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PRELIMINARY  
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TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
FOR THE PERIOD:  
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1983

The House met at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, the Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor) and the Minister of Northern Development (Mr. Goudie), I wish to announce today that government is developing a new harvest plan for the George River Caribou herd, the largest in the world, a plan that we hope will eventually generate \$5 million annually for the Labrador economy. This new plan provides the potential to double our present harvest through the establishment of an outfitting business for non-resident hunters.

The caribou of Northern Labrador are one of this Province's most precious resources. They are vitally important to native people and Labrador residents as a source of essential food, recreation, traditional and historical ties with the land and spiritual refreshment. In addition to these uses, and without placing any of them in jeopardy, they can also play a greater role in the economic development of the area.

The George River caribou herd of Northern Labrador and Nouveau Quebec has increased from near 5,000 animals in 1954 to an estimated 300,000 caribou in the Autumn of 1982. The population has proven to be exceptionally healthy and productive, and has been recently increasing at an estimated 12 per cent or 30,000 per year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

In recent years, the herd has been the subject of fairly intensive studies which indicate that the herd could support a greater harvest rate without causing any important undesirable impact on the health and size of the herd. In fact, they have proven that this herd is the healthiest and fastest growing herd in North America.

MR. SIMMS: As a result of these advancements and our knowledge of the herd's status and growth rate, we are changing the harvest policy respecting this herd. Until now, 10,000 to 12,000 animals per year are harvested by both Quebec and Labrador hunters, three-quarters of which, by the way, are harvested by Quebec. Here, only Labrador residents have been permitted to take the caribou. However, Quebec has encouraged the establishment of an outfitting business catering to non-resident hunters. The Newfoundland and Labrador Wildlife Division will be making caribou hunting licences available to people who are not resident to Labrador. The availability of these licences creates the potential for the establishment of a hunter outfitting industry in Labrador by persons who are clearly competent in catering to non-resident hunters. The Province is sure that by providing a quality hunting experience, we can develop a sizeable, high-spending market in the North East USA. Thus, the Department of Development will be accepting proposals from prospective outfitters in the near future. This proposal call will take the form of prospectuses, which clearly outline government's expectations of potential operators.

A recent study indicates that the business of outfitting hunters could eventually provide over \$5 million annually to the Labrador economy and provide for nearly 200 seasonal and permanent employment opportunities to Labrador residents. To put this in perspective, this \$5 million would represent 1.5 times the \$3.3 million generated by fishing and hunting outfitting establishments in 1982. We believe that those who will benefit most from this change in policy will be the residents of Labrador who have the interest and willingness to provide the requested services.

MR. SIMMS: We are confident of the wisdom behind this policy change. The potential benefits are considerable both for the Province as a whole and particularly for the local people of Labrador who get involved with the outfitting business either as entrepreneurs or as employed guides. It will help bring greater provincial, national and even international attention to the importance of the George River herd as a vital renewable resource. Proper management of the herd is the key to its future and all concerned agencies and governments are giving this their full attention. In the long run, the new harvest programme should help keep the herd in balance with its vast range as well as provide new stimulus to the area. This kind of renewable resources is most appropriate for Northern communities where there are usually fewer opportunities for jobs and income. Unlike non-renewable resources, which are eventually exhausted, the caribou of Northern Labrador if properly managed, can provide benefits to an infinite number of generations of Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. Goudie) said that I should hang my head in shame. I believe, Mr. Speaker, not only the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development but the Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor) and the Minister responsible for Wildlife (Mr. Simms) should resign from this House of Assembly as of today, after coming in with such a statement, that those three ministers got together and decided to take the heritage away from the native people of Labrador. This is what this government has done today, Mr. Speaker. Three ministers have decided unilaterally that, look, to Hell with the native people, let us take away their caribou, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. WARREN: Those three ministers, Mr. Speaker, all they are concerned about, and all this government is concerned about, is looking after a couple of people in Labrador who have small aircrafts that can get into the herd. And this is what this government is concerned about, Mr. Speaker, their own political buddies. And, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the minister the first thing, before you bring in any Ministerial Statement such as this, the least he could have done was speak to the native people. He would not even talk to the Labrador Inuit Association or the MNIA, to neither one of the native associations did the minister have the intestinal fortitude of speaking. He comes in with this kind of a statement and expects to get \$5 million into the Newfoundland economy and wipe out the native people. Was that his main ambition? If that is his ambition when the Premier is talking about land claims? The minister does not have a clue, Mr. Speaker, about how the native people in Labrador live. I would say it is a disgrace to the minister, it is

MR. WARREN: a disgrace to that government to try to whip the rug from under the feet of the native people. And I believe it is just a disgrace that the Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor) and a Labrador minister, the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. Goudie), would have any part of this kind of a programme. I would strongly suggest, Mr. Minister, that you do your home work first; go in a talk to the people who have to depend on the caribou for their way of living. They do not have the chances to get the T-bone steaks as you and I have. Mr. Speaker, they have to depend on the caribou meat. And why bring in numerous planes and US residents or Canadian residents from outside of Labrador travelling in over the caribou herd? As the minister said, there are 300,000 caribou there, but give it about two years, Mr. Speaker, and it will be completely wiped out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, to conclude these few remarks, I would suggest strongly that the minister reassess the statement that he just made -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please! Order, please!

MR. WARREN: - and look at the heritage, look at the traditional way of life of those people who are close to the caribou herd and do not just look at it for the sake of putting an extra \$5 million into the provincial economy when you are going to wipe out a race of people in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance when he intends to table the Auditor General's report and the accounts of the Province for the year ended 31 March 1983. We understand that the report has been in the hands of the minister now for about eleven days, and I believe the deadline is ten days, after ten days the minister has to table the report in the House. Would the hon. gentleman indicate when he intends to table the report?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS: At the earliest practical moment, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. NEARY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): A supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Would the hon. gentleman indicate if he intends to table the report in accordance with the Financial Administration Act or are they just going to stonewall and keep the report under wraps and not table it before the House rises for Christmas?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, I certainly will be tabling it in accordance with the Financial Administration Act. And just on that point, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, I think, was incorrect in his statement a moment or two ago. The Financial Administration Act says that the public accounts and the Auditor General's report should be tabled on or prior to January 31st if the House is sitting, and if the House is not sitting at that particular time, within, I think it is ten days of the House sitting in the New Year, so that there is absolutely no obligation to table the reports before January 31st. It does not necessarily mean that they will not be tabled before that time, but there is absolutely no obligation in the Financial Administration Act to table them before January 31st; and certainly if the House is not sitting at a particular time when they are ready for tabling, it would be quite within the act not to table within, say, a week or ten days after the House sits in the Spring of next year.

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MR. NEARY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: I do not know if the hon. gentleman is aware of it or not, but the House has been sitting now for a month, the hon. gentleman has the report, why does he not be man enough, why does he not have the courage to table it in the House?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely overflowing with courage and I will be tabling them at the earliest possible moment.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, does the hon. gentleman intend to table the report before the House rises for Christmas, which could be another week or ten days? Is the hon. gentleman going to sit on the Auditor General's Report, on the Public Accounts for the next ten or twelve days when the House is sitting? The hon. gentleman knows he has an obligation to table that report in this House.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) if the House is sitting in a week or ten days from now, I will have tabled the report by that time.

MR. NEARY: Okay, fine.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Could the Premier tell us if he has been in contact or if the Canadian Forces have contacted him concerning

MR. WARREN: the German Air Force using simulated bombing in Labrador?

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

PREMIER PECKFORD: I take that question under advisement, Mr. Speaker, and will get some additional information for the hon. member in the next couple of days.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier. If the Premier does receive some correspondence from the Canadian Forces as it pertains to the Germans using simulated bombing in 2,500 square miles of Labrador, would the Premier, before any decision is made, undertake to carry out an environmental impact study on the area?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I will take it under advisement, Mr. Speaker, and get back to the hon. member.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, my third supplementary to the Premier: In view of the fact that the Germans are one of the many European groups that are against our seal hunt, would the Premier consider, in any negotiations pertaining to using a section of our land for German Air Force exercises, that there would be a bartering point concerning our seal fishery?

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

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, the question is more appropriately directed to the hon. member's colleagues in Ottawa.

MR. NEARY: A supplementary question,  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition,  
on a supplementary.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker , my -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: - understanding of this question that was put my colleague is that the training of pilots in low-level flying, that ten year agreement, that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about the use of land miles square for practicing bombing in Labrador, training oilots to kill people throughout the world, yet we are being held out as Barbarians by these people for killing seals. Now would the hon. gentleman answer the question that was put by my hon. colleague regarding the fifty miles square territory that falls under the jurisdiction of this Province? Now would the hon.gentleman tell the House and tell the people of this Province if in any negotiations that may take place regarding fifty miles square of Newfoundland and Labrador territory to be used for dive bombing by the Luftwaffe, if the hon. gentleman will take advantage of any negotiations that he may have to trade off that for the West German Government allowing our seal products to be imported into West Germany?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I think I have answered the question that the hon. member for Torgnat Mountains (Mr. Warren) put to me, and I think the question that

PREMIER PECKFORD: Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) is asking is essentially the same question. On the whole issue of this matter, I indicated that I will take the matter under advisement and get back to the hon. member. So we will examine all of the ramifications of the situation and then make a decision within the jurisdiction in which we have a decision to make, Mr. Speaker. But the hon. member can be assured that we will take the whole matter into consideration in any determination of what, if any, action the Province can take that is within their jurisdiction, that is within our jurisdiction.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. member for Port au Port.

MR. HODDER: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor). I would like to ask the minister if he would tell me whether his department, which is responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, is considering any remedial action on homes which were repaired through the Rural RRAP programme?

MR. HODDER: many of those homes are not livable now, even though they were repaired through the Rural RRAP programme.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure I understand what the hon. gentleman is getting at. The Rural RRAP programme is a federal programme which is administered by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation in many areas of the Province on behalf of the federal government; it provides grants and loans for repair and renovation of existing homes. If these homes have fallen into a state of disrepair so as that they are not livable and cannot be repaired, then obviously those persons will have to look for alternative accommodation. The programme will only apply to a certain degree, and if they are gone past the point of economic recovery and economic renewal, then there is very little, obviously, you can do with that particular unit.

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

MR. HODDER: Mr. Speaker, the minister is aware that this programme has only been ongoing for some four or five years, and that, while it was a federal programme, the programme was delivered to the Province by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and it was Newfoundland and Labrador Housing which carried out the provisions and the inspection of those homes. Now, what has happened throughout the Province is that many of those homes, some of them only two and three years old, are now in such a condition that people cannot live in them. I know of two cases in this Province, from my own personal knowledge, where homes were RRAPed, they were RRAPed incorrectly and the people had to move out of their homes and Social Services, in these two cases, had to pay for alternate

MR. HODDER: accommodations for them.

These people are trying to get the programme reopened to get some assistance. In some cases foundations are not correct; and the minister should realize that part of that programme said that the money should not be paid until the inspectors okayed it.

Now, in many cases in this Province the inspectors did not. What I am asking the minister is, will he take responsibility for those homes?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman seems to be a little confused. He says that some of these homes are only two or three years old. If the homes are two or three years old -

MR. HODDER: The repairs.

MR. WINDSOR: The repairs? Okay, that is better. As it relates to the Rural RRAP programme may I first of all correct the hon. gentleman. The corporation does not deliver Rural RRAP in all of the Province; we do deliver it in a significant portion, better than 50 per cent of the Province, but not in all of the Province; there are other delivery agents that deliver the programme on behalf of the federal government. And this is precisely what Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation does, we deliver the programme on a fee-for-service basis simply because we have the personnel in various areas of the Province to undertake such activities on behalf of the Corporation.

MR. WINDSOR: The programme is a repair programme. It does not guarantee that those repairs are going to last forever, it does not guarantee that the house will now be up to the national building code although every effort is made to ensure that wherever possible, certainly any renovations that are made would be up to normal standards. But that does not guarantee that repairs that are made to an electrical system in a particular house will guarantee that the foundation will not crumble in two or three years' time. So obviously the corporation cannot take responsibility for the overall structural integrity of the unit. But, you know, as it relates to repairs that were done, I would assume that they were done with proper supervision and in accordance with proper construction practices.

MR. HODDER: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Supplementary, the hon. member for Port au Port.

MR. HODDER: Mr. Speaker, if the minister feels that they were done with proper inspection throughout the rural sections of the Province, then the minister is hiding his head in the sand because I believe he knows different, because any member on the other side of the House -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HODDER: - who has these programmes -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Chair recognized the hon. member for Port au Port on a supplementary question. As I have stated several times, in asking supplementary questions there should not be need for any preamble whatsoever. The hon. member is getting into a speech in debate on that issue.

The hon. member for Port au Port.

MR. HODDER: Mr. Speaker, I will ask a new question. The minister's department also -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

MR. HODDER: - administers the rural and remote programme throughout this Province. In many cases cases, homes built with inspectors from his department watching, are now in just as bad condition or are more uncomfortable than the houses that the people originally lived in. Would the minister consider, in this particular case, helping these people open their claims so that they can now get the proper work done on their houses in cases where this happened?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Development.

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, just to clarify the question for the hon. gentleman as it relates to whether or not the corporation delivers all of the RRAP in the Province, I have figures here which indicate that in 1982 the corporation delivered approximately two-thirds of that programme in the Province and other agencies, such as the White Bay North Development Association, CMHC themselves on the Northern Peninsula, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Indians, the towns of Buchans and Badger and the town of Grand Falls, and others as well, have all been participating in this particular programme.

I assume the hon. gentleman is referring to his particular area.

MR. HODDER: No.

MR. WINDSOR: You are speaking in general.

MR. HODDER: Well, the majority of the areas are being run anywhere, you know -

MR. WINDSOR: About two-thirds of them are being delivered, Mr. Speaker, by the corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. WINDSOR:

Now the hon. gentleman refers to the rural and remote housing programme, Mr. Speaker. In that case, the rural and remote housing programme is, in fact, a mortgage lending

MR. WINDSOR:

programme, and the corporation acts as does any other mortgage lender, the individual is responsible primarily for obtaining land on which to develop the unit and for obtaining a contractor to build that for him. So the corporation's responsibility is simply one of providing financing and a certain monitoring role. But again we do not ensure the integrity of the unit. Obviously the contractor who built the unit and the owner of the unit have a certain responsibility in that regard.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. member for Port au Port.

Mr. HODDER:

Mr. Speaker,

I am kind of amazed by the minister's answer because he does not give any hope to the people who have this type of housing that he will even intervene on their behalf. The question I would like to ask the minister is whether he does not feel that his department has some liability, especially since both in the RRAP Programme and the Rural-Remote Programme there were certain standards laid down. For instance, there was not supposed to be any cosmetic treatment of homes; in other words, siding should not go on until foundations were done. We found that has been done and there is proof. Any Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation office across this Province can tell the minister, or any of the Social Service people who now have to deal with a lot of those can tell the minister all about it. What I am asking the minister is does he not feel that he has a responsibility since it was his inspectors who did this particular job, possibly because there were so many people asking for it at the same time that they bent under pressure.

MR. HODDER: Or, Mr. Speaker, would he sit down with his federal counterparts to try to help those people who have those problems? Some of them are very bad, would he try to iron this out and try to get something going on these particular houses? And there are thousands, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. Minister of Development.

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, it is very simple for the hon. gentleman to stand in his place and to cast aspersions on the corporation and on the programmes that we deliver without providing any details. If the hon. gentleman has some specific cases that he would like to bring to my attention, I would be only too happy to investigate them and find out what the difficulties, if any, are. I am not prepared to accept what he is saying in general terms -

MR. HODDER: Ask your colleague, the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey).

MR. WINDSOR: - that every unit that was built under Rural Remote is falling down, or that every repair that was done under Rural RRAP

MR. WINDSOR: is no longer of any value and has since degenerated to the point where the units are no longer inhabitable. So, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman had something specific to say, let him say it, but let him not come out here and make very general comments -

MR. HODDER: I will and I have.

MR. WINDSOR: - which tend to put a slant on all housing programmes delivered by the Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, I have a question as well for the Minister of Development.

Around the turn of the last decade, Mr. Speaker, the former Liberal administration started to drill offshore. We know, of course, what kind of a state and a mess that that is in after ten years of Tory mismanagement. Also, during that same period of time, Mr. Speaker, the former Premier was talking about an aluminum smelter for this Province. Now, after eleven years of Tory administration, it is still at the talking stages. At least, of course, that is more than we can say with regard to the offshore.

Let me ask the Minister of Development, in view of his comments over the last couple of days to the media when he said that the latest company, or the one that showed the most interest, does not appear as interested now in establishing a smelter in the Province as it was a couple of years ago if the minister would mind elaborating on that statement, and would he give us an update on the prospects for the aluminum smelter?

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

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, as much as it might upset the hon. gentleman opposite, I think there is indeed a very high potential for development of an aluminum smelter in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

MR. WINDSOR: Certainly it will be based on our resources and will be developed in accordance with the best interests of this Province and the people of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. WINDSOR: We certainly will not be giving away the resource as hon. gentlemen opposite have done in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. WINDSOR: The fact of the matter is that we have done a proper feasibility study -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

A few days ago there were complaints to the Chair that when a member is speaking, he does have a right to be heard in silence. At that time, I requested hon. members to my left and to my right to adhere to that rule and I must ask them again. A question has been asked of the minister and I would request that he be given the right to be heard in silence.

MR. WINDSOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate why hon. gentlemen might not like the answer, but since they have asked the question, I certainly intend to answer as best I can.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR:                   The fact of the matter is,  
Mr. Speaker, that we have done very exhaustive feasibility  
studies on the establishment of an aluminum smelter,  
starting out originally with in-house studies and

MR. WINDSOR:

undertaking a very extensive marketing programme to identify companies that had particular interest in this Province based on Labrador's tremendous hydro potential. Resulting from that, of course, we were able to put in place a joint feasibility study with ARCO Aluminum Company, which was a very exhaustive study costing in the order of \$500,000, and this Province put in 50 per cent of that. That study has shown very conclusively, Mr. Speaker, that Newfoundland is indeed a world class site as it relates to the establishment of an aluminum smelter and certainly when additional aluminum smelter capacity is required, Newfoundland will be in the forefront as it relates to potential developments. Unfortunately, the company that we are dealing with have now seen that within their immediate future they do not perceive that they will have a need to proceed with construction of a smelter, so they have at least deferred for the time being any plans in that regard. That does not deter us at all, Mr. Speaker, we are moving ahead actively now in pursuing other companies, we have the agreement of ARCO to utilize all of the information, the very detailed studies that were done in that feasibility study, we can utilize that information now as part of a marketing package and we are moving forward with other companies to investigate their interests in that regard.

MR. CALLAN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, we are glad to hear that the company has given the Province permission to use that study.

MR. NEARY: Well, they \$500,000 of taxpayers' money, so why should they not?

MR. CALLAN: Well, actually the Province paid 25 per cent, the feds 25 per cent and the company the remaining

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MR. CALLAN:

\$250,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. CALLAN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me ask the minister by way of a supplementary, when this company, Atlantic Richfield, when the report was tabled back in the Spring there was several contingencies, I mention that one of the contingencies includes a 50 to 60 per cent increase in the market price of aluminum or economic subsidies to allow the project to achieve a satisfactory rate. There were four or five contingencies listed, as the minister is aware, I am sure. Let me ask the minister has any of these contingencies

MR. CALLAN:

changed or are they the same now as they were six months ago, and is that the reason why it is still no longer feasible?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. Minister of Development.

MR. WINDSOR: Well, Mr. Speaker, in our opinion there are very positive changes to the factors affecting the construction of aluminum smelter in this Province since the study was undertaken. In fact, at the point in time, the snapshot in time of the economy of our Province which was studied in that particular feasibility study, was probably at our worse particular point in time, about eighteen months ago. So obviously the economy has improved since then. Interest rates have improved, which impact on a number of factors, the construction costs of the smelter itself as well as the projected costs that might be required for provision of electricity.

Prices that are now being received for aluminum are steadily increasing and recent projections, as reported in The Globe and Mail and Financial Post, indicate in fact that the price for aluminum will continue to rise on a regular basis. That of course, Mr. Speaker, -

MR. NEARY: Dream on! Dream on!

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) does not want the answer to the question, I think the hon. member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) does and I will try to give it to him.

MR. NEARY: Dream on!

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, the prices of aluminum are rising steadily as predicted in our feasibility study, and perhaps a little in excess of the rate of improvement that we predicted. There are other factors, such as technology improvements, which can in fact give some considerable savings on the capital cost of the project. So we feel quite strongly that the situation now is far better than it was at the point

MR. WINDSOR: in time when the feasibility study was carried out. And we are still quite optimistic that we can in fact put together a proposal which will be feasible and viable and will be a substantial contributor to the economy of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN: A supplementary. Mr. Speaker, one of the four or five contingencies that we just mentioned, one of them is that a commitment to develop the Lower Churchill River, of course would be an incentive to any industry wanting to locate in the Province. Could the minister tell us what is the status of that commitment and that contingency with regard to the aluminum smelter?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, obviously, in any energy intensive industry such as this one basic requirement would be the availability of energy, and so that will require either the development of a new site on the Lower Churchill River, or the availability of power from the Upper Churchill River, or some other source, and obviously government is moving ahead on several fronts to determine just what opportunities will be available in that regard.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth (Mr. Simms). The minister, earlier today, made a Ministerial Statement concerning the George River caribou herd and the commercial harvest. Could the minister advise this hon. House which native groups his department has been in contact with, or consulted with before the minister brought in this Ministerial Statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, first of all, may I say that I am extremely, extremely surprised at the attitude displayed by the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) in his response to the Ministerial Statement, to begin with. I had, along with a lot of other people on this side, considered him to be one of the leading aspirants for the leadership of the party opposite because of his reasonableness, his rational thinking, and his rational explanations and expressions. But, obviously, I am going to have to consider my pledge of support to him and might ask that he send back the \$2.01 I sent over to him

MR, SIMMS:  
campaign.

last week toward his

Mr. Speaker, this is a project and a change in harvesting plan that was determined after a feasibility study has been undertaken by a local corporation to determine whether or not the resource there was underutilized and if it was feasible to harvest it. That study indicated that it was, and we have, indeed, decided to utilize that particular resource. Right now there are about 12,000 animals harvested from that resource annually, 9,000 of which are harvested by the Government of Quebec through their outfitting business which they have had in existence for years. We have not been taking advantage of the resource; we have decided now that there is a possibility and a good possibility of making available to the economy of Labrador approximately \$5 million worth of business.

Of course, the other side of it is that there is a possibility of some 200 jobs, we estimate, being developed, and I think that is a positive step, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARREN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): A supplementary, the hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: I will ask the minister the question again. Have the minister's officials consulted with the two native associations in Labrador before the minister decided to take this unilateral action?

MR. NEARY: A good question.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. SIMMS: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to give the hon. the member for Torngat Mountains the assurance that this particular change in harvesting plan will have no effect detrimentally at all on the harvesting that is now done by the native people. They will still be able to continue to harvest that resource without any detriment at all. The other point is, of course, that we have had representations over the past couple of years from numerous people in the Labrador area who have expressed an interest and a desire to develop something like this and to take advantage of the resource that is available, to create 200 jobs and provide a \$5 million stimulus to the economy of Labrador. Now, I would find it impossible to believe that the hon. the member for Torngat Mountains would be against that kind of a proposal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I gather from the

MR. WARREN: minister's answer there was no consultation.

Again, another example,

Mr. Speaker: It was only about two years ago the Premier betrayed the native people, and now we have the minister betraying the native people, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please! Order, please!  
The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) is proceeding to make a speech, I would request him to ask a precise question.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the minister is, since he did not answer the question as to whether there was any consultation or not, can the minister guarantee that there will not - at the present time, the native people in the Nain - Davis Inlet area hunt the caribou by means of land transportation and it is not having any effect on the caribou herd - will the minister guarantee that if this commercial harvest comes about, that there will not be any aircraft used to go into the center of the herd and disrupt the herd?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, the flight paths of aircraft does not come under the jurisdiction of my department so I do not quite know how to respond to that question. Whatever development takes place will be done with the proper assessment, whatever assessment is required.

MR. WARREN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker -

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: - to the minister. Would the minister undertake -

MR. NEARY: To table the feasibility study.

MR. WARREN: First? Okay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. WARREN: - to table the feasibility study that was done by the Assistant Deputy Minister of Rural Development in Goose Bay, who has wanted for the last three years to have a commercial hunt, who started the whole thing going in Goose Bay about four years ago - that Assistant Deputy Minister that is the guy who started the whole ball rolling - would the minister agree to table this report and to advise this hon. House if he or his officials will be sitting down with the native people in the Province concerning an action that his department has taken without any consultation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, I can understand now why my office has been flooded with phone calls over the last two weeks asking for the hon. member's Provincial Affairs programme on CBC to be shown again. Now I realize

MR. SIMMS:

why it has been done.

Mr. Speaker, as I said in a statement and as I said in response to earlier questions, the harvesting that has been done by the native people will not be in jeopardy at all, it will have no effect whatsoever. The feasibility study the hon. member refers to is one that was done in conjunction with the federal government, by the way, not the one that you are referring to by a former Assistant Deputy Minister.

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. the Leader of the

Opposition.

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, I have got a quicky for the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn) today. Back in June when the administration declared a holiday, the hon. gentleman went public and said that he wanted the businesses who did not observe the holiday to be prosecuted. Now would the hon. gentleman tell the House what action has been taken? Have they abandoned the idea of prosecuting the businesses that stayed open in defiance of the law? Mr. Speaker, has the administration backtracked now? Could the hon. gentleman tell the House what the status of that situation is now?

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

MR. DINN: Mr. Speaker, I realize that that is one of the questions that the Opposition spent several weeks in trying to determine when they would get an opportunity to ask because it is of such urgent public importance. I will get a status report, an up-date, a status report for the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) and provide it to him as soon as it is can possibly be done.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! The time for the Question Period has expired.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, as required by the Financial Administration Act, today I table the Public Accounts of the Province for the year ending -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

DR. COLLINS: - March 31, 1983, that is the fiscal year which ended earlier this present calendar year. In doing so, I would like to point out to the hon. House that this is a considerable achievement. Never before have the Public Accounts been tabled at such an early date. Indeed, never before have they been tabled in the same calendar year in which the related fiscal year ended.

Mr. Speaker, the compilation of the Public Accounts is a very large undertaking consisting of a review and summary of all the many transactions during the year by the departments and by government as a whole, together with a statement of the financial position of the government at the end of the year. It is, therefore, only

DR. COLLINS: right that I should congratulate the Comptroller General of the Province, one of the two most senior officials in the Department of Finance, as well as his staff, for completing this unusual feat.

My action in tabling the Public Accounts with such alacrity is also in keeping with the fundamental policy of openness and accountability of this government in its dealings with the House and with the people of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

DR. COLLINS: In this connection, I would point out that the Public Accounts are being tabled at the earliest practical moment, so much so that printed copies for circulation to the members of the House, the public and the media, will not be available for a further week or so. When this unavoidable delay in printing became obvious, I felt it best to table the original, signed, Public Accounts document received by me without further delay.

Mr. Speaker, I also take pleasure pursuant to the Financial Administration Act in tabling the report of the Auditor General.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY: We finally wormed it out of him.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please! Order, please!

DR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, that is for the same fiscal year -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

DR. COLLINS: - that is for the same fiscal year to which the Public Accounts apply.

DR. COLLINS: Accordingly, I extend my congratulations to the Auditor General and his staff for matching the diligence of the Department of Finance by such early presentation of his annual report also.

MR. NEARY: Another victory for the Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please! Order, please!

DR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, as has been the practice of this administration since taking office, I also table the document entitled Departmental Observations on the Report of the Auditor General for the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 1983. The purpose of this document, and a most useful one it is, is to show clearly the response of each department of government to the comments on its performance contained in the Auditor General's annual report. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the tabling of these three important documents gives a complete view of all aspects of the financial operations of government for the year which ended just a little over eight months ago.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): A point of order, the hon.  
Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the  
hon. gentleman if he has copies for the Opposition of the  
Auditor General's Report? Is there a spare copy or is there  
only one copy?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!  
The hon. Leader of the Opposition  
(Mr. Neary) used the occasion to ask a question and obviously  
it is not a valid point of order whatsoever.

MR. NEARY: By leave. We will give him  
permission to answer.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the  
Leader of the Opposition asked about the medal for the  
merchant seamen and I was trying to explain yesterday to  
the Leader of the Opposition from memory about three different  
groups of people, one who have already got the volunteer  
medal who were for all intents and purposes in conflict  
in the last war; then there were the foresters, and the  
Leader of the Opposition was asking about the merchant  
seamen. As it relates to the merchant seamen, we have  
gotten back to the merchant seamen saying that we are  
agreeable to the concept of a medal, but we are waiting to  
hear back from them as it relates to the terms, the definition  
of merchant seamen in terms of times of service, routes  
to be served and so on.

MR. NEARY: Do they have their own  
organization?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes. Someone representing  
their group wrote us and we have written them back and said

PREMIER PECKFORD: to them we are agreeable to the concept, we just want some more definition of what a merchant seaman actually is so that we can get an idea.

MR. NEARY: That was done years ago.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Let me answer the question first, that is all I am asking. I am trying to explain something -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD: - to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary). In accordance with the rules I undertook to get an answer from the Leader of the Opposition for today, and I am trying to answer the question. We already have issued a medal to a group of servicemen. There is another group called the foresters who wish to have the same medal as the first group, and we said to them, 'No, because you are a different group all together and most of you served in England rather than actually at the front', for want of better terminology I can think of right now, 'and you should have your own distinct medal'. The foresters are still insisting on having the same medal as the first group. Then there is the third group, the merchant seamen, and we have written them back and said to them, 'Yes, we are agreeable in concept for you having a medal and we wish to now get into discussions with you on the definition of a merchant seaman because we need to know the definition so that we will know the numbers we are talking about so we will be able to determine the cost'. And that is where that is at the present moment.

MR. NEARY: How long ago was that?

PREMIER PECKFORD: I do not know the exact date. I can get that information for the Leader of the Opposition. But

PREMIER PECKFORD: we have gotten back to them and we are waiting to hear from them on the definition so that then we can finalize something for them.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. MARSHALL: Order 17, Bill No. 21.  
Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Newfoundland Public Service Commission Act, 1973". (Bill No. 21).

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary), adjourned the debate.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, there is not much I guess I can add to what I have already said in debating this bill. Yesterday I opened my few remarks by stating that the hon. gentleman who introduced the bill did not seem to grasp, did not seem to have the background, of what it was all about. He was pinch-hitting

MR. NEARY: for the Minister of Public Works and Services (Mr. Young), so now that that hon. gentleman is back in his seat maybe when second reading of the bill is being closed, Mr. Speaker, we may get a lecture from the Minister of Public Works and Services as to why these changes were necessary, something we did not get yesterday from the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall). So at least one member of the Commission shall be appointed from the public service of the Province. That is the way it is now, but the amendment is to provide that a period of service as a member of the Commission counts towards the ten years of public service required for the purpose of subsection (4) of Section 6.

So I think what the hon. gentleman was trying to say was that it would be no longer necessary - with this amendment - to appoint an executive from the public service to oversee promotions and appointments and so forth, that that would no longer be necessary, that a member of the public service could build up ten years of service while he is a member of the Commission and did not necessarily have to be an executive type. It is too bad the hon. gentleman was not here yesterday to give us some intelligent background on this information.

MR. WARREN: It is impossible!

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman could have saved a lot of time in this House if he had been in his seat yesterday when this very important piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, was being brought into the House, when the hon. Government House Leader did not seem to understand what it was all about.

Now, here we are again, twelve days before Christmas, the Province in chaos, Mr. Speaker, we are on the brink of financial ruin, the economy is in the

MR. NEARY: . . . . . worst state it has been in in our whole history. We are on the brink of bankruptcy, and if we were not a Province of Canada today we would be bankrupt. We have 60,000 Newfoundlanders unemployed, most of them, 50 per cent of them young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, and here we are forced to debate a bill, Mr. Speaker, that will change the status of a member of the Public Service Commission.

They have their priorities upside-down. We have the highest taxes in Canada, sick people lying in corridors in hospitals waiting for beds, as a result of the government's restraint programme. The fishery is in chaos. The pulp and paper industry is almost on the brink of ruin. The mining industry is in the middle of a bad recession. We have large numbers of fish plant workers and fishermen who do not qualify for unemployment insurance, the first time since Confederation, Mr. Speaker, and here is what we are forced to debate.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): On a point of order, the hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: Of course, the day would not be complete if the hon. gentleman were not called to order, but he is not being germane to the bill, Mr. Speaker. This is a bill relating to a change in the Public Service Commission. It is a bill that relates to the qualification to be a commissioner and the requirement with respect to doing certain reports and to delegated authority. Now, the hon. gentleman can get up and by saying, you know, this bill does not deal with the economy and go on and talk about irrelevant matters, but he is being irrelevant to the principle of the bill.

MR. HODDER: To the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): To that point of order, the  
hon. member for Port Au Port.

MR. HODDER: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me  
that the hon. gentleman opposite protests too much, because  
every time the hon. gentleman speaks, and he has on a number  
of occasions in the past couple of days, he tells us how  
great the legislation is that the government brings in.

MR. HODDER: Well, if he has the right to be able to say that when he is speaking on the bill, Mr. Speaker, I am sure we can talk to the bill to point out, and I think it is germane to the bill, as well, that the legislation is practically worthless and that what the government is saying about the legislation they have brought in this session is totally untrue.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!  
I have to agree that the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) is straying somewhat from the principle of this bill. I would remind him of our rule of relevancy, and that we are discussing Bill No. 21, "An Act To Amend The Public Service Commission Act, 1973".

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.  
I apologize if I was straying there a little but, but really what I was doing was trying to illustrate to the House and to the people of this Province the priorities of this administration, and I think that is fair enough. They seem to have their priorities upside-down. This is not the kind of legislation that we should be debating in this House now, Mr. Speaker, what we should be talking about is the economy, jobs, what plans the administration have for dealing with unemployment; and tell us what they intend to do about hospital user pay fees.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): A point of order, the hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has already been ruled out of order and he still persists. Now, the fact of the matter is the hon. gentleman

MR. MARSHALL: has plenty of time to ask questions about the economy or anything he wishes during Question Period, during the Late Show. And we saw the depth of his interest today in the type of questions he asked of the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn). He just had a half hour to ask questions about the economy and he asked virtually nothing about it.

This is a matter which relates to the principle of the bill; the principle of this bill, Mr. Speaker, relates to the Public Service Commission and the complement of the Commission and, as I said, the matter of delegated authority. And the hon. gentleman is out of order. He has been called to order by Your Honour, and yet he persists in his irrelevancy.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. the Leader of the Opposition to that point of order.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of a comment you would get from a small man with a small mind. As I indicated during my few remarks, when Your Honour made his ruling, I thanked Your Honour, I apologized to the Chair for straying, but I believe that we are allowed, Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about legislation, to indicate whether or not this is the government's number one priority, and that is precisely what I was doing. All the hon. gentleman is doing is interrupting me unnecessarily. Mr. Speaker, they can try to rush legislation through, they can try to bully the Opposition as much as they want, but we are going to stay here as long as is necessary to debate this legislation thoroughly. The hon. gentleman can get as testy as he wants. I know he wants to close the House down. He wants to get out of the House. He has got pressure from his own members to shut her down, but, Mr. Speaker, we intend to stay here as long as is necessary. Even if we have to stay here until New Year's Eve, it does not make any difference

MR. NEARY: to us, Mr. Speaker, we intend to stay.

And now we have all kinds of ammunition in the Auditor General's Report; we have the Springdale ferry we can talk about, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: The point I was making, Mr. Speaker, and that is why I am arguing, there is no point of order. I was not defying Your Honour's ruling, as the hon. gentleman said. The hon. gentleman tries to browbeat the Chair. Being the snob and the aristocrat that he is, he tries to bully the Chair. All I was implying, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a lot more important things to debate in this House than this piece of legislation that we have before us now.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): To that point of order, I have to rule again that there is a valid point of order. The intention of this debate is to debate the principle of the bill, The Public Service Act, not to debate its relevancy or its irrelevancy at this time.

I would ask the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) to direct his remarks to the principle of the bill, An Act To Amend The Public Service Commission Act, 1973.

MR. NEARY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we now see something else happening in the House. They are now gone on the shift system. They have so many members now who can go home, stay home for a few days.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: I do not know what shift we have today. They are working on three shifts over there now, we have A, B and C shift. I do not know what shift we have today. But it does not make any difference what shift they have, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BARRETT: This is the Terra Nova shift.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: We are going to talk about legislation like this bill we have in front of us as long as is necessary and they can get on the shift system all they want, it does not make any difference to us. It is not the quantity on this side that counts, it is the quality, Mr. Speaker.

When the minister is closing second reading on this bill, perhaps he would give us a report on the status of the Public Service Commission, tell us who the present members of the Commission are,

MR. NEARY: how long they are appointed for, tell us something about their background.

DR. COLLINS: What they will get for Christmas.

MR. NEARY: What they will get for Christmas? - No, that is all cut out now. You are not even allowed to take a brace of rabbits now, I understand, since the Premier brought in the new regulations.

But it would be interesting to see how much interference there has been with the Public Service Commission by this administration. Because, Mr. Speaker, we have something new happening in this Province today. We have a group of men led by the hon. gentleman directly opposite, who will get up and talk about integrity and honesty, use pious words to illustrate the halo they have over their heads as far as appointments in the Public Service are concerned, and when it comes to political patronage and political appointments, Mr. Speaker, any previous administration in this Province, and probably future administrations, could learn from this crowd. They wrote the book when it comes to political appointments, and yet they have the brazenness to stand in this House and say, 'We are an administration of integrity and honesty.'

Mr. Speaker, we have people pouring into our offices, letters from public servants all over this Province who feel they have been shafted and discriminated against. They do not want their names to be known because of the reprisals and the disciplinary action that could be taken by the gentlemen there opposite. Mr. Speaker, it seems to us that the Public Service Commission is merely a rubber stamp for the administration.

A year and a half ago, the Ombudsman, a former member of the Tory Party who was

MR. NEARY: defeated in politics,  
appointed Ombudsman by the -

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

I would remind the hon. the  
Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) of the rule of  
relevancy again. We are discussing An Act To Amend The  
Public Service Commission Act, 1973.

MR. NEARY: That is right, and that is what  
I am talking about, Mr. Speaker. I am talking about an  
appointment that was made by the Minister of Fisheries  
(Mr. Morgan) when the Ombudsman had to issue a special  
report.

Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman is  
a gentleman appointed by the administration there opposite  
so I would not consider that gentleman to be very impartial  
when it comes to partisan, political affiliations or  
leanings. But yet, that gentleman, in conscience, felt it  
was necessary to write a special report and submit a  
special report to this House

MR. NEARY: about the way that a minister made an appointment in his department.

MR. MORGAN: Yes, and I am proud of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman is proud of it. The hon. gentleman should be proud of it.

MR. MORGAN: A good PC, a good Tory and a good employee.

MR. NEARY: A good Tory and a good PC. Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman was taken to task by the Ombudsman in a special report to the House of Assembly. We only have two servants of this House, one is the Auditor General - no, we have three now, one is the Auditor General, one is the Comptroller of the Treasury, and the third one is the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman felt so enraged -

MR. MORGAN: And he was wrong.

MR. NEARY: - he felt so enraged about the blatant abuse of the ministry in overruling the Public Service Commission that he wrote a special report and took the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) to task.

MR. MORGAN: We are all Liberal, why not? You cannot find many Liberals in the Province these days.

MR. NEARY: Look, I have some documents here from Mr. Rybacki perhaps the hon. gentleman should go out and deal with that. Look, I am getting fed up with getting reports about the hon. gentleman's pavement down in Salvage.

MR. MORGAN: You poor fellow. Is it paved in Salvage? That is news to me. It will be paved in Salvage next year, I will tell you that.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, so the Ombudsman had to write a special report. Now, how did this administration of integrity and honesty, how did they deal with that report? Can the hon. the member for Menihek (Mr. Walsh) tell us how

MR. NEARY: they dealt with it? The Premier took it and swept it under the rug, said it was all a misunderstanding.

MR. MORGAN: He was wrong.

MR. NEARY: Who was wrong?

MR. MORGAN: The Ombudsman.

MR. NEARY: Will the hon. gentleman stand up and say the Ombudsman was wrong?

MR. MORGAN: He was proven wrong.

MR. NEARY: You know, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman thinks the Ombudsman was wrong -

MR. MORGAN: That is right, he is only human.

MR. NEARY: - and the administration there opposite thinks he was wrong, I ask them now in all fairness, fair play and British justice, bring the Ombudsman before the Bar of the House and let us question the Ombudsman on that special report that he had to write.

MR. TOBIN: There was no Ombudsman in your day, was there? There was no Public Service Commission either.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. DINN: There was no collective bargaining either.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: I thought they had the member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) silenced. Because he has been told by his own members that what he is doing is digging a hole for himself, that his own constituents are getting brownd off and they advised him to -

MR. TOBIN: That is why you had so many out to the meeting.

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Tape No. 3952

MJ - 3

MR. NEARY:

- button the opening.

MR. TOBIN:

How are things in Terra Nova?

MR. NEARY:

This is the first time now that  
he has surfaced for a long time.

MR. TOBIN: How are things in Terra Nova? Were you pleased with the outcome?

MR. NEARY: So, Mr. Speaker, the matter has been swept under the rug.

MR. TOBIN: 'Garfield' was not out there, was he?

MR. NEARY: Ignorance is not something that we treat very lightly in this House.

MR. TOBIN: In that case you would not be allowed in here.

MR. NEARY: Could I have silence, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER(Aylward): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Thank you, Your Honour.

MR. HODDER: He sounds like a fishwife.

MR. NEARY: So, Mr. Speaker, the report enraged the Ombudsman to the extent that he had to write a special report for this House. Now, if the Premier and the ministers and the administration there opposite think that the Ombudsman was wrong, let them stand in this House man fashion, never mind sniping across the floor of the House, and say the Ombudsman, who did a very thorough investigation into this case, who took evidence, probably some of it under Oath, who has a very comprehensive file on that appointment -

MR. TOBIN: But what did the minister do wrong?

MR. NEARY: - let the minister bring the Ombudsman before the House of Assembly, before the Bar of the House-

MR. MORGAN: I got a PC supporter a job, who was qualified for the job.

MR. TOBIN: Are voters not supposed to get jobs?

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

Order, please!

MR. NEARY:

Could we have a little order,

Mr. Speaker.

MR. HODDER:

The other fellow was far more qualified, number one, according to the Civil Service Commission, and you know it.

MR. MORGAN:

Who, your Liberal buddy in Stephenville?

MR. HODDER:

No. He was not a Liberal any more than the other guy was.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. MORGAN:

Not any more you mean.

MR. HODDER:

Not any more? He was not qualified.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

Order, please! Order, please!

I would ask both hon. members not to carry on a conversation across the House. And I would remind all hon. members that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) has the right to be heard in silence.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am using that case because I believe that is only the tip of the iceberg, of what is happening to the Public Service Commission.

MR. TOBIN:

Tell us how you hired them.

Tell us how you hired your crowd?

MR. NEARY:

I believe Your Honour asked for silence in the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, so I am only using that as an example of what people suspect is happening to the Public Service Commission, that they are being overruled by ministers, by the administration there opposite. And we can see, we can tell, Mr. Speaker, from the complaints that we

MR. NEARY: get from the people that we talk to that this administration is probably the worst in our whole history when it comes to political patronage and political appointments.

MR. HODDER: The Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) is the worst offender.

MR. NEARY: We have an example, You could not get a more classic example, I suppose, than the Ombudsman being forced to write a special report for the House for all members to see with their own eyes,

MR. NEARY: read with their own eyes. And their reaction to it is that the Ombudsman was wrong. We saw the documentation, we read it. In any court of law the administration would be convicted. But, Mr. Speaker, because they have a majority of forty-five over on that side, and seven on this side, and they sweep things under the rug and they ignore special reports from the Ombudsman, that does not make it right. If the hon. gentleman thinks the Ombudsman was wrong then let him stand in the House -

DR. COLLINS: And what about the Mifflin Report?

MR. TOBIN: What was that about?

DR. COLLINS: Social Services on Bell Island.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, could we have silence.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman thinks the Ombudsman was wrong let him stand in the House and tell the House why he thinks the Ombudsman was wrong, where he went wrong.

MR. MORGAN: Two years ago the issue was. Read Hansard for that time and see what I said then. He was wrong.

MR. NEARY: No, all we heard at that time was abuse directed towards the Ombudsman.

MR. MORGAN: That was two years ago, it is not relevant to this bill now.

MR. NEARY: Yes, it is.

So, Mr. Speaker, we think that was only the tip of the iceberg and we would like for the Minister of Public Works and Services (Mr. Young) to -

MR. CALLAN: (Inaudible).

MR. NEARY: Well, I know he is not going to get up and admit what we are accusing the administration of, he is not going to admit it. He will try to bluff his way out of it. But we know it is going on, Mr. Speaker. We know

MR. NEARY: today in Newfoundland that if you do not have the right political stripe, Mr. Speaker, you are doomed as far as getting a job in the public service is concerned.

MR. MORGAN: (Inaudible) are all gone now.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the expert is the minister himself. If you are not from certain districts, not of a certain political stripe, Mr. Speaker, you do not have a chance. And that is unfortunate and tragic. We have really come to something in this Province now where you almost have to show your PC membership card to get on the government payroll. You almost have to show your membership card, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TOBIN: One time you had to show your Liberal membership card to get building materials for your home.

MR. NEARY: You almost have to show your membership card in the Tory Party to get a job in the public service. I have calls and letters, I have testimony from people all over this Province whose sons and daughters have gone to the vocational schools, have gone to the university, have applied for jobs in the public service, that were advertised or put on the bulletin board and, Mr. Speaker, the jobs were filled before they applied,

MR. NEARY: or they did not have a chance even though they had the qualifications, probably more qualifications than the successful applicants, they had all the qualifications necessary, bright young Newfoundlanders who were told, we are sorry but there is no job for you, because somebody supported the administration. That is actually happening in this Province today.

MR. CALLAN: That is hard to believe.

MR. NEARY: Well, you should not find it very hard to believe.

MR. CALLAN: Look at their faces over there.

MR. NEARY: Yes, look at their faces, they are all angels over there. Their halos are hurting them. They will get up and tell us, 'Oh, we are an administration of integrity and honesty', and they expect everyone out there to believe it. I think sometimes they even believe it themselves. Mr. Speaker, it is shameful the way young Newfoundlanders who are applying for jobs in the Public Service, it is shameful the way they are being treated. They did what they were told; they have attended university, they have gone to the College of Trades and Technology, or the College of Fisheries, or the vocational schools, they got their education, they have got their certificates, and they are about to enter into the work-a-day world when they run right smack up against politics. The Minister of Public Works and Services (Mr. Young) thinks that they are not of the right political persuasion so no job. That hon. gentleman is the expert. When it comes to political appointments, he wrote the book.

Mr. Speaker, this administration is worse for political appointments and political patronage than the Duplessis years in the Province of Quebec, and everyone knows how corrupt the Duplessis administration was in the Province of Quebec.

MR. TOBIN: I bet you cannot name a dozen people who got jobs through political patronage.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, they would love for us to drop names on the table of the House so they could go out and retaliate against these people for giving us information. One thing that I have done since I have been a member of this House, and that is why I get so much information directed my way, I have never divulged my source of information and I never will. And awful lot of people say to me, 'Why do you not write a book? You must be in possession of a wealth of information.' And I am, Mr. Speaker. When I leave this House, when I leave public life, which may be ten or fifteen or twenty years from now, I never want to put a pencil to paper again. But as long as I am here and I have the health and strength, and as long as there is an ounce of energy in my body, Mr. Speaker, I intend to fight social injustice and discrimination.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: When are you going to the Senate?

MR. NEARY: Oh, Mr. Speaker, they would love to be able to get rid of me.

MR. SIMMS: Oh, no we would not. You would make a great contribution if you would run for leadership.

MR. TOBIN: Are you running for the leadership?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, as long as I have an ounce of energy I will fight these social injustices -

MR. TOBIN: When are you going to start?

MR. NEARY: - and discrimination against people who they are think of the opposite political stripe. Sometimes they do not even know. They do not care, as long as you have your Tory membership card or you supported this candidate or this minister. That is all they care. They are ruthless, absolutely ruthless.

MR. TOBIN: That is not true.

MR. NEARY: It is true. Ask the Minister of Public Works and Services (Mr. Young), he is the expert on it. There has been more interference with the Public Service Commission in recent years, Mr. Speaker, than ever in our whole history.

MR. TOBIN: Why way did you hire when you were Minister of Social Services?

MR. NEARY: And now they have a new technique. Their technique now is, if cannot ram it through the Public Service, Mr. Speaker, if it looks too obvious and it might hit the headlines -

MR. TOBIN: Did you hire (inaudible)?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, could we have silence, please? Could you ask the hon. gentleman to restrain himself, please!

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please! Order, please!

MR. NEARY: If it is too obvious and they think the public may hear about it, it may hit the headlines -

MR. SIMMS: Put them on contract.

MR. NEARY: Put them on contract, that is right.

MR. SIMMS: You said that yesterday.

MR. NEARY: Yes, and I will say it tomorrow and next week. It may get boring for the hon. gentleman but it is not boring for the people out there who have sons and daughters sitting home today who should be working.

MR. SIMMS: The media people are all gone, boy.

MR. NEARY: Do not worry, they are listening.

MR. SIMMS: No, they are not. If they are not, the Speaker is listening.

MR. NEARY: They are gone in to read the Auditor General's report to find out about that ferry down in Springdale.

MR. SIMMS: What ferry?

MR. NEARY: The one the taxpayers paid for.

MR. SIMMS: Withdraw! Withdraw!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentlemen over there may think it is a big joke, they may think it is funny, but when you travel around this Province and you go to the home of a person whom you have never met before in your life and you meet a young lady with a degree or a son with a business administration course and they say, 'Look, he has applied for several jobs in the public service, went in for the interviews, we paid his way in to St. John's for his interviews. But do you know who got the job?' they will say to you - 'So-and-So, because he campaigned for the minister, that is who got the job!' - or 'So-and-So, because he is a fork relation of somebody on the government side of the House!' Mr. Speaker, that is what they tell you.

MR. SIMMS: You can count them on one hand.

MR. YOUNG: Tell us about the bridge in Codroy.

MR. NEARY: Yes, if we ever saw a fib and a farce, we saw it with the opening of the bridge down in Codroy the other day.

MR. SIMMS: No way! No way!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please! Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada contributed \$3.6 million, the Province \$800,000 and they hailed it as a great provincial project. And they allowed the federal MP to hold the ribbon on one end and the hon. gentleman on the other end after the Government of Canada contributed \$3.6 million to that project. What a bluff!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

MR. NEARY: What a bluff! And the Premier cuts the ribbon and never even acknowledged that Ottawa put \$3.6 million into that project.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

I wish to remind the hon. the Leader of the Opposition of the rule of relevancy. again. I do not see what the bridge in the Codroy Valley has to do with the Public Service Commission, Bill No. 21.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, sometimes when you get baited by the other side, when you have these distractions and interruptions, one cannot help getting carried away. And the hon. gentleman just reminded me of that gigantic bluff that they ran the other day down in the Codroy Valley.

MR. DAVE: Your colleague, the MP, did not even know what bridge was there three years ago.

MR. NEARY: The MP invited me up for the opening and I said I would go if Ottawa got the recognition that it deserved for putting \$3.6 million into it and Ottawa certainly did not.

MR. DAVE: (Inaudible) acknowledgement of it.

MR. NEARY: Well, my colleague from Ottawa was there too.

MR. SIMMS: And they let Roger Simmons cut the ribbon?

MR. NEARY: They let him hold the ribbon, let him hold it! That is an expensive ribbon, \$3.6 million from the Government of Canada!

MR. DAVE: He did not have anything to do with it.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please! Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, they are trying to deliberately sidetrack me.

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

May I interrupt the hon. the Leader of the Opposition for one minute?

It gives me great pleasure to welcome to our galleries, Tom Best and the members of the Petty Harbour Fishermen's Association.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the members of the Petty Harbour Fishermen's Association are here today to hear what I have to say.

MR. DAVE: You are a lot gladder than they are!

MR. NEARY: If you are not the son of a lawyer or the son of a doctor you do not have much chance with that administration.

MR. NEARY: If you are the son of a miner, or a fisherman, or a logger, Mr. Speaker, you do not have much of a chance, because they are handing out their jobs along partisan political lines.

MR. TOBIN: Name some jobs. Name some. Have some source. Name some jobs, Document the jobs. Tell us.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentlemen would love to have names. They would love to have them so they could go out and mow them down. Because that is what they would do. And I am not talking about the kinds of jobs that was given to the former member for Gander, who is the handshaker in this Province. We are the only Province in Canada that has an official handshaker, a hand greeter.

MR. TOBIN: That is not true.

MR. NEARY: That is true.

Mr. Speaker, we have a gentleman who sat in this House for six or seven years -

MR. SIMMS: A fine gentleman.

MR. NEARY: - and a fine gentleman, who was given an appointment by the administration. And what does Your Honour think the appointment involves?

MR. SIMMS: Official greeter.

MR. NEARY: Official greeter, shaking hands with people. For that he makes \$30,000 or \$35,000 a year plus expenses. An official handshaker, the only Province in Canada that has one.

In addition to that we have a protocol officer.

MR. SIMMS: Yes, that is all we have. A small staff.

MR. NEARY: A small staff.

MR. SIMMS: In every other province they have twenty or thirty.

MR. NEARY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, twenty or thirty handshakers in the other provinces?

MR. SIMMS: Yes.

MR. NEARY: We are the only Province in Canada which has an official handshaker.

MR. SIMMS: You do not agree with protocol?

MR. DAWE: There is a nice one in Nova Scotia, too, I understand.

MR. NEARY: I am not talking about these kinds of appointments, by the way, these are political appointments, these are outside the ones I am talking about. I am talking about appointments that fall under the ambit of the Public Service Commission.

MR. SIMMS: We cannot get any jobs there. We cannot get any jobs there. You know better than that.

MR. TOBIN: I wish I had to know how to get one.

MR. NEARY: Can the hon. gentleman look me straight in the eye -

MR. SIMMS: Yes. Yes I can.

MR. NEARY: - and say that, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SIMMS: Yes.

MR. NEARY: Well, the hon. gentleman should talk to some of his other colleagues. The hon. gentleman should take a look around and look at some of his other colleagues.

MR. YOUNG: All forty-five of us, boy. 'Forty-five from Carbonear'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY: So, Mr. Speaker, the number of jobs, the number of classifications that have been established outside the Public Service has increased tremendously in the last several years. The number of people on contract increased tremendously, a way to get around the

MR. NEARY:

Public Service Commission.

The number of political appointments have increased drastically in this Province. Today, if you fail in business, you do not pay your social security tax, you are no good to anybody else, you can get appointed to Newfoundland Hydro. That is the new Newfoundland Senate. They talk about the Senate over there, we have our own Senate here in Newfoundland, we have Newfoundland Hydro.

MR. NEARY:

You get an appointment for life to Newfoundland Hydro if you cannot do anything else.

Mr. Speaker, when are we going to get back to fair play in this Province? When are we going to get back to the kind of atmosphere where a man is judged on the basis of his qualifications and not his politics?

MR. TOBIN: That is not how you did it.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, when are we going to get back to that day when a man will be able to apply for a job and know he is going to get a fair shake.

MR. SIMMS: The fishermen from Petty Harbour are leaving, they cannot stand it.

MR. NEARY: No, do not worry, the fishermen from Petty Harbour know what I am talking about. When will the son or a daughter of a fisherman or a miner or a logger or a paper maker or a machinist or a truck driver, when will they be able to apply for a job and say, "I think I got a fair chance to get that job because I have the qualifications," and not be discriminated against by somebody there opposite, that nobody will run interference on behalf of one of their supporters, the Minister of Public Works and Services (Mr. Young) will not have a quarterback taking the ball and running with it to the Public Service Commission and saying, "Hold it now, hold it, look, you know, the minister would like this particular person to be number one on the list, he would like that particular person to be number one?"

MR. SIMMS: It cannot be done, Sir. It cannot be done.

- MR. NEARY: It could not be done with the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) but it was done.
- MR. SIMMS: One example.
- MR. NEARY: Oh, one example, one example that brought on a special report from the Ombudsman.
- MR. SIMMS: Why was that? It brought on a report from the Ombudsman because the gentleman who did not get the job complained to him about it.
- MR. NEARY: The Ombudsman was so enraged about the way it was handled by the gentlemen there opposite that he wrote a special report condemning the administration.
- MR. SIMMS: How can that one example lead you to say that that is what is done universally, everywhere in the Public Service Commission? Baloney and rhetoric, that is all you know, Sir. Be fair with the people now.
- MR. TOBIN: He can say it, because that is what he did.
- MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, we are raising these matters because of the complaints that we get.
- MR. TOBIN: Okay, tell us how you appointed your friends in Social Services.
- MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas): Order, please!
- MR. NEARY: Surely, Mr. Speaker, this House does not have to put up with the ignorance of the rules by the hon. gentleman. We do not have to put up with that.
- MR. TOBIN: Just tell us how you appointed your management people in Social Services?
- MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!
- MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, my suggestion to any hon. gentlemen there opposite who do not agree with what I am saying is that this is a debating forum and hon. gentlemen have the same privilege that I have, they can stand and debate,

MR. NEARY: they can rebut what I am saying, they can argue against it. But, Mr. Speaker, the trouble is that they are on the shift system over there. The Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) has sent the word out, "Boys, keep quiet, we have to get the House closed."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, Sir! No, Sir!

MR. NEARY: "We have twenty-odd pieces of legislation on the Order Paper and we will never get it done if everybody gets up and speaks". But, Mr. Speaker, what I say to hon. gentlemen there opposite -

MR. TOBIN: As a matter of fact the (inaudible) shift starts again next Thursday.

MR. HODDER: If you have anything to say, say it.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas): Order, please! Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

The hon. member has asked on a number of occasions for silence when he is speaking and I would ask all hon. members to honour that request.

MR. HODDER: I will take you on day for day in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. NEARY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for protecting me.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest if the member for Burin-Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) keeps it up Your Honour has no choice but to name him. You can only carry on as if you were in a bar or in a tavern somewhere for so long, then Your Honour has to bring the hon. gentleman to task.

MR. TOBIN: Tell us about The Bright Spot.

MR. NEARY: If the hon. gentlemen there opposite disagree with what I am saying about this bill, about by-passing the Public Service Commission, about bullying, pushing and shoving the Public Service Commission, if they disagree with me let them stand and say so. That is all they have to do, Mr. Speaker. But I have the right and the privilege to stand here and say what I think and what I know from experience, and what I know from letters and correspondence and meetings that I have had with parents and with individuals who applied for jobs in the Public Service in this Province.

MR. DOYLE: That is why we have the Public Service Commission as opposed to -

MR. NEARY: My suggestion to the hon. gentleman is to advise his colleagues to leave the Public Service Commission alone.

MR. NEARY: As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, there should not be one appointment made without being processed through the Public Service Commission, not one.

MR. SIMMS: Ninety-nine point nine of them are.

MR. NEARY: Oh, 99.9 are. I had another example the other day where the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn) interfered with the Workers' Compensation Board, picked up his phone, called the Chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board, said I have a friend -

MR. WALSH: You have no proof of that.

MR. NEARY: Well, I had the letter there the other day. I do not know if I still have it. Look, there it is - 'As per our telephone conversation of Thursday the 11th March, 1982, I am enclosing a resume of Mr. So-and-So'.

MR. WALSH: Big deal.

MR. NEARY: Yes, it is a big deal. The problem is that we do not know what happened in that telephone conversation.

MR. DOYLE: Oh, now, the minister made representation on behalf of a constituent.

MR. NEARY: I see. And it is just merely a coincidence that the fellow he telephoned about and then wrote the letter about and sent the resume got a job on a contractual basis bypassing the procedure of the Workers' Compensation Board. That was all merely a coincident, Mr. Speaker. How many examples do they want? We are not going to trot out the names of everybody who complained about being discriminated against, or they feel they have been discriminated against by the administration, by the Public Service Commission. We are not going to trot them out because of reprisals and retaliations against these people.

So, Mr. Speaker, we hope that the minister now who is here today, will be able to give us a bit of background on why it was necessary to make the

MR. NEARY: change that is being recommended in this bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)

MR. NEARY: He can take as long as he wants, we are going to be here until Christmas Eve anyway. And tell us when the appointments were made, how they were made to the Public Service Commission, and how long these people are appointed for?

Now, Mr. Speaker, hon. gentlemen may not like it, and ladies may not like it there opposite, they do not like the truth, they do not like to be criticized.

MR. DOYLE: Go back to the (inaudible)

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman should go and meet and talk about his ferry on Bell Island that they are calling me about, for the last few weeks.

MR. DAWE: Yes, I am sure they are. And he has increased the double boats from five weeks to five months since he has been a member.

MR. NEARY: \$3.6 million to \$800,000 and the member of Parliament gets to hold the ribbon.

MR. DAWE: That is about as much effort as the member of Parliament put into it.

MR. NEARY: I remember when the federal MP was here with a cheque in his pocket for \$1.8 million and the hon. gentleman would not go down to the telephone building to collect it, he sent down his deputy minister.

MR. DAWE: That is the part that was worth holding on to the ribbon.

MR. NEARY: Oh, yes. Well, there is still \$1.8 million owing and, I guarantee you, if I was in the MP's place they would sweat for it. They would sweat, if I had anything to do with it.

MR. DAWE: It is a legislative programme  
and he has nothing to do with it.

MR. NEARY: So, Mr. Speaker, I think I have  
exhausted now just about everything I could say about this  
bill. I look forward to the response from the hon. gentleman.

MR. NEARY:

I do not expect the hon. gentleman to get up and admit that the things are happening that I accused the administration of, but I would like to get some kind of an explanation from the hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker. And we would like to know the reason we are being forced here, just about a week or ten days before Christmas, to debate a bill to change the qualifications of members of the Public Service Commission. Mr. Speaker, at least we are entitled to an explanation as to why we are being asked to do that just a few days before Christmas.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

If the minister speaks now he closes the debate.

The hon. Minister of Public Works.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the House Leader (Mr. Marshall) for introducing the bill in his excellent way yesterday, learned gentleman that he is. Mr. Speaker, I was unfortunately absent, Sir, I had to attend a function in my district. I have about seven this week. I hope it is not a conflict of interest, but the people are dying to see me in my district, not like the hon. member, they do not even want to hear tell of him.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member gets up and he shakes this little bill which could have taken five minutes yesterday afternoon, "This is a priority of government." Who has been speaking for almost an hour on this, Mr. Speaker? Who has been delaying the closing of the House or whatever business we want to go on with - we have other important bills on the Order Paper - other than the hon. member?

MR. MARSHALL:

Right on.

MR. YOUNG:

Now, Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill: The former Chairman had fourteen years altogether in the civil service, but his time while he was Chairman of

MR. YOUNG: Public Service Commission was not recognized. This is what we want to do, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to ask the hon. member about the jobs he is talking about. Look, one thing we are proud of is that the police, the firemen, and the wardens go through the Public Service Commission now. That is a great step forward. But what happens, Mr. Speaker, when you get 400 applications for thirty-five jobs? Someone has to be disappointed. I would ask the hon. member to name one person who applied and was bullied, as he says himself, by any member on this side of the House.

MR. DINN: Name one!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. YOUNG: Name one! And I will also ask him to come down and meet with the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, I will meet with the Commission itself, the full Commission and see if anyone bullied anyone in the Public Service Commission, as he stated?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. YOUNG: Now, Mr. Speaker, we do not intend to bully the Opposition. If they are making fools of themselves, like Mr. Parsons said in The Evening Telegram sometime last week, that is not our fault.

MR. MARSHALL: He was saying The Daily News.

MR. YOUNG: He said The Daily News. The Evening Telegram was it? In The Evening Telegram he said, with the questions they are asking they are making fools of themselves.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the jobs he is talking about over in my district: Mr. Speaker, if my constituents are qualified, smart, with high I.Qs and so forth, and well represented get jobs, that is not my fault, Mr.

MR. YOUNG: Speaker, that they qualified and got these jobs. Sir, he asked who the Chairman of the Public Service Commission was?

MR. MARSHALL: Did he actually ask that?

MR. YOUNG: He actually asked that and why were they appointed and all of that? Now, it is Mr. Peter Withers who was a civil servant all his life, Mr. Speaker, he was deputy minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. He is also Chairman of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. Now, Mr. Speaker, is he not qualified for the position? We have Mr. Vince Rossister of the Commission, he had experience in personnel and he worked in the 1950s with the U.S. Department of Defence. He is a Vice-Chairman. We have another gentleman, Mr. Doug Whitten, who is a career civil servant, and was Administrator with the Department of Health. His appointment was made in 1981.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, these people are appointed at the pleasure of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. There is no skulduggery going on. As I said before, if the hon. member says he got letters, he has not got a letter, Mr. Speaker. He might have cut a letter or two out of The Evening Telegram or The Daily News and that is about all he got over there to put his hopes and his complaints on. Mr. Speaker, I have much pleasure in moving second reading. I would also say that the other information he was looking for, when we table the Report of the Public Service Commission all the information will be in it.

Thank you, Sir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Newfoundland Public Service Commission Act, 1973," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 21).

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Fishing Ships (Bounties) Act." (Bill No. 8).

MR. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present this bill to the House for second reading. It is a bill dealing with fishermen's bounties. Under the financial assistance we provide to fishermen there is a grant system we call bounties, paid to fishermen to help offset the cost of their boats, and these bounties are paid only after a five year period. For example, one fisherman can only receive one bounty within a five year period or the five year age of

MR. MORGAN: his boat. What this bill is doing is amending that legislation to enable more than one bounty or grant to be paid to fishermen under special circumstances. These special circumstances will be that if a fisherman, for example, loses his vessel by means of a storm or by fire, or for any reason the vessel is lost or damaged to an extent that it cannot be used any longer in the fishing industry, or in the fishery, then we felt it is quite unfair to that fishermen that he would not qualify to receive a bounty to help him replace that vessel he lost in a storm or in some other accident. This amendment is merely for that purpose, being able to have fishermen qualify twice within the five year period to offset circumstances beyond their control.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas): The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, that was a very brief report given by the hon. gentleman. I have a couple of questions that I would like to ask about bounties. Could the hon. gentleman tell the House now what bounties boat owners can qualify for? There have been an awful lot of changes made in recent years as far as bounties for gear and boats are concerned, Mr. Speaker. It is a job to keep up to what is available. Could the hon. gentleman when he is closing second reading on this bill give us a run-down on the kinds of bounties that are available now to fishermen who want to build boats, and the bounties that are available for various sizes of boats.

Could the hon. gentleman also tell the House, I presume it is through the Fisheries Loan Board that these applications have to made? Is that correct?

MR. MORGAN: Yes.

MR. NEARY:

Through the Fisheries Loan

Board.

Now, Mr. Speaker, hon. members will recall a couple of years ago the minister changed the Fisheries Loan Board and forced the fishermen in this Province to apply to the banks for loans. I believe it is about time we had a comprehensive report on how that system is working. It seems to me that there is an awful lot of complaints and condemnation of the administration for forcing fishermen to go to talk to bank managers about applying for loans, and about getting loans and so forth and so on. The fishermen of this Province were not used to that and they do not like it. They prefer to deal with their elected representatives.

MR. NEARY: but the minister and the administration forced them to go to bank managers, and they are not at all happy about it. I would like to ask the minister if there is any intention on the part of the administration to revert back to the original procedure and have the fishermen make their applications directly to the department and have them processed by the Fisheries Loan Board and not have to go to bank managers who sometimes can be very cold and calculated in their decisions. There has been an awful lot of inconvenience and an awful lot of hardship created for fishermen in this Province as a result of the new procedure that was adopted by the administration there a couple of years ago. I believe the minister now should, when he is closing second reading of this debate, tell the House whether there have been complaints and how the Fishermen's Union feel about the new system. Were they happier with the old system? I believe fishermen all over the Province have told me, and I am sure they have told other members of the House, how much they hate going down and sitting in a bank manager's office to make an application for a loan to build a boat or to buy gear. They feel that they are being - I do not suppose it is right to say ill-treated by the bank managers, that is not the right phrase I am looking for, but they feel that they are being treated in a cold and sort of hard-hearted way. And the administration have managed to successfully ~~to~~ shrug off their responsibilities to the bank.

I would like for the minister to indicate where we stand now, at this point in time, regarding the Fisheries Loan Board. Does the administration intend to revert back to the original system or are they still going to force fishermen to go to the banks when they need loans?

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, the amendment itself is a good one, as far as making it possible for fishermen to get more than one bounty in a five year period. I think it is worthwhile because I know of a couple of instances myself where fishermen's boats went aground, were damaged beyond repair or were burned. There were a couple in my own district that got burned. I am not sure if they would qualify under this new amendment. But certainly if the boat had been a new boat, a couple or three years old, Mr. Speaker, when she caught fire and burned, then the fisherman would stand to lose everything, he would not be entitled to a second bounty in a five year period. He would have to wait until the five years ran out before he would be entitled to another bounty. So, that amendment, I would say, is a fairly good one. But I would like for the minister in second reading to give us a much broader outline of how the new system is working, what kind of complaints they are getting about it, if it is the intention of the administration to accept their responsibility and not to brush off their responsibility onto the bank managers, that these matters

MR. NEARY: should be rightly dealt with by the elected representatives of the people. They have managed to duck out from under, Mr. Speaker. They have weaseled their way out. At least the fisherman can come and talk to his member, or he can argue with the Fisheries Loan Board, or he can argue with the ministry, but he has not got a chance with a bank manager, just hard, cold facts and figures and that is it.

Now, maybe that is the way the administration want it. Maybe they want to treat people in a cold and callous way. Maybe that is the way they want it, because they have a reputation, Mr. Speaker, and I think rightly so, that they have no feeling for people. The Liberal Party has a long-standing tradition and record of being a party of the people, of having feelings for the people. One of the big problems with this administration is that they have no regard or no feelings for people and they proved that when they tossed the responsibility for fishermen's loans over to bank managers, another illustration of the lack of regard that they have for the people of this Province.

Our primary producers, the people who generate new dollars, who create the jobs in this Province - the primary producer, the fisherman, will come to his elected representative looking for assistance and he is told, 'Boy, look, go down to the bank. You go down to the bank and if you can negotiate with the bank, then we will pay so much of your interest.' And the poor fellow goes off to the bank and when he leaves the bank manager's office - with all due respect to bank managers - he comes out completely frustrated, a lot of the fishermen, completely frustrated, do not know if they are going to get their loans or not. Some of them have lost good

MR. NEARY: deals, Mr. Speaker, because they have not been able to get their loans processed. An awful lot of them that I have talked to have nothing but criticism and strong condemnation for the administration for the way that they have treated the fishermen of this Province.

MR. MARSHALL: I bet you do not fuel it.

MR. NEARY: I do not fuel it? Mr. Speaker, I would listen to any citizen of this Province, whether he is a fisherman, whether he is a miner, whether he is a logger, whether he is a truck driver, an office worker or a retail clerk. I just do not hobnob around with the clique. That is one of the problems about the ministers, they are living in a dream world, they are in their ivory tower and they do not hear, and most of the time they do not want to listen to what is being said or what is going on. I am sure the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) if he were to stand in this House and tell the truth about this situation, that he would have to admit that what I am saying is correct, that an awful lot of fishermen feel that they have been cast aside by the administration and that the administration abdicated its responsibility for dealing with these matters and threw it over on the bank managers. Now, as good as the bank managers are, and a lot of them are good common-sense people, fishermen find it very hard, very difficult to negotiate loans with the banks.

MR. NEARY: And so, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the hon. gentleman when he is speaking now on second reading, closing second reading on this bill to make what he calls a simple amendment, but a very important amendment, that he will give us a full and detailed and comprehensive report on how the Fisheries Loan Board has been functioning in the last couple of years, since they installed the new system of forcing fishermen to deal with the banks rather than deal with the administration and with the elected representatives of the people.

MR. SPEAKER (MCNICHOLAS): If the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

The hon. Minister  
of Fisheries.

MR. MORGAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the Opposition Leader (Mr. Neary), on behalf of his party, is supporting this amendment. It is indeed a good amendment for the fishermen who, as I mentioned, find themselves in difficulty, in most all cases circumstances beyond their control. I would like to outline to the House of Assembly, and to those members who represent fishing areas in particular, that despite what the Opposition Leader has said the Loan Board Programme today that we have and are now administering through the Fisheries Loan Board, with the chairman reporting to me as minister, is the most beneficial programme anywhere in Atlantic Canada in any fishing part of Canada, including British Columbia. It is the best programme, it is touted as the best programme by fishermen themselves. It is recognized by the Fishermen's Union as the best programme in place anywhere, to the effect

MR. MORGAN: where we have, for example, three union officials sitting on the board, making decisions, meeting sometimes on a weekly basis. At least every two weeks they meet, in most cases depending on the applications pending.

I recall a few years ago when I became Minister of Fisheries there was an awful mess in the Fisheries Loan Board. There was no question about that. With all due respect to my predecessor, there was an awful mess left in the Fisheries Loan Board. In fact, I recall the board was bankrupt. There was no morale left among the employees of the board. The fishermen had no confidence in the board. The board was in complete, total shambles. Well, this administration, under the issue of the Premier (Mr. Peckford) and the Cabinet, and with the guidance of Cabinet and myself as the minister reporting to Cabinet, we changed all that. We changed the whole structure of the Loan Board. We brought in new employees in the Loan Board. We appointed new members to the Loan Board and we put in place, most important of all, brand new regulations governing eligibility criteria. Those who could qualify to receive loans and grants from government had to meet certain criteria, and that criteria was worked out in conjunction with the Fishermen's Union, full discussion, full consultation. And only upon the approval of the Fishermen's Union that represents most of the fishermen in the Province, did we finalize the eligibility criteria for fishermen to get financial assistance.

We put that programme in place back in 1980, and I became minister that year, and it is working quite well since that time. In fact, I have nothing but sincere congratulations for those people who served on the board as fishermen. We have fishermen on the board, we have union employees on the board

MR. MORGAN: and, of course, government employees. In this case, people who are working with the board.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand that what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) has said has to be corrected, and that is that the fishermen are not complaining that they have to go to the bank, whether it be the Bank of Nova Scotia or the Bank of Commerce or the Bank of Montreal. Because when they go to sit down with a bank manager they are not negotiating a loan, they have to meet the criteria set by government under the regulations. And if they meet the regulations, the bank manager can very seldom, in fact, I would venture to say, can never say no. He has to recommend that applicant to the Loan Board and say, 'Yes, he meets the eligibility requirements or criteria', and then he comes into the loan board for final approval. In fact, it is more convenient in many cases for the fishermen to walk into a bank in the respective communities than to have to travel all the way to St. John's to sit down with the loan board. Sure the respective members of the House of Assembly, on both sides of the House, often write on behalf of individual constituents, fishermen, and rightly so, but they never interfere in the activities of the board. We have made it a policy that there be no political interference in the operation of the Fisheries Loan Board. I can say in all sincerity, in the last four years as minister there has never been a time when I told that board to overrule a decision they have made, to overrule it. I have often asked them to review it again based on input from members of the House of Assembly, to review a decision they have made, to reconsider it, but I have never told them what to do, and rightly so.

MR. MORGAN: Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) wants information on the bounties themselves, what kind of bounties, and a good question. I think it is important to understand what we are talking about. A fisherman today in Newfoundland who meets the criteria will receive, for example, a thirty-five dollar per foot bounty on a small vessel below thirty-five feet, thirty-five dollars per foot on a vessel below thirty-five feet. He receives an eighty dollar per foot bounty if that vessel is partly decked. He will receive a hundred dollars per foot bounty or grant if the vessel is fully decked, below thirty-five feet. Then beyond thirty-five feet which is most of the long liner fleet, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARSHALL: (Inaudible)

MR. MORGAN: The hon. House Leader (Mr. Marshall) is hurrying me to close the debate, but these are important points. Because I know that within the confines of the House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of fishermen, and when the Opposition scores points which are wrong or tries to score points, we have to correct them. There are quite a number of fishermen from Musgrave Harbour within the confines of the Assembly right now waiting for a meeting with me. In fact a Musgrave Harbour delegation, ten or twelve people; a delegation from Petty Harbour, fishermen in my colleague's district.

Now, the other bounty of \$1,000 per ton is a very important bounty for fishermen - \$1,000 per ton is paid to fishermen who want to acquire a boat from thirty-five feet to sixty-five feet, the maximum size vessel they can have in this Province under the licensing system. And that bounty is indeed very important. I, today, in a telephone conversation with the federal Minister of Fisheries, pleaded with him as I did last week in Ottawa, have your government in Ottawa reinstate the federal government's

MR. MORGAN: subsidy, the grant from the federal government, to tie in with our grants we pay fishermen to help them recover the cost of replacing vessels. It is not a time to remove federal government subsidies. Although Michael Kirby says, 'Yes, remove them', in his recommendation in his report, it is not a time to remove subsidies to the fishermen in this Province. I am hoping the federal Cabinet will indeed approve between now and Christmas - I understand they are going to be dealing with it next week - the application and the position taken by this government to reinstate the 25 per cent subsidy that was in place in 1982, was removed in 1983, I think primarily because of Mr. Kirby's efforts, to reinstate that 25 per cent federal government subsidy. It will help the fishermen substantially to tie into these bounties paid by us here under the Fisheries Loan Board programme and will help fishermen cover at least that part of the cost of replacing their vessels.

MR. NEARY: What is the policy on buying boats outside the Province now?

MR. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, our policy is a matter which has been discussed at some length with the Fishermen's Union, and I must say the Fishermen's Union is not in total agreement with it.

MR. MORGAN: our policy today is that all new boats coming into the system to replace old boats must be built within the Province. We will not finance them if they are built in Nova Scotia, or built in Quebec, or built elsewhere outside Newfoundland, the reason being it means employment in Newfoundland in the construction of the vessels. There have been some complaints that these vessels obtained outside the Province are less costly. That has never been proven, but there have been some complaints along that line. But in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we changed the regulations last year and made it a bit easier for fishermen whereby they can buy used vessels anywhere they want. They can go to Florida and buy them, they can go to Alabama - they have gone to Alabama and bought them, in fact - they can go to British Columbia and buy them and, if they are used vessels, we still finance them through our loan board system.

Mr. Speaker, without taking up any more time of the House, I will say that the Fisheries Loan Board programme is now working the best it ever did in the Province. The fishermen are pleased with it. We will accept any recommendations for change to bring further improvements. Whether they come from the Opposition, the Fishermen's Union or the fishermen themselves, we will indeed look at them if we can see further improvements possible. But, in the meantime, the loan board system is working quite well, but there is one real problem; there is little or no incentive from the federal level. There is a freeze on all new licences for new vessels and new boats, and there is no federal subsidy in place to help them offset the costs. We feel these matters should be looked at by the federal government and then tie in with this kind of a programme, and it is all for the fishermen's benefit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move second reading.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Fishing Ships (Bounties) Act", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 8)

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Status Of Women Advisory Council Act". (Bill No. 20)

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

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Premier (Mr. Peckford), who is engaged in public business downstairs, I have much pleasure in introducing this bill. It is a bill to amend the Status of Women Act and the principles of it are very simple. The Advisory Council is given the status of a corporation and its name is to be the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the previous bill it had been provided that the administrative assistants to the advisory council would report it to the advisory council, to the Premier and to the Lieutenant-Governor. The way the amendment is put there now the administrative assistants will report to the Advisory Council alone, which is the most appropriate way in which it is to be done.

Similarly there is an amendment to section 14 (1) (c). At present this requires the Advisory Council to include in its annual report to the Premier a copy of the report on the Advisory Council by the Auditor General. This amendment would require that a copy of the audited financial statement of the Advisory Council be included with the annual report.

So, Mr. Speaker, I suppose if people wanted to this could be called

MR. MARSHALL: legislation but, like all bills that are put before this House, it is important to the council itself, important to the operation of this very important body that this administration has set up and that this administration has supported in the past and will continue to support in the future.

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL): The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, we support the amendments as put.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Status Of Women Advisory Council Act", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 20)

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The City Of Corner Brook Act". (Bill No. 29)

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

MRS. NEWHOOK: Mr. Speaker, Bill 29 contains just two straightforward amendments, one which provides the city of Corner Brook with the authority, similar to other municipalities and the city of St. John's, to declare a state of emergency. The city of Corner Brook has never had this and they have been requesting that we give them that authority.

Clause 2 will remove the authority of the council of the city of Corner Brook

MRS. NEWHOOK:

to sell real property for tax arrears where that real property is occupied by the owner for residential purposes. And this, again, Mr. Speaker, is the same as is contained in the Municipalities Act. I move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, we can all readily understand why the City of Corner Brook would like the authority and the power to declare a state of emergency. With the way the administration have handled the Bowater situation in Corner Brook, or mishandled it would be more appropriate, Mr. Speaker, they may have indeed to declare a state of emergency sooner than they think. I do not believe that is the kind of emergency that the minister referred to in the explanatory notes. The kind of emergency that the minister is thinking about, I presume, would be a storm or some act of nature, of God, that caused a flood or a calamity. The Premier would make a great door but a very poor window, I cannot see the minister over there. Have we got the second shift back now? What shift are we are on now, A, B or C shift?

MR. MARSHALL:

You are on the short shift.

MR. NEARY:

I am on the short shift.

I can just barely see the minister over there. I think it is awfully rude, Mr. Speaker, to have another meeting going on across the way when I am trying to catch of the eye of the Municipal Affairs (Mr. Newhook). We have B shift back in the House again. He would make a great door but a very poor window.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are going to

MR. NEARY: support the bill, have no

hesitation at all in supporting the bill. Clause 1 would make the City of Corner Brook Act conform with -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, could they cool it? If they want to have a meeting could they go outside somewhere and have it? Is it permissible

to have two members standing at the same time, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, the rules of the House are not being followed.

There is only one member allowed on his feet at once in this

House, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: We will all stand.

MR. NEARY: Well, maybe the hon. gentleman would like everybody to stand when he comes in.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are going to support the amendment to provide the City of Corner Brook with powers similar to other municipalities and similar to what they have in the City of St. John's in relation to declaring a state of emergency. Also we are going to support clause 2. This amendment, I believe, will make the city of Corner Brook Act conform to the Municipalities Act that we passed in this House a couple of years ago and we had a great debate, if the hon. minister will recall, over selling property while people are still occupying that property. That was always a sore point with an awful lot of people in this Province. And we are happy to see these two amendments being brought in, Mr. Speaker, and we support the bill.

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL): If the hon. minister speaks now she closes the debate.

MRS. NEWHOOK: I move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The City Of Corner Brook Act", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 29)

December 13, 1983

Tape No. 3967

IB-3

Motion, second reading of a bill,  
"An Act To Amend The St. John's Assessment Act". (Bill No. 18)

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL): The hon. Minister of Municipal  
Affairs.

MRS. NEWHOOK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Bill 18  
has just three amendments. The first one requires the  
city of St. John's

MRS. NEWHOOK:

to impose reduced rates of real property tax for buildings without access to water mains or sewer mains, and it pertains, I would say more particularly, to properties brought in under the ambit of the city council after the St. John's regional boundaries expansion took place.

Clause 2 of the bill permits the city council to deliver its notices of assessment by ordinary mail. Right now the present act states that they must be delivered by registered mail and, of course, registered mail is rather costly these days, and the city has asked if we can make this amendment which will conform with the Municipalities Act. All other municipalities in the Province deliver their assessments by ordinary mail.

The third clause, Mr. Speaker, will also remove from the St. John's, the same as we did for Corner Brook, the authority to sell property for tax arrears where that real property is occupied by the owner for residential purposes. That, of course, is the same as in the Municipalities Act.

These are just three straightforward amendments, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL):

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY:

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are going to support the bill. Two may be straightforward amendments but the first one I do not believe is so straightforward. The first one is a departure from normal procedure. And I presume this is the promise that was made to people in Airport Heights. When Airport Heights became a part of the city of St. John's, the administration, the minister and the members representing

MR. NEARY: the districts made a commitment that the people who live in the area of Airport Heights, and I happen to be one of them, would pay reduced taxes because it was virtually impossible to provide services like water and sewerage for the next twenty or thirty or forty or fifty years. I am not quite sure if this amendment fulfills the promise that was made by the administration. Perhaps the minister when she is closing second reading could elaborate on what this clause means.

I know that there is a system now - people in the area are paying taxes - being phased in over a period of five years I believe. After five years we will be paying the full property tax, we will be assessed the same as any other householder in the city of St. John's, and that was not the promise that was made in the beginning. The administration up to now have reneged on that promise.

So, I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, what clause 1 of the amending bill means in stating that the city council may impose reduced rates of real property tax for buildings without access to water mains or sewer mains, Could the hon. minister spell that out a little more for us? I have my own septic tank and my own water supply in Belair Park, and then right across the street is Savannah Park and Airport Road, and all the other roads in that area, and the people in the area will probably not get water and sewer mains, even though the administration insisted on a trunk sewer to the airport, I believe, this past year, that may give - I do not know whether it will

MR. NEARY: or whether it will not -  
give access to a sewer main to people who live on the Airport Road. I have talked to a couple of people down there who tell me that there is no way they can hook into that sewer line. I do not know if that is correct or not. But if that is what it means then it is a good amendment and the administration is keeping its promise because the city is proceeding on the basis that the only obligation they have to the people in the area is to phase in the property tax over the next five years and at the end of five years we will be paying the full amount, we will be paying the same as anybody else. I do not think that is right, Mr. Speaker, not because I live there: I moved up there three or four years ago to get rid of the city council and I was only there a few months when, lo and behold, I am back in the city limits again. But these people have gone through tremendous expense to put in their water and sewer systems. They all have their own artesian wells and their own septic tanks and they maintain them, and they were promised when the controversy raged about whether or not the boundaries should be expanded to include the Airport Heights area - the minister will remember the controversy and the concerned citizens group up there - and during the negotiations a commitment was made. I believe the member for Mount Scio (Mr. Barry) was one of the ones who pushed for that commitment from the administration and announced that the people would not have to pay the same property tax as other people in the city of St. John's who have access to water and sewer facilities.

MR. NEARY: I have talked to the mayor about water and sewerage and the mayor has told me in no uncertain terms that it will be twenty-five, thirty, forty or maybe fifty years before water and sewerage is extended to that area. So if that is what the amendment means then I welcome it and I commend the minister for bringing it in and for keeping this promise to the people in the area. But I am not so sure from the explanation given by the minister if that is what it means or not. The phase-in is not good enough. That is not what the people were promised. The people were promised they will be paying less taxes because they would be getting less services and there is no hope of getting all the services in the next twenty-five or thirty years. I am hoping that is what it means because if it is it will be a great Christmas present for the people who live in that area. So I look forward to an explanation from the minister on that.

On the other clauses, Mr. Speaker, we support the other amendments. The minister mentioned the city council being concerned about having to send out their assessments and their bills by registered mail. I often wondered why it is necessary for the traffic court to send out their summons, their tickets, by registered mail. Perhaps the administration could take a look at that situation. They may be able to save themselves a few dollars that way. Every time you renege or you forget or you mislay your ticket, the next thing you know you get a notification from the post office that there is a registered letter for you. I do not even bother to go pick them up anymore. If you go down all you are going to get is a registered letter from the Traffic Court telling you that you did not pay your ticket.

December 13, 1983

Tape No. 3969

IB-3

MR. NEARY:

The thing could have just as easily reached me by ordinary mail as to send it by registered mail. It might be something that the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) could take a look at because it must be costing a fortune to send out all these letters by registered mail.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we support that amendments.

MR. NEARY:

Of course, clause

3 is similar to the one that we just approved for the city of Corner Brook. So I would ask the minister to take a few moments to explain clause 1, the amendment of the bill that would require the city of St. John's, the St. John's City Council to impose reduced rates on real property tax for buildings without access to water mains or sewer mains. I would like to have clarification and a further explanation of that particular amendment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (AYLWARD):

If the hon. minister

speaks now she closes the debate.

The hon. Minister of

Municipal Affairs.

MRS. NEWHOOK:

Mr. Speaker, it is true

that the taxes to these people are phased in the same as for other properties in the city where they are now reverting from the rental value to the real property assessment value. In addition to that, the council also argues that because these properties are not serviced that their assessments are less, that the assessed value of the property is less and therefore, of course, their tax bill would be less. Also, the fact that they are not receiving water means that they are not being charged the water tax that all of us have to pay in the city. I also understand that there is a small mil rate built into the overall mil rate to cover sewerage. It is a very small amount, I think maybe one or two mils or something like that. I am not quite sure what it is, but I think the city may be looking at reducing the mil rate by the amount which it portions to the sewerage services.

The city does say that it already has a provision for a reduced rate, but it has

MRS. NEWHOOK: not been applicable now since the property tax came into being, because the property tax is applied to the value of property, and any properties that are not up to par, of course, have a lesser value. Also, of course, they have a board that will consider reduction of taxes on a need basis and so on. So my explanation is, I guess, that they will perhaps be looking at this mil rate and taking away maybe the portion of it that relates to sewer. That is my explanation of it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NEARY: Well, we are disappointed. It is not what we thought it was.

MRS. NEWHOOK: Well, that is a reduction in the property tax. You know, if the mil rate is reduced that is a reduction.

MR. NEARY: Go back and look at the commitment you made a year and a half ago.

MRS. NEWHOOK: And the property values are less because they are not serviced so their tax is less in that way.

So, Mr. Speaker, now that we have this amendment, of course, we will be discussing this with the city council of St. John's. I am not sure exactly what kind of a reduction it will be but we will discuss it now that we have the legislation to cover it. I move second reading, Sir.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The St. John's Assessment Act", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 18)

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Department Of Public Works And Services Act, 1973". (Bill No. 32)

MR. SPEAKER (AYLWARD):

of Public Works.

The hon. the Minister

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, this amendment will have the effect of bringing the government pricing agency under the administration of the department. It will mean that the director of the agency will report to the deputy minister of the department on the day-to-day management responsibility of the agency. This will ensure that the minister will be able to account

MR. YOUNG: for the activities of the agency and take whatever action may be necessary to improve its efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, the intent of the bill is to make the management expertise of the whole department, as well as the resources of the department, available to the Government Purchasing Agency. Mr. Speaker, it also contains a provision that before we go to public tender, increasing the amount not to exceed \$1,000. This will be increased from time to time by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council and some more housekeeping matters.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I want to say a few words on this particular bill. The guidelines of the Government Purchasing Agency, I believe, Mr. Speaker, have either not been followed or the minister now is trying to cover up something. The minister is trying to cover up something, particularly, Mr. Speaker, judging by his last comment that increases the level at which a public tender must be called from \$1,000 up to I think it was \$10,000 or something like that. What the minister is doing here is trying to cover up for all the things that are going on within this government, all the contracts that have been let went out without public tender.

MR. YOUNG: That is not right.

MR. WARREN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I refer the minister to what has happened in Davis Inlet recently. Some \$700,000 of public money has been spent in Davis Inlet without any tender being called.

MR. YOUNG: On what?

MR. WARREN: On what! On building a recreational center in the town, on building four houses in the town.

MR. SIMMS: Who built the recreation center?

MR. WARREN: Who? The Band Council. The money came from the Department of Rural Development.

MR. SIMMS: What has that got to do with this bill?

MR. WARREN: Hold on now. Just relax now. What it has to do with, Mr. Speaker, is that money from this government has been used throughout Newfoundland and Labrador without the proper authority. Because, Mr. Speaker, in talking with the Government Purchasing Agency the other day, in speaking to an individual over there, under their regulations it does not give any provisions at all for them to assess. The ministers are supposed to go through the Government Purchasing Agency but what is happening is that the ministers in the various departments are overriding the Government Purchasing Agency. And the minister now is bringing this bill in just trying to protect the ministers who are going about and spending government money without proper authority. This is exactly what is happening, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DINN: He does not know what he is talking about.

MR. SIMMS: As usual.

MR. WARREN:

The ministers are spending monies without proper authority and now they are going to use the Government Purchasing Agency as scapegoats. That is what they are going to do, they are going to use the Government Purchasing Agency as scapegoats. Now that is exactly what is happening with this bill. The minister is trying to bring in further protection, that is all he is doing, he is trying to bring in further protection. But it is too late now, Mr. Speaker, the horse has been let out of the barn. And all the minister has to do is look around him and look at the Auditor General's report a couple of years ago as it pertains to the Department of Transportation -

MR. YOUNG: Look at it today. Look at it today.

MR. WARREN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, look at it today. It is amazing that the hon. minister would say, 'Look at the Auditor General's report today' -- \$778,000 paid for a ferry that was not even used. That is pretty good, Mr. Speaker. That is very good. Look at the Auditor General's report today, \$778,000 paid for a ferry that was not even used, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, all the minister wants to do now is take the Government Purchasing Agency under his wing and if anything happens from now on it is going to be blamed on the Government Purchasing Agency. That is all the minister is doing, just trying to cover up for the incompetence of the various ministers in the government. Mr. Speaker, unless this bill can improve the performance and follow the regulations then I am sure we will have second thoughts about whether we will support it or not.

MR. SPEAKER (AYLWARD): The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, as usual which is typical at this time of year when the administration is attempting to get the House closed down as soon as they can, when the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) is looking daggers at ministers and members when they want to participate in debate a dagger goes out telling them to sit down, that they are only prolonging the House, Mr. Speaker, so in keeping with tradition of the administration in recent years the hon. gentleman just got up and gave a very brief report on why we have these amendments before us at this late date.

Now, the first amendment in the explanatory notes, Mr. Speaker, would indicate that what is happening is that the Purchasing Agency is being put directly under the minister whereas heretofore the Purchasing Agency could have been separate and distinct. I believe the minister always reported to the House, anyway, for the Purchasing Agency, but now they are going to bring in an amendment to place it directly under the responsibility of the minister. Well, now, that may not seem like a very important change, Mr. Speaker, and we have no real objections to that.

MR. YOUNG: Answerable to the Deputy Minister.

MR. NEARY: Pardon?

MR. YOUNG: To the D.M.

MR. NEARY: To the deputy minister.

Yes, we understand, Mr. Speaker. It is just wording being changed a bit to make sure

- I do not know why they had to do it -

that everybody will know what minister is responsible for this agency and who this agency reports to. Well, I do

MR. NEARY: not see too much wrong with that, maybe the wording needed to be a little more specific. What I am concerned about, Mr. Speaker, is the change that is being recommended in these amendments to take the lid off the \$1,000 ceiling that the administration, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council or the ministers had to abide by, the \$1,000 ceiling. Now the implication that I am getting from this amendment is that they are taking the lid off. They are lifting -

MR. YOUNG: No, they are not.

MR. NEARY: Yes, they are. Let me read the clause, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NEARY:

" Clause 8: Section (54) of The Department of Public Works and Services Act, 1973 details the circumstances in which the Purchasing Agency need not invite tenders for the supply of services. One is where the amount involved does not exceed \$1,000. This amendment would provide that the amount would be set from time to time by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council." They are changing the law, Mr. Speaker. This is a very consequential amendment. What they are now saying is that we do not like the \$1,000 limit that we have to abide by, that was set by this House when the legislation was first brought into this House. Now they want to change the act to put the authority and the power in the hands of the Cabinet to make decisions no matter what the amount, an unspecified amount. If the Cabinet feel, well, okay, this is fine, we want this but we were restricted under the \$1,000 limit, this is going to cost \$100,000, all we need is an Order-in-Council and we can approve it.

MR. BAIRD:

You are wrong.

MR. NEARY:

I am right.

MR. BAIRD:

You are wrong.

MR. NEARY:

I am absolutely right.

That is what the amendment says.

MR. YOUNG:

It does not say that.

It says no such thing.

MR. NEARY:

Let me read it for the hon. gentleman again. "This amendment would provide"- just listen to what it says -"that the amount would be set from time to time"by an order of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Now read the appropriate section of the act.

MR. CAPTER:

Read the act.

MR. NEARY: You do not have to read the act, Mr. Speaker. I can read and I can understand what this means. The amendment would provide that the amount would be set from time to time by order of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

MR. CARTER: Now read the rest of it.

MR. NEARY: Read the rest of what?

MR. DJINN: He has not got the act.  
He has never seen the act.

MR. NEARY: Well, here is what it says. "Section 54 now reads: The Agency shall invite tenders for services except where (a) the need is one of pressing urgency; (b) there is only one available source of supply; or (c) the amount involved does not exceed one thousand dollars and it appears to the Director, in view of the nature of the purchase, that it is not practical to invite tenders." That is what the act says now. Now that I have read it for the hon. member for Baie Verte (Mr. Rideout), what does he say about it?

MR. RIDEOUT: There is still more to it than that.

MR. NEARY: Like what? I have it here in front of me.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment only means one thing, that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council can determine now whatever amount they want when they are buying goods and services. That is what it means, unless they amend the wording before we have second reading, if this amendment goes through. And it will go through because with forty-five against seven they will shove it through. But what they are doing, Mr. Speaker, let no one be under a false illusion, what they are doing is giving themselves the authority to overrule that \$1,000 limit. That is what they are doing,

MR. NEARY: and we do not like it on this side of the House.

MR. WARREN: PC patronage.

MR. NEARY: Oh, yes. Now you talk about the patronage I was talking about earlier, if they get this amendment through, which they will, Mr. Speaker, there will be no end to the favours that will be dished out to their friends. This is a very, very bad amendment indeed. Mr. Speaker, this is a watering down of the Public Tendering Act. They have been rapped on the knuckles a number of occasions by the Auditor General and now they are going to amend the act so that they can get around this \$1,000 limit and this is what this is all about, Mr. Speaker. They want to give themselves a free hand now on the eighth floor, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, which is the Cabinet. They want to give themselves a free hand so that they can dish it out, they can make decisions above the \$1,000 limit that was the law previously. Why would they want to do that, Mr. Speaker? Why do they want to do it? I wish I could answer. I can only assume why they want to do it. They certainly do not want to do it to conserve taxpayers' dollars, to save the taxpayer money. The only reason they want to do it is because they want a free hand to do what they like, that is the only reason they want to do it. The hon. gentleman gets up and takes about a minute and a half to tell us about these inconsequential amendments that they are putting through at this late stage of the game, Mr. Speaker. 'This amendment', it says here, 'is consequential on that in Clause 6.'

MR. TOBIN: You are after reading that five times. You are wasting the time of the House.

MR. NEARY: - Well, if I read it ten times the hon. gentleman would not understand it. You can lead a horse to water, Mr. Speaker, but you cannot make him drink. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have seen flagrant violations of the Public Tendering Act in recent years. I have not had time to run through the Auditor General's report yet but I will do it tonight. I browsed through it earlier this afternoon and I saw some reference to violations of the Public Tendering Act in here. I will take a look at it when I go home tonight and see what questions we can ask as far as the conclusions of the Auditor General's report is concerned. No doubt the Department of Transportation will come in for some criticism. As far as the Public Tendering Act is concerned, we will take a look at that and we will be asking questions about that matter in due course, Mr. Speaker. There is one matter that I want to raise as far as the Public Tendering Act is concerned and how the administration and how ministers have devised devious ways to get around the Public Tendering Act. The example that I am going to use is in the Department of Municipal Affairs. The Department of Municipal Affairs are the biggest violators of the Public Tendering Act. Mr. Speaker, as hon. members know, and as the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mrs. Newhook) is aware, the government on numerous occasions have approved

MR. NEARY: loans and grants and guarantees to municipalities to purchase equipment, to purchase backhoes, to purchase bulldozers, front end loaders and the like and other heavy equipment.

MRS. NEWHOOK: Approval to borrow.

MR. NEARY: That is right, approval to borrow.

Mr. Speaker, once the approval to borrow is given then public tenders are called. Is that correct? Public tenders are called?

MR. YOUNG: That is right. So far so good.

MR. NEARY: And the decision as to who gets the contract, who is awarded the tender is made by the minister's officials in conjunction with the -

MR. TOBIN: That is not true. That is not true.

MR. NEARY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is so.

MR. DIHN: Wrong again.

MR. NEARY: No, I am right again. Made by the minister's officials in conjunction with the municipality that is involved.

MRS. NEWHOOK: The low tender is accepted.

MR. NEARY: Pardon?

MRS. NEWHOOK: The low tender is accepted.

MR. NEARY: No. This is the point I am making, low tender is not what is accepted by the minister's department. Mr. Speaker, in some instances there have been no tenders. And we are talking about items valued at up to \$100,000, anywhere from \$10,000 up to \$100,000, sometimes a couple of hundred thousand dollars. Mr. Speaker, tenders

MR. NEARY: are called and the contract or the tender is not awarded to the lowest bidder. Mr. Speaker, here is the procedure that is followed in the minister's department, here is the procedure, 99.9 per cent of the time here is the procedure that is followed: The minister's officials will say, 'Look, we have been doing business with this company for the last twenty or thirty years -

MRS. NEWHOOK: That is within the (inaudible)?

MR. NEARY: Pardon?

MRS. NEWHOOK: That is within the (inaudible).

MR. NEARY: No, I am talking about the minister's officials.

MR. WINDSOR: You know what you are saying is not true.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is 100 per cent correct. The minister's officials will say, 'Look, we have been doing business with this company for the last twenty-five or thirty years -

MR. WARREN: There is a letter on file in the Nain council from the minister's office saying do not use this firm, use the other firm.

MR. NEARY: Yes, there is a letter on file, my hon. colleague just reminded me, in the office in Nain advising the council not to do business with this company, do business with that company because we have been doing business with them for years and they look after their maintenance and we are familiar with them. Mr. Speaker, every

MR. NEARY: day practically the  
Public Tendering Act is being violated by the minister's  
department.

MR. YOUNG: That is not true.

MR. NEARY: It is true, Mr. Speaker.  
It is true. I can give the minister example after  
example where three and four companies supplying equipment  
have bid on

MR. NEARY: tenders in the newspaper and were the lowest bidder and were told by the minister's officials, 'We are sorry, you are the low tender but because we have been doing business with this company or that company, two companies in particular who provide equipment, that we cannot give you the contract, we cannot buy the equipment from you.'

MRS. NEWHOOK: The municipality accepts the low bid.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Speaker, the municipalities are also subject to the Public Tendering Act, as the hon. minister should know. What is happening, Mr. Speaker, is this, that the minister's officials are playing nursemaid to the municipalities, and they are guiding them along. They are saying, 'Look, we will give you a grant to pay for this piece of equipment, we will give you a loan or guarantee to get this piece of equipment, but you are inexperienced in these matters so we will help you do it'. And the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mrs. Newhook) cannot sit over there and look me with a straight face and tell me that it is not happening.

MR. WINDSOR: There is not a word in the Auditor General's report about it.

MR. NEARY: No, but there will be because it will be brought to the Auditor General's attention. The Auditor General would want to have eyes in the back of his head with some of this crowd. But that is happening

MR. NEARY: practically on a daily basis in the minister's department. The minister should go and check her records, and the minister will discover, especially in the purchasing of heavy equipment, that the Public Tendering Act is not being followed.

MR. SIMMS: Give her examples. Anybody can say what you are saying.

MR. NEARY: I gave the minister examples of tractors, bulldozers, backhoes, front end loaders and trucks. Mr. Speaker, let me deal with the minister again. The minister said, 'Give me examples'. Trucks, bulldozers, front end loaders, backhoes -

MRS. NEWHOOK: (Inaudible) the tenders (inaudible) municipalities.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, before the hon. minister jumps too fast, the hon. minister better do a little investigating into these matters, because the hon. minister is also responsible for seeing to it that the municipalities follow the Public Tendering Act.

MR. YOUNG: What has that got to do with this Act?

MR. NEARY: It has all to do with it. We are talking about purchasing and we are talking about -

MR. CARTER: Are you not afraid of getting a punch?

MR. NEARY: No, only the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) gets punched for insulting members' mothers. That is one the hon. gentleman will never live down. He will never live that one down.

Mr. Speaker, I am accusing the minister's officials of getting around the Public Tendering Act and allowing the municipalities to get around - some municipalities now, not all of them - many

MR. NEARY: municipalities to get around the Public Tendering Act by saying, 'Look, we have loyalties to these two companies. We have been doing business with these two companies for the last twenty or thirty years and they have given us good service'.

MRS. NEWHOOK: You are talking about municipalities?

MR. NEARY: I beg your pardon?

MRS. NEWHOOK: You are talking about municipalities, are you?

MR. NEARY: And the minister's officials I am talking about.

Mr. Speaker, it was only the day before yesterday a supplier of heavy equipment came to see me to

MR. NEARY: complain about this matter, and to tell me that the minister's officials are the ones that he was dealing with.

What do you think, that I am just making it up?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, they are so supersensitive and so paranoid!

MR. HOUSE: Name them. Name the companies.

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman now better go out and check his hospital user fees before he gets clobbered.

MR. WARREN: Your finished, my son, you are finished.

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman is finished. The hon. gentleman better roll back the hospital user fees in this Province.

MR. WINDSOR: If you do not want an Auditor General's Report to read, read the federal one tonight.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, we will be busy enough tonight reading this and getting a few questions for the next couple weeks in this House.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious accusation I am making here and I am making it in good faith.

MRS. NEWHOOK: It is not a true accusation.

MR. NEARY: It is a true accusation.

MRS. NEWHOOK: (Inaudible) unless there is a good valid reason for them not doing so.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I will challenge the minister. No, I will not challenge the minister, that would not be fair. I will request the minister, before she

MR. NEARY: jumps into something that she cannot handle, that the minister go back twelve months -

MR. SIMMS: You said it happens 99 per cent of the time, so why should she go back that far?

MR. NEARY: - go back twelve months.

MR. WARREN: You have gotten yourself in trouble already today.

MR. NEARY: You are in trouble enough now with your fines, the minister of fines around this Province. No wonder they call him the 'fine minister'.

Mr. Speaker, let me direct my remarks to the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mrs. Newhook). Let the minister go back one year and dig out in records -

MRS. NEWHOOK: (Inaudible) and I know.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister does not know in her simplicity. The hon. minister should not be listening to her colleagues to her right and to her left because they may lead her astray.

MRS. NEWHOOK: Why?

MR. NEARY: Well, I would like for the minister to produce documents in this House.

MR. WINDSOR: You produce them.

MR. NEARY: No, I do not have to produce them.

MR. DINN: The only thing you produced is the Mifflin Report.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, if I were going to produce some documents in this House I might produce one to show where a minister was on the payroll of another company while he was a minister. I might produce that kind of a document.

AN HON. MEMBER: Prove that!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: I might produce a document to show where a gentleman was on the payroll of the Telephone Company while he was a minister.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: I might be able to put that document on the table.

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

MR. DINN: The hon. member just made a charge against a minister over here.

First of all, I would like him to specify which minister and, number two, he has an obligation, a moral obligation if nothing else - although he would not know what morals are - a moral obligation if he makes a charge to produce any documents that he has.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition on that point of order.

MR. NEARY: That is not a point of order,

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker. The only thing I can say to the hon. gentleman -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL):

Order, please!

MR. NEARY:

- if the hat fits him then

let him wear it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To that point of order, it appears to be a difference of opinion between two hon. members.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY:

Now, Mr. Speaker, let

the minister go down to her department tomorrow morning, go back twelve months over the records and dig out of her files approvals for loans and guarantees to municipalities in the last twelve months to purchase heavy equipment -

MRS. NEWHOOK:

We follow the Municipalities Act to a tee. I do not need to go back and check anything.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR:

You are belittling

every mayor and every councillor in Newfoundland.

MR. NEARY:

No, I certainly am not.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order,

please!

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, where do

I get the five minutes? I thought we had an hour on these bills. Do we have an hour on a government bill?

MR. SIMMS:

Half an hour.

MR. NEARY:

Half an hour. Twenty minutes

or half an hour? Half an hour.

Mr. Speaker, the hon.

minister now can be as fast on the draw as she wants, but

MR. NEARY: I can guarantee her that if she will just do what I am asking her to do, go and check the records of loans and guarantees for trucks, bulldozers, backhoes, front end loaders -

MR. WINDSOR: Pickup trucks.

MR. NEARY: No, not pickup trucks, heavy equipment. - for the last twelve months the minister will discover that in a large number of cases the contract was given on the basis, not of the lowest tender but on the basis of 'we have been doing business with these two companies for the last twenty or thirty years and we have no reason to change now.' That is the answer the hon. minister will get.

MRS. NEWHOOK: I know all about them. I signed all the orders and so I do not have to look up anything. I know exactly what happened.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: What can I say, Mr. Speaker?

The hon. minister will not do what I am asking her to do. I mean, the hon. minister can say, 'I signed everything', but the hon. minister does not know what led up to signing this document. Documents are put in front of the minister. The trouble is she does not know what she is signing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, they are gone snarky again, gone ape over there again. Does the minister look at the tenders, see the tenders?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Does the minister see the tenders before she signs the documents she is talking about? I am looking at the minister and asking a question. Does the

MR. NEARY: minister examine the tenders? Does the minister examine the tenders to see if indeed the contract is awarded to the lowest bidder?

MRS. NEWHOOK: The contracts are opened by the municipalities, by the councils.

MR. NEARY: I see. And all you do is pay out the money?

MRS. NEWHOOK: No, the council does. The council purchases the equipment.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, do I have to go through it again for the minister's benefit?

MRS. NEWHOOK: I sign the approvals to borrow.

MR. NEARY: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the minister signs the approvals to borrow without knowing whether or not the contract has gone to the lowest bidder, then that makes the situation much worse. It makes it worse. The minister should insist before signing loans and guarantees that the money to purchase a piece of equipment is going to the lowest bidder. The minister

MR. NEARY: now is admitting she does not know that. Mr. Speaker, these decisions are made by the minister's officials. And, by the way, one of the officials made a statement recently - I will not say who it was - that they have no control over it because this comes down from higher up, and if they had their way they would award the contract to the lowest bidder.

So, Mr. Speaker -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. NEARY: Oh, Mr. Speaker, they are over there now, they are going right ape. Here we are, another day gone, tomorrow is Private Member's day.

MR. STAGG: What is the name of your contracting friend who did not get a contract?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, members over there would like names. They would love to have names. They would love to so they could retaliate against them. They would take them out and shoot them if they had their names. These are very valid complaints, Mr. Speaker. And the hon. gentlemen can display all the arrogance and cockiness, and they can be as stuck-up as they want and they can be -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, they are getting too big for their breeches and too big for their shoes, that is the problem, and they are not satisfied to listen. We just heard from the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mrs. Newhook) that the document that she signs is the guarantee of the municipality, that she does not see the tenders, she does not ask any questions about the tenders.

MR. TOBIN:

She never said that.

MR. NEARY:

That is what the

minister said.

MR. TOBIN:

You are wrong again.

MR. NEARY:

No, I am right again.

So, Mr. Speaker, now

I have to come back to my original request to the  
minister -

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL):

Order, please!

MR. NEARY:

I move the adjournment

of the debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The time for the

hon. Leader of the Opposition has expired.

If the hon. minister

speaks now he closes the debate.

MR. YOUNG:

I move the adjournment

of the debate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Let it be noted that

the hon. minister has adjourned the debate.

The hon. President

of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

The hon. gentleman

does not want to hear the answers.

Mr. Speaker, I move

that the House at its rising do adjourn until tomorrow,  
Wednesday, at 3:00 p.m. and that this House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House

at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at  
3:00 P.M.