, obviously we will go nowhere, in fact we will get worse and worse and worse.

One of the points the Premier might want to ponder - and I think the Premier does ponder these points - he might have a look at the Royal Commission on Economic Prospects, Gordon Pushie's Report. It was roundly damned by Mr. Smallwood at the time that it became public because, I suspect, it said certain things that Mr. Smallwood would just as soon had not become public or would just as soon were not said. For example, the predictions on what would

MR. ROBERTS:

happen to the public debt of the Province and so forth were if anything under estimated.

PREMIER PECKFORD: What year was that? Do you remember?

MR. ROBERTS: 1968 or 1969. About 1968 or 1969 as I recall it.

MR. BARRY: I have a copy.

MR. ROBERTS: Copies are hard to come by. If my learned friend the Minister of Mines and Energy (Mr. Barry) has one but if not I will undertake to lend the Premier one if he has some security of measure to put against it.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I was just wondering if the time was right because I thought it was much sooner than that. I thought it was 1964 or 1965. That is why I asked the question.

MR. ROBERTS: Oh, no, 1968. It might have been 1967. The Pushie Commission Report.

PREMIER PECKFORD: The Royal Commission on Economic Development.

MR. ROBERTS: And the man who wrote most of it is Ian McAllister, a gentleman of diverse and very large talents who I believe is now at Dalhousie in the economics faculty, the learned gentleman -

MR. BARRY: Who?

MR. ROBERTS: Ian McAllister.

PREMIER PECKFORD: McAllister, I remember him.

MR. ROBERTS: I think he is on the - I know the Board of officials of the Public Utilities retain him from time to time to advise them on some of the structure and the power outlets in the rural districts. But in any event be that as it may, the significant thing about that report and the significant thing about all the reports we have seen is that they all point to the problem. The problem is superbly analyzed. It is on solutions that we are a little weak and I would hope that



MR. ROBERTS: this committee, whatever name is to go on it, Economic Advisory Council, whatever name is to be put on it, would direct its attention to solutions. and I am not suggesting the global solutions. I think we have all been at it long enough to realize there are no big answers and, in fact, you know, I could go on perhaps on a Budget Speech to say that the theme of Newfoundland history has not been the Amurlee Report, in my opinion, I think that is a misreading. I think the theme of Newfoundland history has been the next big boom, the next big bang, and I suspect the present administration are in grave danger of tumbling in to exactly the same chasm as have, I could go back before Bond, back to Whiteway, back to the days of the railway, back to the days when, you know, the building of the Thorburn Road by the Thorburn administration was a great leap forward, and there was always to be, you know, the next big step was just over the hill and when we got the mill on the Humber or the Gander mill they talked of or the Grand Falls mill in 1904, or Labrador Iron Ore and on and on and now we are talking oil and gas. I do not think the solution lies with any of these. The role of the Council, hopefully, will be to deal not in the macro economics, if I understand the concept correctly, but rather with micro economics, to deal with the realistic and small projects. In that sense, while I agree with what has been said by my learned friend, the Leader of the Opposition, and by the Premier about people not representing specific interests, it is going to be awfully hard to get people. I remember reading once Joseph Chamberlain was being attacked in the British House of Commons for having appointed a prominent arms manufacturer to be the man in charge of manufacturing arms, and the man had divested himself of his interests and Chamberlain - it was in the Boer War when it was important, if you were to kill the Boers, important that the British have adequate guns and ammunition - the Boers were doing very well at the time, but Chamberlain said, "You know, what are we to say 'wanted a man to serve the Queen, no friends, no family and no assets'". It will be difficult to find people who have something to contribute who

MR. ROBERTS: do not have something of their own. That is partially why they have something to contribute. Obviously, their interests should be publicly declared. Obviously, their contribution should be measured quite properly against their contributions.

I also want to say to the Premier that I think from what he said there may be a very real possibility of a conflict of concepts. It is one thing to have a commission or a committee or an advisory group that devotes itself to analyzing briefs that come in from all of the multiplicity of groups and we will see more and more of them. In fact, there is a Subhead down below in these Estimates that will create yet again another group, the Status of Women Council, which will doubtless have a great deal to say on a great number of issues. I would suggest that that work of analysis is to be done by these monstrous secretariats that we have created the Treasury Board itself, and the Priorities and Planning and so forth. I mean, you know, I think they are monstrous, in the sense I think they are over-large, I think they are so large that they are inefficient. I think they are like the dinosaur which became so very large through the process of evolution that it ceased to exist and I think that may be what should happen to some of these secretariats, But be that as it may, the role of this new committee, I would suggest, would be to look at - it must have the power to initiate, as my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, said, but to look at the economic problems and then to proffer their advice. I would think if it is to have any value, it should be proffered publicly. I think it should be proffered very publicly in the form of an annual report to the Minister of Finance (Dr. J. Collins) or the Premier or to whomever there is a report, and in the form of special studies. The Economic Council of Canada makes a very valuable contribution. There are no answers, I mean, if the Premier thinks and I do not for one minute feel that he does, believe that, you know, I will get the answer and he will give it to me in

MR. ROBERTS: the Throne Speech and the Budget and, by heavens, there is the next election and off we go. You know, there are no easy answers. The value of this work is the accumulation over a period of years of a body of knowledge and a body of information and of testing the ideas and the concepts. The answers to this Province's problems do not lie in any big bang. They do not lie in oil and gas. They may not even lie in the fisheries, but if they do lie in the fisheries it is because the fisheries are,

MR. ROBERTS: in the economic sense, a multiplicity of ventures, a multiplicity of jobs. And I will end before I am ended, in fact, because I have about run out of ten minutes -I suspect. But I think the ten minutes have worked out very well. It is long enough to make a point or two or three, it is not so long that we are invited to go on as all of us can. I see the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn) agreeing, he would agree that we can go on at any length, he frequently does. But ten minutes is certainly, I think, proving to be a fairly useful rule.

I would suggest as well that the commission work very closely with the Economic Council, I think they have done good work. I certainly do not agree with everything they have recommended. I find it significant that there are very few, if any Newfoundlanders. I cannot remember one who has ever been invited to serve on it. Bill Bennett was on it for many years, he was not a Newfoundlander although he had deep interest and wide knowledge of this Province but he was not a Newfoundlander born or bred or adopted.

So, Mr. Chairman, I have no problem with the \$10,000, I do not think any of us on this side does. The Premier was also kind enough to say he would welcome our advice on financial matters. He will get quite a deal of it and I think it is needed. I think the need is there. Having read the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Collins) speech, I think there is a need for good advice to be given to the Premier. But I would say to him that we will proffer it and I hope that he will receive it in the same positive spirit as we spoken today. The problems are really not unique. The previous administrations tackled with them they had some successes, some failures. The Premier's administration will tackle them, hopefully they will have some successes, they will certainly have some failures. The administration that succeed the Premier's will have successes and failures. The important thing, Sir, is that we all try to serve the common good which is to solve this never ending problem and to create the jobs and more jobs because after all it is what will make

MR. ROBERTS: this Province work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROBERTS: Now I am worried, 'Morgan' agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (BUTT) The hon. member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. R. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, before the Premier reacts if he chooses to to what my colleague from the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Roberts) said, I would just like to say a few things on the subject as well because time, at least for the afternoon is running out.

On the subject of the Economic Council  
Mr. Chairman, I too would like to very much commend the idea. I think it is a good idea, a very positive idea and I am looking forward to its implementation. I listened with great interest to what the last three speakers have had to say, first my colleague the Leader of the Opposition and then my good friend, the Premier and my colleague the Opposition House Leader. And I believe the process that we have gone through in the last half an hour or so is a very valuable one in that we are contributing, hopefully, a few ideas which can in time make this a workable council. For my part, I say to the Premier, I would see this council primarily as a kind of think tank rather than any particular research arm of government. Certainly, it itself would need some research capability in order to think sufficiently profoundly, but I would see it first and foremost as a think tank rather than some administrative work unit or slave team, I would see it as a think tank to proper advice to government on various economic issues.

The Premier welcomed advice on the matter over the next few days. Might I suggest to him and this is straight off the top of my head - there may be reasons why it cannot be done this way but might I suggest to him that he give thought to the possibility of floating a kind of trial balloon on this matter, probably a preliminary statement to the House as to what his thoughts are on the subject before the actual -

PREMIER PECKFORD: A white paper approach.

MR. R. SIMMONS: Yes, a white paper approach before the thing is actually structured, locked into a procedure that he would have political difficulty or other kinds of difficulty undoing, just to float a trial balloon of sorts first. I think the kinds of problems that the council will have to address itself to are not partisan problems, they are not Tory problems or Liberal problems, they are problems that are common to all of us as Newfoundlanders and problems on which we all share a pretty deep concern. And if there was that trial balloon and there were some weaknesses in the approach or perceived weaknesses perhaps from our vantage point, not being too close to the forest, in a sense, as government members may well be, then we might be able to offer some suggestions as to how it could be improved on. Certainly we would be willing to give it a try.

Two quick questions and then perhaps the Premier might take a minute to respond to some of the things that have been put to him on this subject. They are very detailed mechanics questions really. First, I wonder can the Premier indicate what his time frame is for structuring this council, whether we are talking weeks or months? And secondly, and very related, I recognize that \$10,000 is just an approval amount but can he indicate what kinds of dollars he expects this to cost us during the year and for what purpose, you know, what kinds of paid staff he might be talking about? I realize the question is somewhat premature because he has got to know first what kind of council he is going to structure but in terms of

MR. SIMMONS: ballpark figures, he might be able to spell out that half of it is for staff or half is for this and that kind of thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Baird) The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I think that the suggestions by the hon. member for Burgeo Bay d'Espoir are worth considering and I tend to go along with him in the sense of it not being administrative but more of a think-tank and getting together from time to time - and having an Executive Director, which we would participate in the funding - that is necessary to sort of co-ordinate the reports, but to use a lot of the information as the member for the Straits (Mr. Roberts) said from the government, from the secretariats on the statement that we put out quarterly on the economy, to use that as a base, to use all the other information, the programs and so on that we, as a government, publish and to use all that information that will also come from Stats Canada and so on, and assemble it, and then to comment upon, based upon that, the economy generally and upon various programs which either detract from or contribute to it being better. Hopefully, we can get the private sector - the group - to participate in some of the funding as well. But I am not looking at any more - \$10,000 obviously is just a token vote there to have a vote - but I am not looking at any more than \$30,000 or \$40,000 and that hopefully we can get some matching or some funding from the private sector to go along with it, but I would tend to agree that perhaps another way to go is to set out some of the parameters and suggestions in a white paper - we would have to put a time frame on it because I would like to get it established and get it fully operational this year - so say a white paper for a month or so or six weeks at the most and let the comments come in and then to go ahead and formulate it and establish it. I am wide open on it at this present moment. All I want to do is to see some agency which represents a lot of the

PREMIER PECKFORD: sectors that are now coming in individually and ad hocly, if you will, with a whole bunch of things, to be independent, to publish an annual report, to really comment upon in an independent way, and as the hon. member says, it is not partisan at all, it is commenting upon the - what? - the state of the economy and how they think it can be better served by more enlightened policies being adopted by the government of the day, and having a sort of an Executive Director as a permanent head who would assemble a lot of the information from the government in the way of programs from the Planning and Priorities Secretariat, from the other information gathering agencies that are available, and put it all together and have that group who would sit fairly regularly from time to time and publish a report and commenting upon it. I think it is more of a think-tank idea, in my view, than the administrative thing. So, I do not think it is a bad idea at all to have a type of white paper approach to get some more ideas on it, because a number of good ideas came out of here this afternoon, but I am wide open and I think it has to be one step removed from government. We can fund it but then its terms of reference must be clear and it must be able to comment in an objective way on what is going on. I think a lot of good can come out of that kind of a group if they know for sure and it is written down what their terms of reference are and they are outside of government type thing, which I do not think was the case in the past to be quite frank with you, it just was not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Butt) The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. STIRLING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was kind of hoping you would not get back to your seat quite as fast because I wanted to say it is the first time I have had a chance to talk with the Deputy Deputy in the Chair, but anyway that will have to wait for another time.



MR. STIRLING: Mr. Chairman, under this heading of the Economic Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, I have a few of the questions that -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. STIRLING: Yes, I am going to do a 'Premier Peckford'. I am not talking unless I get his attention.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Continue.

MR. STIRLING: I had a few questions on the last Subhead and this is in the order that you had them and going from this point forward, 'Mr. Premier', and going back to the Throne Speech and dealing with your accountability from this point forward, I am having a little bit of difficulty. I attended the meeting this morning on Rural Development and I had thought that we were going to do quite a bit on Rural Development as it tied in with the Economic Development and I believe it ties in with this Subhead, and the whole thing really has to tie in with something the people can identify as saying, "Yes, I think that is", to use the campaign slogan, "the way we want to grow". The Minister of Rural Development knows how disappointed I was this morning, I am glad that he is back in the Chamber. I was really disappointed this morning to find that the Estimates for Rural Development

MR. STIRLING:

loans this year have been cut from last year of \$2.7 million down to \$2 million which seemed to be a very serious restriction of the way we wanted to grow.

I heard the Minister of Industrial Development (Mr. Barry) on a radio programme the other day—and I know that sometimes these things have to be cut in thirty seconds or a minute - but he was saying in talking about the Marystown shipyard that maybe if we can get it down to \$200,000 or \$300,000 maybe government will subsidize it. I am not making any commitment but maybe we will subsidize it if it is \$200,000 or \$300,000. We have a situation in which no deficit was indicated in the Estimates last year. I realize the member was not the minister there at the time. We had no indication in the Estimates last year, then an \$8 million deficit, then a \$3.5 million indicated deficit, and then the minister is saying, well if we can get it to \$200,000 or \$300,000 maybe we can keep it going and maybe not. That does not seem to me to have any kind of consistency or planning or there does not seem to be the kind of accountability that the Premier talked about in the Throne Speech in which, surely if we are going to try to develop in Newfoundland, if we are going to try to encourage outside development or we are going to try to encourage unions to co-operate, then we have to be able to predict with a bit more accuracy than what has been done in the past or this administration.

I realize that the Minister of Industrial Development (Mr. Barry) may have only been taken out of context in that. But to me as a businessman it looked like it was inconceivable that a Board of Directors could predict no deficit, then an \$8 million deficit, then a \$3.5 million deficit and then suddenly expect that to be turned around in one year or we may close it down.

MR. ROBERTS: But the real question is, did the board predict that or is this the government monkeying with the books?

MR. STIRLING: I am asking it in the context of this Economic Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, the concept and I am trying to restrict

MR. STIRLING:

my remarks to that concept. We are going outside the government and we are going to try to set up a council and ask for input, the think-tank kind of thing. But in the areas of rural development this year we have got a substantial cutback.

I think the Premier asked some very good questions. As a matter of fact 'Mr. Premier' if you would like to come over to the Opposition side and ask some of those same questions. I have them in a little bit different form. I had hoped we could learn from something like the Action Group or if you go back to the Economic Development Advisory Council. There are also some new members here and we should ask the question, how did it come about. What brought the Economic Development Advisory Council into being and it is now out of being and a new one brought up? Before we actually form this new one - and I am saying this in a positive sense - that I think we should look at and say, 'What was intended by the other one?'. The same kind of question the Premier himself was asking about the Action Group, is what is the alternative? What are the alternatives? How did it get so far as to be brought in as a concept, to go through Cabinet, to be defended by the government and then a period of a year or something later then to cut it off, cut it out, throw it out?

So I agree with the Premier in the kinds of comments he was talking about earlier and I hope in the Committees and in this House we will spend a lot of time saying, "If these things were failures, how do we prevent them from happening again?" And in fairness to this new Economic Council, what kind of lessons can we learn from the Economic Advisory Council or the Action Group type of an approach? And if this is not the way to do it, what are the alternatives? I would like specifically if the Premier would comment on a couple of things that I mentioned earlier about the cutback in the Rural Development Loans and what was wrong with the Advisory Council concept that we do not carry into the new concept?

MR. CHAIRMAN (BAIRD): The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Chairman, I will be only too happy to answer those questions. There is really no inconsistency although I appreciate the question because I think it needs to be answered. As it relates to Rural Development, I mean the amount of money,

PREMIER PECKFORD:

that is the quantitative and the qualitative elements have to be put into play there. And I think what we are saying now and what the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. Goudie) is saying, what the administration is saying is that we want to, we are going to look at the Rural Development Authority with a lot more scrutiny and we think it is an excellent lever for Rural Development. That is the RDA. And, also, another part of that in Rural Development is a special subhead in the Department of Rural Development which funds not only the development associations as an operating grant but will give them capital funds to stimulate, to get a fish plant going which later will be taken over by private enterprise but where the catalyst in rural Newfoundland because there is an absence of entrepreneurial skills available yet, blah, blah, blah and on we go. So that is the whole purpose of Rural Development in the first instance.

Now that is sort of parenthetically said. As it relates to RDA itself and the fact that it is now \$2 million rather than \$2.7 million is an attempt by the government to streamline the Rural Development Authority and to be more selective in the loans that we do put out, that they are loans which will actually see a fair amount of job creation, that the proposals are well developed. We think we have advanced along the line now where we were rather flexible in the rules of who was eligible and who was not, that the parameter of the programme or of the lending agencies were broad so a lot of people could qualify. We are now reducing that. In other words, I do not know, for example, whether we should finance bakeries. We have in the past. Okay?

Now, in certain parts of rural Newfoundland there might be a case that can be made for it. But surely the main impetus that must be given to RDA is in those areas which create new dollars. I am always high on talking about new dollars, not turning over the same dollar. I guess if you are making bread you are really turning over the same dollar in cookies. Now it might be good in certain

PREMIER PECKFORD:

rural areas where there is an absence of good bread and we are getting away from making our own bread. You know, I suppose, you can make some kind of an argument for it if you keep at it long enough. It is a grey area. And so what I am saying is what we are going to do -

MR. ROBERTS: Grey bread? Is the Premier saying grey bread?

PREMIER PECKFORD: We are going to streamline the authority. It is not meant to diminish the thrust that government wants to put into it. We are being far more selective and we hope that with \$2 million we can create more permanent jobs than we can with \$2.7 million with more flexible rules applying. Okay? And put that in the context of our having to review every department and to look at what our parameters are financially, that is what we have done but there is no real point - we are not trying to get out or move away from our Rural Development responsibilities or obligations here. That is essentially what we are trying to do.

The minister is now developing regulations which will govern that RDA which hitherto had not been developed in any specific way. But I am keen on making them specific so that when proposals come in they get dealt with quickly but they are in the resource sector, they are creating new jobs and the proposal, you know, looks very, very viable so that we can get our collection rate up and our success rate up. In the same way, as for example, the Fisheries Loan Board has a collection rate if you will, or a repayment rate of well over 90 per cent. I do not think we will ever get up to that as it relates to Rural Development but we could sure get well up over 50 per cent so that there is that success rate so we are really doing something positive. I think it is time for us to review and try to move in that direction. So there is no attempt here that the right hand does not know what the left is doing. We are aware of and I am aware of the front that

PREMIER PECKFORD:

we are taking here on Rural Development.

So I just say that by way of comment and we will then see how that goes as the year goes on. It might be necessary as the year rolls on and November comes, that the Department of Rural Development and the minister will be up to Cabinet saying, Hey, you know, you guys, you were not very realistic. We put in the new rules and we put in the new things but the applications are still coming fast and furious and the \$2 million is gone and we want additional money, and we might agree to additional money. But the only way to do it is to reduce it first and work at it from that angle rather than give a whole lot of money, then the same impetus might not be there by the department to really develop the rules and to really be more careful on the applications. If -they have less money they will be. Then we will see how they do and then we will give them more if they demonstrate that they have done a good job with the two that they had. I would rather go that way than go the other route.

The shipyard; the hon. member mentioned the shipyard

PREMIER PECKFORD: and how could that be. That whole debt as incurred by the shipyard involved the contracts for the tugs that were built, the foreign contract that the yard had, and I do not think there is any attempt here by the Board of Directors or by government to, you know, manipulate anything. That debt became noticeable as the tugs got finished and as the bills started coming in and the arguments started getting heavier between -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) foreign -

PREMIER PECKFORD: It was noted that there were, well, specifications and I do not want to get into it right here now, the detail on it. I know a fair amount about it.

MR. ROBERTS: The shipyard made a loss of maybe, what, 50 per cent?

PREMIER PECKFORD: There were a lot of problems with that contract, a lot of problems, some of which -

MR. ROBERTS: The problems are surely management, not Board of Directors.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Exactly, exactly, and that is why I am saying it came to the Board of Directors after sort of thing. It had a lot to do with the specifications. When they were gotten, they were not the same as had been told that they would be. There are legal disputes underway between both sides. There are a whole bunch of issues there which were not recognized at the time. There are a lot of reasons for it and we will get into that some day. - -

MR. ROBERTS: There will be ample opportunity, I would assure the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes, exactly, and I would very much like to get myself involved in that kind of debate.

The reason why the old Council did not work or are we just, you know - and I appreciate that comment from the hon. member. I have already sort of indicated that -



PREMIER PECKFORD: - the hon. member for the Straits  
(Mr. Roberts) is listening now closely to what I have to say.

MR. ROBERTS: I always listen to what the Premier  
says. I do not believe him all the time, but I listen.

PREMIER PECKFORD: You know, that is one step at a time.

MR. ROBERTS: There is a hymn One Step Enough For Me, but  
look where it got Cardinal -

PREMIER PECKFORD: The previous Council, as I indicated  
before, I think, on two points why I wished to change it: one, the  
composition of the Council I think was heavily weighted on the side  
of big business with little representation from medium or small business,  
little representation geographically from around the Province, little  
representation from the labour or ordinary person, so I want to expand  
geographically and economically, if you will, the composition of the  
Council - one; two -

AN HON. MEMBER: How large a Council exactly?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Ten, I think will be sufficient.

Secondly, to change its mandate  
to be one of a sort of a think-tank and commenting upon the economy  
type thing rather than just project orientated, and that is what the  
previous Economic Council was that a number of things referred to them,  
what is the story on lands' policy, what is the story on this? I  
do not think that should be its role. Government can handle that,  
and if we fail then the Opposition tells us we failed and make a  
good case and they can have a go at it for four or five years, but  
where they should be is commenting upon, and I think the hon. member  
would agree with me, on the economy, making recommendations;  
government has had a year; the budget is in place; this is where  
you were wrong in your budget; you should have done this differently;  
your taxation policy should be different; you know, you should be  
spending your money on this part of fisheries, not that part; and

PREMIER PECKFORD: on we go with it. That is what I would like to see the comment on. Make an independent annual report that was not a part of the previous Council, all of those, composition, mandate, annual report, arm's length, were not a part of the previous Council and I want to make it a part and I think this way it can work.

On motion, 308-03, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Butt) Shall 309-03 carry?

MR. ROBERTS: That is the Status of Women - but we have only one minute, I will ask a one-minute question. I do not know if my learned friend here -

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. ROBERTS: I just want to ask whether the Premier or the administration have decided as yet how large this Council is to be? When it is to be appointed? And is it to include only women or will it be man and women, as I would suggest it should be?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Now I can answer it but if another member from the other side wants to rise on a - you want to say something? You will not have any time.

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

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of things we want to say on the Status of Women issue. We realize that we have another full opportunity in the Budget debate and I missed what my colleague just said, so he might have said the same thing.

MR. ROBERTS: I just asked if there were going to be men on the committee as well. I would hope so.

MR. SIMMONS: I put in a plea for my colleague from Strait of Belle Isle as well. If there is room on the committee for him, then by all means -

MR. ROBERTS: Eat your heart out, 'Simmons'.

MR. SIMMONS: - as one of the men on the committee.  
It took me a week, 'Ed', it took me a full week, 'Ed', but then I  
am a bit slow.

Mr. Chairman, I was saying to the  
Premier and the Government House Leader that we realize that we have  
other opportunities to talk about Status of Women, so in the interest  
of expediting we are prepared

MR. R. SIMMONS: to have the item called today so that the Premier could get his Estimates through committee but we want it understood and on the record that we are at all downgrading this very important subject it is near the hour of 6:00 and we will be addressing ourselves to it during the Budget debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN (BUTT): The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I appreciate that and I would like to do the same thing to address that whole question in the debate. A good question that the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Roberts) raised and that is the question of the composition of the council and whether there will be any males on it? I had not thought of it as a matter of fact. It is to be the Umbrella Organization which will, as I guess the hon. member realizes, have a number of chapters and it can disburse in the financial restraints on the treasury, funds to some of its chapters some of which are in St. John's, Corner Brook, Grand Falls, Labrador City and so on. The composition is something that we will have to look at and guess it works both ways -

MR. ROBERTS: What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

PREMIER PECKFORD: True, well said! We will take that under advisement and I would like to hear again some comments from hon. members in the Budget Debate on this one. It is another idea which I want to pursue and have my own ideas on it but they are not so well formulated that they cannot be changed and that I cannot take some advice from somebody else.

On motion, 309-03, carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed Head III, Executive Council without amendment, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Butt): The hon. the President of the Council

MR. MARSHALL: I move the Committee rise.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Butt): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report head III, Executive Council without amendment, and ask leave to sit again.

On motion, report received and adopted  
Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER (Simms): The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

MR. N. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give notice that I would like to rise on a point of personal privilege. Realizing that it is 6:00, I simply wish to give notice since this is the first time Your Honour has been in the Chair since I was able to receive the transcripts of Hansard for yesterday. So I reserve the right to raise this privilege on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. President of the Council.

MR. W. MARSHALL: Before presenting the adjournment notice, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to indicate to the House that we purpose to adjourn - it is rather complicated because the Regatta can get complicated - we purpose to adjourn tomorrow anyway. His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor is having his annual garden party which all hon. members have been asked to and the House would want to adjourn tomorrow for this purpose. So we will be adjourning tomorrow in any event and I will presenting at the end an adjournment notice which will in effect mean that we will reconvene on Thursday if the Regatta is not held on Thursday.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. E. ROBERTS: Before my learned friend moves his immensely complicated motion -

MR. W. MARSHALL: It is.

MR. E. ROBERTS: - and before I am slate by the hon. minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Mr. Windsor) for something I apparently said, I just want to understand - if the House does not meet on Thursday presumably

MR. E. ROBERTS: the committees will not meet on Thursday as well?

MR. W. MARSHALL: In the next breath, Mr. Speaker. I was about to come out with this.

MR. SPEAKER: (SIMMS) The hon. President of the Council in the next breath.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. W. MARSHALL: Those people on the Resource Committee, if the Regatta is not held tomorrow the Resource Committee has agreed that they will schedule a meeting at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow morning at the Colonial Building.

AN HON. MEMBER: What was that?

MR. W. MARSHALL: If, however, the Regatta goes ahead tomorrow that same meeting of the Resource Committee will meet in the Collective Bargaining Room at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday morning.

MR. ROBERTS: What happens if the races goes ahead on Thursday?

MR. W. MARSHALL: Well, if the races go ahead on Thursday they will have already had their meeting on the Wednesday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. W. MARSHALL: And in any event, whichever morning, Mr. Speaker, the committee will be engrossing the Estimates of the Department of Forestry, Resources and Lands. The Government Services Committee, its next meeting will be at the Colonial Building at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday but if the Regatta is held on Thursday this meeting will not take place and it will take place at the time that the committee has arranged afterwards. They will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Transportation and Communications. The Social Services one, the hard working committee, has decided to meet tonight at 7:30, Mr. Speaker, and that will take place in any event at the Colonial Building. The Estimates of the Department of Social Services will be considered at that time.

MR. MARSHALL:

In the event that the Regatta is cancelled tomorrow, this hard working Committee will reconvene again at nine-thirty in the Collective Bargaining Room. And the Chairman has indicated that Consumer Affairs and Environment will be considered then but, of course, that it is an anticipation that Social Services will be over at that time. So that is the schedule of Committees, Mr. Speaker.

I move, Mr. Speaker, that this House at its rising do adjourn until Thursday, August 2nd at 3:00 P.M. unless the Regatta is held on that day. And in such case, if the Regatta is held on Thursday that this House then stand adjourned until Friday, August 3rd at 10:00 A.M.

On motion the House at its rising do stand adjourned until tomorrow.