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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
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3:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1983

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

Order, please!

I would like to welcome

to the galleries today a group of students from the District Vocational School on Bell Island with their intstructors, Mr. John Pinsent and Mr. Lester Rose.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor). Mr. Speaker, some time ago there was a report done by a scientist concerning an ice probe in Lake Melville, I think their was concern expressed about whelping of seal pups and it may affect the seal pup population. Could the minister give the House a synopsis of this report and if in fact it would have some danger on the seal population in Lake Melville?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Development.

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that concerns have been expressed by particularly some of the inhabitants of some of the local coastal communities as it relates to interference on the seal population and the seal fishery in that area, should Lake Melville be opened up to year around shipping. I am not aware of any evidence which indicates that there is any serious harmful effect of shipping on the particular seal herd, In fact, I am under the impression that the seals are only there certain

MR. WARREN: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WARREN: On the icebreaker M.V. Franklin that went up the lake last year, there was a particular scientist, Professor Bowles or some such name, and he did say publicly that there was evidence that there would be a disruption in the whelping season of the seal herd. I would like to say before the House, Mr. Speaker, that we are not against development, in particular as it pertains to Happy Valley - Goose Bay, I think we need year-round shipping. But if year-round shipping does become a reality, would the minister's department undertake to take in regard the 200 people in Rigolet, at the mouth of Lake Melville, who could be affected by year-round shipping, in particular as it pertains to their livelihood in the seal fishery and also in their regular day-to-day living, such as hunting and trapping?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Development.

MR. WINDSOR Mr. Speaker, certainly we would be most concerned about any serious social implications that any industrial development would have on that area of our Province, or any area of the Province, as we are with any major industrial development or any increase in activity of any kind anywhere in our Province. We would always look at these matters and this would be one factor that we would look at in deciding whether or not that industrial enterprise was one that we would want to see go in that particular area. We would also, of course, look at the job creation that is created by it; perhaps those 200 people, and 1,500 more besides them, may have employment offered to them as a result of some major industrial activity. That also would be something that we would consider, as well as the overall

MR. WINDSOR: economic input into the areas as a result of that industrial activity. So certainly we would look at the social implications, not only those that relate to the seal fishery but on the whole way of life and the history and culture of our Province generally.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WARREN: A new question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan), could the Premier advise what positive steps have been taken for the establishment of a seal pelt factory or a seal pelt manufacturing outlet in this Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer that directly, I will have to get on to the people in the Department of Fisheries and find out. I know there have been several various initiatives taken over the last number of months and so on on it, but I am not fully familiar with exactly what the particulars of the specifics are. I will undertake to get an update for the hon. member and provide him with the information as soon as possible, and, if possible, on the next sitting day.

MR. WARREN: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, the hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, Has the Premier been contacted by his federal counterparts or by anyone else as it pertains to the future of the seal fishery off the Coast of Newfoundland? And the reason I ask the Premier this question is there have been rumours circulating, again I just say rumours, that there may not be a hunt at the Front this year. Has the Premier any confirmation, or has he heard any rumours that there possibly will not be any seal hunt at the Front this year.

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

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, you know there is a lot of initiatives and a lot of rumours on the go about that. The Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor) just informed me when I sat down, after I indicated that I would undertake to get the hon. member some information, that the Minister of Development is familiar with a proposal on processing seal pelts in Fleur de Lys and that we are providing some assistance as the Government of Newfoundland in that endeavour. So that is one that I can suggest to the hon. member in answer to his previous question. On the recent question, I had discussions last week, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) and myself, in Ottawa with the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bane) about the whole seal fishery as one topic of many other topics that we discussed on the fisheries issue. And we are pursuing now with the federal government, both the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and other departments, some mechanisms that could be in place to assist in ensuring that the seal hunt does go ahead next year. Now they have not been finalized but there are efforts on the way, by us as well as the federal people, to try to ensure that there will be a hunt next year. But, as I say, they are not completely finalized yet.

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

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary
to the Premier. In view of the campaign that Brian Davies
and his cohorts have been putting on in Europe against
Canadian fish products, in particular the seal, I would like
to ask

MR. WARREN: the Premier if he has any plans on behalf of his government to counteract the propaganda and the ambitious attitudes that Brian Davies is showing to the European people over across the way? Has he any actions or plans for his government to try to counteract the jeopardy into which Brian Davies is putting our seal fishery?

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

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, it is a very, very difficult situation to know how to respond to. It is not easy to know. I was part of the previous pro-sealing campaign. When Mr. Moores was Premier, I went personally down to New York and Washington on behalf of the then Premier and the government, so I was very much a part of that programme that involved a fairly extensive pro-sealing campaign which involved public relations firms as well as people within the provincial and federal governments. And if you look at all the press that was given to some of that campaign, I guess you could say that it was successful. But at the same time, efforts have continued and look where we are today even though we had that campaign. So it is hard to assess the effectiveness of the campaign that we did embark upon and we did pursue. In the visits that I had personally, and the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) and people in the federal government, in Europe last January. For example, we went over and we were in London and met with a lot of the senior people in the English government, we went to Denmark and we met with groups in Denmark, very senior, the Minister of Fisheries and so on in the Danish government, and the minister

PREMIER PECKFORD: responsible for Greenland in that government - now Greenland since that time, by the way, has held a plebiscite or a referendum and are getting out on their own, if I am not mistaken, but at that time they were under the Danish government - and we went on to Germany and into France and met with a lot of very senior people. The Canadian ambassadors or consul generals, whatever is applicable in the different countries, have been doing a fair amount of work on that. It is difficult to know whether a pro-sealing campaign helps or just highlights the issue and gives them a greater target to shoot at. I do not know, it is difficult, so that is number one. Number two is, from just a sheer financial point of view now relative to the Province, there are financial implications here, too. Any effective programme would entail hundreds of thousands of dollars, at least a half million dollars, I would say, or more to do. Commentators in the last number of weeks on the latest programme by Mr. Davies and others

PREMIER PECKFORD: seem to suggest that the effectiveness of their campaign will not be great. Thirdly, I would just point out to the hon. member and to the House, the other problem you have, you know, is a real problem, and that is that in Europe right now, especially in England, in Holland, in Belgium, in the Benelux countries generally, in France, and Germany most particularly, where there is a good market - it had been an historic market - you have the emergence of this Green party, which takes different forms and becomes political parties, and they have seats now in the Bundestag in Germany. They have a broad base of anti-cruise missile, anti-sealing, you know, they have three or four issues. So it is far more difficult to counteract those forces than ever before. It is a far more powerful political lobby, in the real sense, than it ever was before. So for those three reasons it seems to me a very difficult one for us, as a Province alone, to try to counteract. And I think in the talks we have had with the federal government they feel somewhat the same way. So I think we just have to wait a little bit longer and just see how the thing pans out over the next month or two and then reassess the position that we are now taking.

MR. WARREN: A final supplementary,
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WARREN: I, as well as a lot of other hon. members here, am quite concerned. In fact, sealing is the second income for practically 90 per cent of my district. My final supplementary to the Premier is, if the seal hunt does go ahead this year - and I understand that the Sealers Association has requested the federal

MR. WARREN: government - Kirk Smith, I think, is President - has requested from the federal government some sort of a subsidy on a par with the value of the seal pelts in other years. If the federal government do not see fit to subsidize on a par, is this government committed to assist in subsidizing the sealing industry?

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

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, on the question of the hon. member's district, I fully appreciate what the hon. member is saying and I think what he has said about his own district is accurate and we are very sympathetic to the position that the member and a lot of people in his district find themselves in.

May I just go on to say on behalf of both myself, as a member for a rural district on the Northeast Coast of the Province, and other rural members, the member for Twillingate (Mrs. Reid) and the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk), who is not here -

AN HON. MEMBER: Baie Verte.

PREMIER PECKFORD: - and the member for Baie Verte (Mr. Rideout) and other members along the East and Northeast Coasts but especially the Northeast Coast; I have a fair number of fishermen in my own district, both in Little Bay Islands and Long Island, in Brighton and in Triton, Jim Cove and Card's Harbour, as well as Harry's Harbour, Jackson's Cove, Silverdale and Langdon's Cove, who are very involved as landsmen in the seal hunt and do supplement their income every Spring. So I am personally

PREMIER PECKFORD: cognizant of that fact. Secondly, on the whole question of a subsidy or price support, this was one of the issues raised in the meeting last Thursday with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bane) which our own Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) has been pushing for some time, and we as a government have been pushing for some time. Interestingly enough, as late as this morning I communicated to the hon. Don Johnston, who is Chairman of the Economic Cabinet Committee in the federal government, this whole question of using the Price Support Board as a vehicle through which you could get this subsidy, this price support. We already made our representations to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and I wished to follow up this morning with the chief minister in the federal government because we understand that a number of proposals are presently on their way to that Cabinet Committee this week on this whole matter of subsidy and price support. So I wanted to have it clearly understood by not only Mr. Lumley and Mr. De Bane, whom I met last week, but also with the Chairman of the Committee how strongly we felt about it. So that is in hand and is going to the federal Cabinet Committee this week. Let us hope that they do see fit to use the Price Support Board for this very worthwhile exercise which fits nicely and cleanly under that programme. Thirdly, if in fact they do not go all the way and there is need for some additional support, my only comment could be that the Cabinet, I would think, is willing to consider in a sympathetic way anything that would come to us to do. Last year we did provide \$500,000, I think, to help purchase the pelts, long before, I think, the federal government moved on it. So we have demonstrated in a very tangible way how far we are willing to go and that will continue this year, continue in the sense that we are willing

PREMIER PECKFORD: to continue to provide some support, The level of support and so on will depend upon the kinds of decisions that are coming out of Ottawa in the next couple of weeks.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WARREN: A question this time to the Minister of Rural, Agriculture and Northern Development (Mr. Goudie). The minister's department has a programme in his craft section to encourage a craft production in this Province. I am just wondering if the minister's department could take a real

MR. WARREN: strong initiative in having the craft industry expanded? It is already producing a lot of seal boots and seal mittens and things like that, but to expand more fully into using seal products, seal-skin in particular, in the craft industry. By doing so, there could be at the same time a big intrusion into this part of the craft industry. Maybe a promotion, which would not cost that much money, would be taking those products out to the various craft shows, such as into CNE Exhibition in Toronto, or into Montreal or into Winnipeg and bring our craft products made from the sealskins into the other parts of Canada. Probably it would help the seal fishermen in this Province if the minister would seriously consider boosting up the craft industry as it pertains to sealing in his own department.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development.

MR. GOUDIE: Mr. Speaker, there are quite a number of suggestions involved in the hon. gentleman's question and for the most part we are now doing precisely what he suggests. I should explain that our role in relation to the promotion of crafts emanating from this Province to other parts of the country is in the area of trade exhibitions, if you will, in several centres, whereby we in some cases take along craft producers with us to display their crafts, and in all other cases take along samples of crafts and receive orders on behalf of the producer from retailers and wholesalers across the country. So that promotional effort for all crafts, or as many crafts as possible issued in this Province, has been in place for several years and will hopefully continue to be so, especially if we are successful in negotiating a new federal/provincial rural development agreement.

MR. WARREN: Could you concentrate on the sealskin crafts?

MR. GOUDIE: I am getting to seals, Mr. Speaker, I am just outlining what our present role is in relation to crafts as it exists now.

We also, I should mention, have a loans programme in our department whereby we have injected funds into the craft industry generally in the Province, and that programme, by the way, is available to any craft producer who wishes to apply for certain types of assistance.

In relation to promoting crafts produced from seal pelts, we would most certainly be prepared to assist in the design, if that is necessary, in marketing, research, etc. We have the expertise to do that and would be glad to do it. We have not gotten to the stage where we have approached anyone in the seal industry particularly, the seal fishery, to mount a specific effort in relation to crafts produced from sealskins. But certainly if there is an interest on the part of a producer in the Province who wants to get into that area, we would be more than happy to assist.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): I would like to just take a moment to welcome some visitors to the galleries. First of all, we have in the galleries a representation from the Catholic Women's League, Fermeuse Chapter, led by their President, Mary Walsh, I would like to welcome these people to the galleries.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: We also have in the galleries Mr. Claude Hollands, Presidents of ERCO Industries Limited, and Mr. Bob Chalmers, the Operations Manager. I would like to welcome these two gentlemen to the galleries.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): And we also have in the galleries Mr. Lewis Eveliegh, Mr. David Eveliegh, the owners and operators of Notre Dame Bay Fisheries Limited, Comfort Cove, Newstead, from that great district of Lewisporte.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I have two or three

MR. NEARY:

questions for the hon. the Premier, I do not know if I will have time to get them all in or not. I would like to start out with the Ultramar oil refinery in Holyrood, As hon. members know, since Ultramar announced the closing of that refinery all we have heard is talk and no action, heap big smoke and no fire. Now could the hon. gentleman tell us where the situation stands now, as far as the administration is concerned, with regard to the Ultramar oil refinery? What proposals are now on the table and what is being done about these proposals?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like, since the subject has been brought up, to publicly congratulate the Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor) and the Minister of Communications (Mr. Doyle) for their yeoman work in the last three or four months on this whole question of the refinery at Holyrood. They have done an absolutely fantastic job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

The Minister of Communications, who represents the district in which we find the closed refinery, and the Minister of Development have been spending absolutely endless hours on the matter. It is still in negotiations between the two companies, one, Ultramar, who have closed the refinery, and Metro Fuels, who are eager to reopen the refinery, or to do some work out there with some of the facilities that are presently owned by Ultramar. These negotiations and discussions are continuing with both companies, and as soon as there is something concrete to report the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) will be the first to know.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the people in the district in Holyrood would be the first to know, because they seem to be kept in the dark, Mr. Speaker, as to what is going on. Now I ask the hon. gentleman to tell the House what proposals were on the table? Is this the proposal that is currently on the table, that they split in the operations in Holyrood, that Metro would take the processing part of the operation and that Ultarmar would continue owning the pumps and the storage tanks, etc? Is that the proposal that is on the table now?

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

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, first of all, as it relates to informing people, we get criticized by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) from time to time if we go outside this House and inform somebody outside of the House first rather than inform the Leader of the Opposition and people in this House. So I do not think the Leader of the Opposition can have it both ways; he either wants us to provide the information in this House and through this House and its representatives to the people of Newfoundland and to the people of Holyrood, or otherwise he wants us to go out and inform the people directly even though this House might be open. Now you cannot have it both ways. But I say to the Leader of the Opposition that the least the hon. gentleman can do is to be consistent in how he wants to approach the dissemination of information by the government. If he wants us not to do it through this House, fine, if he wants us to do it through this House, fine too. We are quite flexible and quite willing to go whichever way the Leader of the Opposition would like to have it done. But he first of all must decide upon which way; he cannot have it both ways.

Secondly, the Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor) and the Minister of Communications (Mr. Doyle) and myself have all met with representatives from the

MR. NEARY:

Holyrood area. I have had delegations from the Holyrood area in my office , representatives were representing the whole community talking about and discussing the situation at Holyrood, so they have been kept completely informed by the Minister of Communications (Mr. Doyle) , by the Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor) and by myself. And there have been many, many meetings in the district as well as in my office and in the minister's offices. So the question of information flow and consultation

PREMIER PECKFORD:

with the people I think is a good one, Mr. Speaker. As it relates to various details of this proposal or that proposal, we are not prepared at this time to negotiate in public. We are negotiating with two companies in good faith and we will continue to do so. And as I said, when something has been finalized and some agreements reached or decisions taken, then we will be informing either this House or the people, whichever the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) wants to do.

MR. NEARY: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, we are not in a classroom. The hon. gentleman should remember that we are not in a classroom and we do not need a lecture. He does not have to take us to the gymnasium of a school and give us a lecture. We do not need that from the hon. gentleman, we need some action from the hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding of the situation is that the price to Metro is unsatisfactory. Now has that matter been discussed with the administration? And in the event that no deal can be reached, what options are open to the administration? Will the hon. gentleman tell the House that?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No, Mr. Speaker, I will not tell the hon. House that today. As I indicated in two previous answers, the Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor) and the Minister of Communications (Mr. Doyle) are involved in talks and negotiations and discussions with both companies and therefore it is inappropriate at this moment to start talking about this detail or that point until the negotiations and discussions are completed. It would be completely unfair to one side or the other so to do. So I am not going to

PREMIER PECKFORD: entertain at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, answering those kinds of questions because there are negotiations going on and they involve a lot of various points and a lot of various things. I will just reiterate again, Mr. Speaker, that we will - as soon as negotiations have been concluded - provide the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary), and anybody else who wishes to know, and the people of the area with all the information relevant to this very important matter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. NEARY: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NEARY: There are seventy-five or eighty people in the Holyrood area who are depending on this industry for jobs. Can the hon. gentleman indicate to the House when, in his opinion, the talk will stop and action will start? When can they expect to get a decision on this matter?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer that question. I do not know how long the negotiations are going to continue. I do not have a crystal ball. We are trying to do the best we can to restore those jobs. We are in negotiations not only as it relates to the Holyrood refinery in trying to restore jobs, we are into very important negotiations as it relates to St. Lawrence to try to increase the number of jobs in that community which has been devastated in the last number of years because of a mine closure. And we are going to do everything in our power to see that that mine is restored and that hundreds of jobs are created in St. Lawrence. We are now into very, very important discussions as it relates to Corner Brook and Bowater and the ongoing discussions there. We had long meetings last week about IOC in Labrador City and the ongoing operations there. We had

PREMIER PECKFORD: very, very delicate and ongoing negotiations as it related to the Bay Verte asbestos mine a year and a half or two years ago, and we brought that to a successful conclusion and now have 300 workers working out in Bay Verte who were laid off and where a mine was closed down. We had the same thing in the Minister of Mines (Mr. Dawe) district out in Flat Bay where we had that mine closing down and had it restarted and the 150 or 160 jobs have been restored. So, Mr. Speaker, our record is pretty good. When there are problems

PREMIER PECKFORD:

in the economy we try to arrest them and we try to interest other buyers and other developers, and we are doing that now in St. Lawrence, we are doing it in Holyrood, we are doing it in Bowater, we are stabilizing the situation in Labrador City, and we are doing it on the fishery and we are doing it in all sectors of the economy and we will continue to do so. And the hon. gentleman can be assured that we will leave no stone unturned in Holyrood, in St. Lawrence, in Labrador City, in Corner Brook and anywhere else where there is an economic downturn.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

the Opposition.

The hon. Leader of

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, I could comment on that but this is not the time or the place. I want to get to another matter that seems to be rather urgent, a matter that came out in Ottawa yesterday before the Fisheries Committee of the House of Commons in connection with restructuring. Was the hon. Premier aware when he signed the restructuring agreement that whether or not restructuring would go ahead in this Province depended on whether or not Nova Scotia accepted the restructuring plan? Was the hon. gentleman aware of that?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) is getting at. We have an agreement between the Government of Newfoundland, the Government of Canada and the banks for the restructuring of certain fish companies in this

PREMIER PECKFORD: Province. The bill containing that agreement has passed second reading here in this legislature, and a bill is at Committee stage in the House of Commons which does not deal specifically with this disagreement but gives the authority for this agreement to go ahead. And I would like to know what the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) is referring to and what comments he is referring to?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!
The time for Question Period has expired.

MR. NEARY: By leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. NEARY: That is fine.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) wants to ask a question, I am satisfied to answer. I have nothing to hide.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Leader of the Opposition have leave to ask another

SOME HON. MEMBERS: By leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. NEARY: I wanted to ask the

hon. gentleman if he heard on television last night Mr. Kirby's remarks when he said that a deal had been made with the Bank of Nova Scotia that the Newfoundland restructuring plan was contingent on whether or not Nova Scotia accepted the restructuring? Now that is what Mr. Kirby said and I am asking the hon. gentleman if he was aware of that when he signed the agreement.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I never heard the comments by Mr. Kirby last night and I am not aware that there are any conditions attached to the agreement between the Government of Newfoundland, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the federal government. Our agreement was signed before the Nova Scotia/federal government agreement was -

MR. NEARY: In good faith.

PREMIER PECKFORD: - and in good faith and has no conditions attached to it that it is contingent upon the Nova Scotia one. As a matter of fact, in the discussions that I had with Mr. De Bane and others in Ottawa last week, on Thursday and Friday, they said quite categorically that the agreement between the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the federal government will go ahead regardless; and that it looked very unlikely, at that point in time, that the Nova Scotia, federal government and Bank of Nova Scotia agreement would go ahead because now suddenly the Nova Scotia government were putting additional conditions on the memorandum of understanding that had been signed. I have been briefed on it as late as yesterday afternoon, after I left the House after Question Period, on the progress that has been made in implementing the agreement and everything is moving ahead in our various project teams and I do not see any impediment like the one the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) just mentioned.

MR. NEARY: Well, Kirby did say that.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Well, we will get on to Mr. Kirby and tell him what the agreement says.

MR. NEARY: Right.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. Minister of

Forest, Resources and Lands.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, I have

the honour

MR. POWER:

today to present a petition from the Catholic women's league of the Fermeuse/Renews area. It is a petition, Mr. Speaker, which I present with a certain amount of honour but certainly not with a lot of pleasure. It is a petition that was done and circulated amongst 600 residents of the area earlier this Spring in reaction to an announcement from Dr. Morgantaler, from Montreal, that he will be trying to set up an abortion clinic in the St. John's area. The wording, or the prayer of the petition with which I would hope that all hon. member's of this House will agree and will concur is: "We, the undersigned, strongly protest the opening of an abortion clinic in the city of St. John's."

As I say, Mr. Speaker, this wording in the prayer of the petition was circulated by Mrs. Walsh and her Catholic women's league in the Fermeuse/Renews area in response to an announcement that Dr. Morgantaler was coming to St. John's to set up one of his franchise-type clinics. Again, I would want to expand on the prayer of the petition to say that albeit the wording says St. John's, but I am sure the group that are here from the Fermeuse/Renews area and all of the 600 people who signed this petition would be more than willing to expand the prayer of the petition to not only include St. John's for an abortion clinic but also any other given part of Newfoundland. Again, as I say, this was in response to an announcement.

MR. WARREN:

What about Labrador?

MR. POWER:

And Labrador or any other part of our Island and our Province.

Mr. Speaker, certainly, as I say, it is not a particular pleasure to have to present this kind of a petition; it seems that in many parts of Canada because

MR. POWER: of the liberalized abortion laws, it seems that these abortion clinic types of operations are allowed to flourish. Certainly, Dr. Morgantaler's clinic in Montreal, in the Province of Quebec, seems to be fairly well accepted by the public. It is certainly my belief that the values as circulated, as signed and, I guess, outlined by the persons who signed this petition are the values of our community, being the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and are certainly not at this stage in any way, shape or form going to allow or accept this kind of social value.

In a world where we see so much suffering and pain, so much needless death in many parts of the world, so much terrorist activity and so many strange things happening that to our way of thinking are totally foreign, to allow the death of the unborn in a clinic such as Dr. Morgantaler would like to set up, or others of his suit, is certainly not something which conforms to the values of the people of our Province.

I want to, Mr. Speaker, ask my colleagues and the other members of the House of Assembly to support the prayer of this petition. I want to also commend the great deal of work that was involved in circulating this petition all over that end of the Southern Shore, to commend the 600 persons who signed the petition and, in particular, to commend the Catholic women's league, Mrs. Walsh, the President, and all the other persons who helped circulate this petition and who have shown their interest in preserving the traditional values of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador by travelling all the way to St. John's to be in our House of Assembly today.

Again, in summary, Mr. Speaker, I just hope that all members of this House of Assembly can concur with the prayer of this petition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, like all other previous petitions that have been presented in this House, we support the prayer of the petition just presented by the member for Ferryland (Mr. Power), and we would like to congratulate Mrs. Walsh and the Catholic women's league in the Fermeuse/Renews area on taking the initiative in this matter.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Morgantaler must be getting the message by now from this Province that he is not wanted here. But, Mr. Speaker, the thing that bothers me is the fact that we do not need a Morgantaler here to have record numbers of abortions taking place. In answer to a question put on the Order Paper by my

MR. NEARY:

colleague, the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Roberts), the Minister of Health (Mr. House) supplied the information the other day to indicate that in the year 1980 there were 488 abortions over here at the Health Sciences Complex, and in 1981 there were 358 abortions, in 1982 there were 379 abortions and in 1983, for the first three months there were 152 abortions -

MR. WARREN:

That is about 600 by the end of the year.

MR. NEARY:

- and that will be a record this year, since the committees were set up.

MR. HOUSE:

800 one year.

MR. NEARY:

800 one year. The minister says 800 in one year. I do not know what year that was. It was not since 1980, because I have the minister's figures here since 1980. 488 in 1983; 58 in 1981; 379 in 1982; and for the first three months of this year 152, that will probably hit somewhere between 500 and 600 in the current year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is it any wonder that people are calling the Health Sciences Complex a slaughter house. And I do not know if the Women's League in Fermeus, and in the Renew area were aware that this number of abortions were taking place in this Province. Because I believe, Mr. Speaker, that if they did not only would they have addressed themselves to the possibility of Morgantaler, the butcher, coming into Newfoundland, but they may have addressed themselves to what is happening at the Health Sciences Complex, that the government is turning a blind eye to.

These committees that the minister told us the other day are working, in actual fact when I went out of here I enquired and they are not working. I would like to see the records of their meetings, how often they meet -

MR. WALSH: It is debatable.

MR. NEARY: No, it is not a debate,

Mr. Speaker, it is a question to the minister. How often do the committees meet?

MR. HOUSE: Question Period.

MR. NEARY: Oh, Question Period. Mr. Speaker, we can see from today's Question Period we do not get very far when you ask hard questions of the administration that may be embarrassing.

But the fact of the matter is that the Minister of Health (Mr. House), and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) there opposite should combine their energy and their forces and take a good, hard look at what is happening in the Health Sciences Complex. It is virtually impossible, Mr. Speaker, for that many legal abortions to take place in one year in this Province. And the hon. gentleman knows the difference of that, and the hon. gentleman just cannot sit there and make snarky remarks, Mr. Speaker, about what is going on over there. It is the hon. gentleman's responsibility to investigate it and look into it and he should be doing it.

500 or 600 abortions in this Province this year.

MR. HOUSE: No, Sir.

MR. NEARY: Yes, Sir. According to the minister's own figures. We have 152 for the first three months, average it out for the rest of the year, the next nine months, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WARREN: No more this year.

MR. NEARY: And it has to stop. So I would submit that the administration not be hypocritical about this matter, We support the Catholic Women's League and we supported the petition the other day, and we have brought in petitions ourselves,

MR. NEARY: but, Mr. Speaker, it is about time that we stopped and took a look at what is happening at the Health Sciences Complex and in other hospitals around this Province. I cannot prove it, I can only go on the basis of the information that is given to me, but these committees are not working, they are not meeting, and they are not doing their job. And it is about time that the minister saw to it, that they were.

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

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to stand and support the petition so ably presented by the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands (Mr. Powers), and, first of all, to indicate the position of the government as it relates to Dr. Morgantaler. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) and others in the government have had a fair amount of correspondence on this very important issue. We have indicated in no uncertain terms that if Mr. Morgantaler tries to proceed with the actions as he has done in other provinces, that under the Criminal Code, which we have the power to pursue, we will prosecute and we will take whatever action we can under law to see that his actions are unsuccessful, and I want to make that perfectly clear,

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker. We have no intention of putting up with Mr. Morgantaler in this Province. If he tries to set up here he will be breaking the law and we will take action to see that that law is upheld.

Thirdly, let me just say that under the federal law, under the Criminal Code, is where the whole question of therapeutic abortion lies and that is a Canadian federal law, it is not a law out of this Legislature, it is not a law instituted by this government, it is something over which we have absolutely no control, Mr. Speaker. So for the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) to get up and imply, number one, that somehow this administration or this government can do something about a Canadian law under the Criminal Code is leaving the wrong impression in the minds of those people in the galleries who are here to listen to the debate and the petition on this particular issue.

MR. NEARY: But you own the hospital, do you not?

PREMIER PECKFORD: There is no question about the ownership of the hospital, that has nothing to do with the ownership of the hospital, Mr. Speaker, it has to do with a federal law. And let us be clear: That federal law is a law which was put on the books, and remains on the books, by a federal Liberal Government that the hon. member supports. So let us get our facts straight. Now and then the hon. the Leader of the Opposition comes in and when it is politically expedient he is all over the Liberal Government in Ottawa, he loves the Liberal Government in Ottawa, and then when it becomes politically expedient, he hates the Liberal Government in Ottawa. Once again, the Leader of the Opposition is trying to have it both ways.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Fourthly, Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) has information relating to the Health Sciences Complex or any other institution in this Province where something is going wrong, let him put his money where his mouth is, Mr. Speaker, and let him give to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) or the other people in the government the information. Do not just go out and make wild and woolly allegations - that hurts people. That hurts people, Mr. Speaker. You can hurt people, you know, in many other ways than in a hospital, there is mental and emotional cruelty too, and the Leader of the Opposition practices that every day in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: So, Mr. Speaker, if there is information, let the information come out and let the police have the information and let the prosecutors prosecute.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in summary, I support and this government supports the prayer of that petition and we will take action if in fact Dr. Mongantaler tries to come across the Gulf of St. Lawrence into this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY: How low can you go? You have gone pretty low, but that is the lowest yet.

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

MR. NEARY: It is your programme, you administer it. That is about the slimiest, rottenest, lowest -

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

On a point of order,
the hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I think neither the House nor the people in the galleries have to tolerate

MR. MARSHALL: the type of conduct and the types of statements coming from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary). The hon. the Leader of the Opposition is making statements from his seat that are obviously unparliamentary and they are the types of statements that should be withdrawn. It is also a fact, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. gentleman thinks he can take the people's House on his back any time he wants to just because he disagrees with a statement made by an hon. member. Mr. Speaker, the House cannot function in that particular way and I think it is incumbent on the hon. gentleman to apologize to the House and apologize to the people of the Province of Newfoundland for the way he is detracting from the people's House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): To that point of order, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, what I was doing was commenting on statements made by the Premier that were completely untrue. The hon. gentleman was debating under the disguise of a petition. In actual fact, it is the Minister of Justice

MR. NEARY:

(Mr. Ottenheimer) and the Minister of Health (Mr. House) who enforce this law that he was talking about, who run the hospitals in this Province, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. gentleman should not be allowed to get away with making these wild and irresponsible statements like he did.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: And I would submit it is not a point of order, it is merely a difference of opinion between two hon. gentlemen, Mr. Speaker. The hon. minister must have had his nasty pills again today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

To that point of order, I was paying attention to the Order Paper and did not hear exactly what the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) said. I will check into it. But I would remind all hon. members of the House that it is not permissible under the rules of the House to be shouting and interjecting while somebody else is speaking.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

This being Private Members' Day we have for debate today a motion moved by the hon. member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn). Motion 4.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. HEARN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must say in introducing this resolution that it is not entirely different from the the prayer of the petition that was just presented because what we are dealing with here in this resolution is, once again the preservation and the sanctity and the safety of human life. For the record I will read the resolution.

MR. HEARN: "WHEREAS Winter drilling off our shore has always been a concern of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador; and WHEREAS government acted on this concern by implementing strict new Winter drilling regulations for this Winter's drilling activity; and WHEREAS the Government of Canada has not adopted the intent or the spirit of those regulations; and WHEREAS recent frightening experiences with regard to iceberg movements and sea state conditions offshore have pointed to the urgent need to study and revise those regulations in order to provide a maximum level of health and safety for offshore workers; NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House support the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in this initiative and demand that the Government of Canada and the offshore operations concur with the "Removal Order" for the period needed to reassess and revise the Winter drilling regulations."

I do not think there is any need, Mr. Speaker, to elaborate in this hon. House, or in the Province of Newfoundland, on the importance of safety in the offshore. We are the witnesses of many tragedies that occurred offshore in Newfoundland over the centuries, but more particularly in recent years, and specifically in relation to offshore development, when we talk about oil development, to the loss of the Ocean Ranger. It is during the Winter period in particular, when we run into a time of storms and a period of tremendous iceberg infestation, that we become well aware of the possibilities of what can happen in the offshore of this Province.

In relation to the

MR. HEARN:

removal order, what is being suggested is that the federal government and the companies, along with our own Petroleum Directorate, ask the various operations offshore to cease during dangerous periods until at least we have time to reassess the total situation and to prove that the lives of those who work on the offshore rigs can be saved in the event of any kind of an offshore tragedy or during periods of storm.

We have two main sources of concern, storms and icebergs. In 1983 we had more icebergs off the Coast of Newfoundland than we had in any time of recorded history. In fact, we had many, many times the number of the average year. Perhaps this was just a fluke occasion, but it served as a warning to us that Mother Nature does not go around picking times when to send icebergs or when to keep them back. We have no control over that whatsoever.

MR. WOODROW:

Right you are, Sir.

MR. HEARN:

In relation to iceberg detection, there are only three ways that we can ascertain how many icebergs are off our coast or how many are in the proximity of the oil wells; we have radar, over-flights, and vessel surveys. Basically on the offshore rigs we have two types of radar systems, what we call the X-band and the S-band, Both of those are used on some of the rigs; some of the other rigs only have one type or other. In relation to the X-band, this is affected tremendously; the radiation is reflected by rain or suspended water. So consequently in periods of heavy rain, Winter storms, freezing rain, etc., the X-band radar does not serve the purpose for which it is designed. The S-band, on the other hand, gives poor resolution on what we call hard targets, and certainly an iceberg, as you know, is an extremely poor reflector, to such a degree that there were times during last year's

MR. HEARN: heavy infestation that we had icebergs within ten nautical miles of the various oil rigs.

Now perhaps you might say ten miles is a fair distance. Certainly at sea, where we have wind and wave and tide action in particular involved, ten miles is a very, very short distance, especially when one realizes the tremendous amount of time it takes to get one of those rigs out of the way of the oncoming icebergs.

In relation to the over-flights, for this, of course, we rely heavily on either fixed wing aircraft or helicopters. During the times of concern, a calm period is of no great concern to anyone; it is during times of storms that we worry most. And, of course, with over-flights during a period like this you run into two problems; number one, the visibility problem, where we can see very little or nothing; and, secondly, during periods of excessive storms, of course, flying is impossible anyway. So therefore the over-flights, like the radar, serve absolutely no purpose.

The other one, vessel sweeps, is only based upon what can be seen in direct line of sight, and once again, in times of low visibility, which we find quite often on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland around the sites of our offshore developments, and in periods of high seas, the direct site is practically nil. So therefore any modern ways that we have for detecting icebergs, certainly during times of peak storms, are certainly not suitable in order to detect the presense of icebergs in time to move to safety the rigs themselves or to remove the people from the rigs.

MR. HEARN: In order to move the iceberg - we can and have towed icebergs away from the vicinity of the oil rigs-but the success of towing icebergs depends on several things. Number one, the size; beyond a certain size it is impossible to tow icebergs. Like the old expression, it is just the tip of the iceberg, that is all we see above water. And quite often in the towing process, when we have our ropes around the top of the iceberg, you end up rolling the iceberg, which is extremely dangerous to anybody involved in such an exercise. The shape of the iceberg certainly has a tremendous amount to do with the towing. But, above and beyond that, is wind and wave height; once we get beyond a certain amount of wind or wave action, then it is impossible to tow icebergs. Of course, it is just during these period, when we have heavy wind or wave action, that we do have the problems, and this is the time, of course, when we cannot do anything to help. The impact of an iceberg - and all of us are familiar with them - striking one of those rigs, of course, there is no way that any of them could sustain the shock, the pressure of an iceberg, especially when it is moving with heavy tides that we have on the Grand Banks and especially when we run into the fifty to seventy foot waves that we have during peak storms.

Even when icebergs can be detected, and we have shown that sometimes they are extremely near the rigs when they are detected and we have to move very quickly, the security of the well is extremely important. And here once again the time element comes into play and sea conditions. Trying to move a rig, which involves either removing the anchors, hauling up the anchors, or even sheering them off, or in some cases moving the rig by slackening anchors on one side so that it can adjust one way or another to avoid the path of the iceberg, both of those take time and in times

MR. HEARN: of poor weather and sea conditions are extremely dangerous movements. It takes up to anywhere from four to eight hours to get a rig off site, and if we have tough sea conditions there is no way that the anchors can be hauled in safely. Even in the sheering-off, which involves action from the boats, it is extremely dangerous for those on the decks of the boats involved in the sheering-off process.

Moving off the location itself, sometimes, as I mentioned, we move the rig by either pulling the anchors or slackening the anchors on one side. This has been recommended by some of the oil companies. In times when we do not have time to move the rig directly from the site and to secure the well itself, we would slacken the anchors, move the rig some distance, whatever the slack would give them, and then move back again when the iceberg passed by. But, of course, there is always the danger of impact with the iceberg, there is also danger that the iceberg might strike the chains, the anchors, that moor the rig, and the impact of such a size of an iceberg that we find on the Grand Banks would cause tremendous damage and, of course, disaster to the rig. So I do not think any rig operator, any of the companies, would take a chance on just saying, 'We will move X number of hundreds of feet out of the path of an iceberg' because we are not talking about ice pans, the kind that we copied home around the bay and ran back and forth on or shoved off with our sticks, we are talking about icebergs many thousands of tons.

In moving off the location, also we have to think of the environmental conditions. So I already mentioned, when we have the Winter wind and storms, trying to move a rig off the site and secure the well itself is almost practically impossible to do under the conditions that we are concerned about.

MR. HEARN: We also have to worry about the people on the tow boats. If we sheer off or manage to pull in the anchors on the rig during times of severe storms or sea conditions, we have to worry about getting a tow line to the various boats to be towed to safety. This is an extremely dangerous process. In fact, the people who are involved with supply boats tell us that in times of severe storms it might be an impossible process.

Evacuation and abandonment

MR. HEARN:

of rigs; Here is a process with which we are quite familiar because we have heard over and over again the story of what happened the night of the sinking of the Ocean Ranger as seen by others. We will never know, of course, what happened on the Ocean Ranger from the people who were involved because, as we know, that disaster claimed every life that was on that rig.

In times of freezing rain, wind, wave action up to seventy feet as we had at that period, we cannot safely leave a rig, we cannot land there in our rescue helicopters; even if we could, the number of helicopters that are available could not safely take the number of people who were on the rigs off; the lifeboats that we have up to now, and even some new ones that are being tested, we have no guarantees that these will be successful in times of severe Winter storms, so consequently up to now the experts tell us that there is no safe, secure way of abandoning a rig in times of heavy wave action or wind.

Given a storm such as we had last February - a very controversial time here in relation to work on the offshore; when we suggested originally that the rigs remove themselves from location and come on to shore, an order which of course was rejected by the federal government, the rigs eventually, because of pack ice, just loosened their anchors and moved off ahead of the ice, which could have been an extremely dangerous thing, given a storm. - We have to question the adequacy of the Search and Rescue effort as it pertains here to the Province. When we realize that the Search and Rescue helicopters are either based in PEI, Gander, or the Gaspé Peninsula, and, of course, the fixed-wing aircraft that we sometimes use and from Greenwood, Nova Scotia, when we realize the time it takes any of these, even from Gander

MR. HEARN: it is at least four hours to the rig, six to eight hours from PEI, and that is in good weather conditions, and when we realize that we do not have to worry necessarily about evacuation during good weather conditions, it is during times of storms that we are concerned about, it is practically impossible for any kind of aircraft to successfully reach and rescue people from the rigs. That is the point of major concern. Even if we had here in Torbay, for instance, which would be in closest proximity to the offshore rigs, even if we had our Search and Rescue people based there, we could still not guarantee that we could have saved any lives from the Ocean Ranger, we can not guarantee that we can save any lives in the event of any major storm. We have to realize, Mr. Speaker, that on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland we do not get any long range warning about storms very often. Quite often we see minor storms, which we do not concern ourselves with too often, develop tremendously in a very very short period of time. By the time everyone is alerted, it is then too late to affect adequate rescue work.

In talking about the offshore and suggesting that we could close down for the Winter, we have to also recognize the fact that the success of Newfoundland as a Province, the economic development of Newfoundland as a Province depends heavily

MR. HEARN: on the development of the offshore. We can then not really go, as we say, kicking a gift horse in the face. We have to be extremely careful about our decisions, but we also have to be extremely responsible for the lives of those on the offshore. All of us in Newfoundland look forward very, very shortly to an agreement being reached between our government and the federal government for the development of our offshore resources, an agreement that will benefit all of us directly and indirectly here in Newfoundland. But what we have to remember and ask ourselves is what price do we pay for the development of the offshore? Nobody has said that Winter drilling is impossible - we know it is possible - all we are saying is that Winter drilling is extremely dangerous. There are times when lives are at stake and what we are suggesting in this resolution, Mr. Speaker, is until we can be sure that the lives of the people who work in the offshore are not at stake, we should not continue with Winter drilling. We should, at least during the stormy period, remove from the site the rigs that are there so that the safety of the workers aboard is secured.

In concluding, just before I formally move the resolution, I would like to point out that we should not place such emphasis on making a living that we overlook the possibility of losing a life. With that, I move the resolution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this resolution. In fact, Mr. Speaker, that is more than the hon. member said. The hon. member did not say whether he supported it or not. He skated all around the resolution and I would believe that before he left his caucus today -

MR. NEARY: That is what he said, 'You do not kick a gift horse in the face.'

MR. WARREN: Before he left his caucus today, I would say that he was told by his colleagues, "Look, be careful what you say because this government is against -

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

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): A point of order, the hon. member for St. Mary's-The Capes.

MR. HEARN: I would just like to point out that my remarks during the introduction of the resolution, anybody who could comprehend certainly should be under the impression that I support the resolution. I categorically state it for the member's benefit at this time.

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

MR. SPEAKER: To that point of order, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Your Honour, of course, is aware that that is not a point of order. We understand that the hon. gentleman is just a junior member of the House, a novice. He probably forgot to state that he was supporting his own resolution. We forgive him for that, Mr. Speaker. We know that he was so concerned that he would not cut across government policy, that he would not fly in the face of the policy of the administration, that he forgot, in his frustration and in his simplicity, to say that he supported the resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! To that point of order. I rule that there is no point of order.

The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, a question from this side of the House to the hon. Premier and to the hon. House Leader (Mr. Marshall), asking them if they supported Winter drilling or did not support Winter drilling, received a vague answer, so vague in fact it is this government that is against the hon. member's resolution. This government

MR. WARREN: have indicated publicly that this resolution that the hon. member for St. Mary's-The Capes (Mr. Hearn)- and I must admit that he is one of the most outstanding members on that side of the hon. House to bring in this resolution, and he must have brought it in at a time when it was discussed in their caucus and at a time, probably, when the caucus was believing that there should not be any one drilling - but as we know, and as the hon. members should know or should realize, the big oil companies have told the Premier and have told his ministers 'Look, we are going to do Winter drilling regardless'. That is why this government is against this resolution. The government may come out and support this resolution, but I would venture to say, Mr. Speaker, if this resolution falls at six o'clock, or next week at six o'clock, you will see a lot of members absent from their seats on that side who do not want to support this resolution. You will see a lot of members on that side, Mr. Speaker, who have reservations whether to support this resolution or not. Safety of life. When the hon. member started his debate he said -

MR. NEARY: His famous phrase was 'kicking a gift horse in the face.'

MR. WARREN: He said we are concerned about safety of life. Mr. Speaker, if that government or that side of the House over there were concerned about the safety of life, the hon. minister, the hon. House Leader (Mr. Marshall) would have listened and would have responded to the letters that the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hodder) wrote to him before the Ocean Ranger sank. If that government was concerned, I would say today we would not have eighty-four people gone down

MR. WARREN: to the bottom of the sea on the Ocean Ranger-if this government had paid attention. This government did not pay attention back before the Ocean Ranger sank. There is evidence, there are letters showing that it was unsafe to drill offshore, but this government has shown negligence and what happened was that the Ocean Ranger went to the bottom with eighty-four lives. And regardless what this resolution says, it cannot atone for the negligence the action off this government has caused in agony to many Newfoundlanders, many Canadians and many people from outside of Canada altogether. And, Mr. Speaker, let it be known that the hon. member in bringing in this resolution has his convictions. In fact, he just said it and he will be voting for the resolution because that hon. member does have the intestinal fortitude of standing up to his convictions. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there should not be any Winter drilling. The hon. member believes it and I would say ninety-five per cent on that side of the House believe it.

MR. WARREN: What is the point of believing it if one man over on that side - and I am referring to the Premier - if one man over on that side says, 'There is going to be Winter drilling' then all of us, the forty-three of us or the forty-two of us excluding the Speaker, will be just like puppets, we will go as the Premier says we will go. If the Premier says, 'We will vote for this Resolution,' we will vote for it.

MR. NEARY: Trained seals.

MR. WARREN: Just like a bunch of trained seals, Mr. Speaker.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that today or next week when this Resolution is brought forward, show your convictions and support the people whom you represent, do not worry about the guy from Green Bay. Do not worry about the Premier from Green Bay, he is only one person. Do not worry about the hon. the member for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall), he is only one person.

MR. YOUNG: That is two.

MR. STAGG: He is a great leader.

MR. WARREN: He may be a great leader.

I have no hesitation in saying he was a great leader and he may still be a great leader.

MR. NEARY: Which one, the member for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) or the Premier?

MR. WARREN: Either. One is just as good as the other.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARREN: However, Mr. Speaker, it is no good to be a great leader in this House, it is no good to be a great leader in this Province if you are not going to put the lives of people first, if you do not care about the lives of individuals. And that is what this government

MR. WARREN: is doing, not only in this Resolution, Mr. Speaker - look at the hospital beds being closed down, look at the lives of people that are at stake there.

MR. NEARY: This is a government that does not care about people.

MR. WARREN: You know, I had to laugh to myself just now when the hon. member said, 'Safety - people's lives are at stake.' Yes, Mr. Speaker, this government does care about people's lives! Look at the hospital beds closed, look at the Ocean Ranger with eighty-four lives gone to the bottom and look at the many, many other tragedies in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, it is only in the past week or so we have been told that we do not have enough safety regulations. It has been reported by the oil companies - what was the name of the group that yesterday held press conferences simultaneously in Halifax and here in St. John's?

MR. WINDSOR: FENCO.

MR. WARREN: They said they cannot guarantee all safety. There is not enough evidence that safety is there all the time. And, Mr. Speaker, what removal order - the hon. gentleman says that the Government of Canada and the offshore operations concur with the removal order - now what removal order is the hon. gentleman talking about? Does the hon. the Leader of the Opposition know?

MR. NEARY: Yes, to remove the rigs from the ice fields.

MR. WARREN: Last year, right. Now, here is a removal order that the administration had in place last year, so all he wants to do now is just at some time,

MR. WARREN:

We know what the weather is like, Mr. Speaker, from December to March, we know it is not fit for man or beast to be out into the rough Atlantic; the wind can change very fast, the weather is very volatile and, Mr. Speaker, with that there is no reason why this government should allow Winter drilling. As I said earlier, the only reason they are allowing Winter drilling is that Mr. Oakley, Mr. Hopper and a few more oil executives with the big companies have said, 'Look, we are going to do Winter drilling or we are going to go to Nova Scotia, or we are going to go elsewhere.'

Now, there was an ultimatum put to this government, Winter drilling or no drilling. The government do not have the intestinal fortitude to stand up to the oil companies and say, Look, there is going to be no Winter drilling. There is no courage at all in this government. The only courage that is in this government is closing down hospital beds. That is the only courage.

MR. NEARY:

That is right, hurt people, make people suffer. They have no regard for people. That is the difference between Liberalism and Toryism. This is a people-oriented party. They have no regard for people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, back when the Ocean Ranger sank or shortly thereafter, there were all kinds of accusations made; the Air, Sea, and Rescue was not stationed in Newfoundland, there was no notification given in advance, and all these kinds of excuses. And, Mr. Speaker, it was only an excuse. And the hon. gentleman who just got up out of his seat, as far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, he is the person on the government side who showed the most negligence when he did not respond

MR. WARREN: to a request from the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) who wrote to the minister and said, Look, there are reports of unsafe conditions out in the Atlantic during the Winter months. And what happened? We know what happened, Mr. Speaker, the Ocean Ranger went down.

The hon. member for St. Mary's-The Capes (Mr. Hearn) said that human life is a big price to pay. Yes, Mr. Speaker, these are the truest words that could be uttered by any individual, 'human life is a big price to pay.' And I believe we should remember that, and all of us on both sides of the House, should demand that the government, the Premier and the Cabinet, stop Winter drilling. It is not a big request.

MR. STAGG:
'H' for his colleague.

Honourable, with a capital

MR. WARREN:

You mean the word 'honourable'?

MR. STAGG:

We are not honourable.

MR. WARREN:

Well, I refer to you as honourable members, but I would not refer to you as an honourable member, no.

MR. STAGG:

Well, I will withdraw that.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, another reason why Winter drilling is continuing is because of the terrible unemployment record in this Province, because it

MR. WARREN: is another little ego trip for the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn). The Minister of Labour and Manpower can come into this hon. House and say, "Look, there are 925 people working on the offshore in January." Just a little ego trip to show that unemployment is not as bad as it should be.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if any of the hon. gentlemen have heard a Newfoundland singer by the name of Payne - Is there a Payne?

MR. NEARY: Yes.

MR. WARREN: He has a song made up about the Ocean Ranger.

MR. BAIRD: Sing it. Sing it.

MR. WARREN: No, but I will take my seat and let the hon. member for Humber West (Mr. Baird) sing it. The song has to do with working on the oil rigs, and I would suggest that the next chance you get to listen to that song, listen to the last verse. In fact, the last stanza says that we would sooner be home, we would sooner be on the shore. And naturally they would, Mr. Speaker. Naturally they would. It is bad enough, Mr. Speaker, during the Summertime and the Fall and the Spring, but during the Winter months just imagine the tribulations, what anguish it is for families knowing that their husbands are out there for the next twenty-one days and knowing - we admit it on this side and this government admits it - that Air, Sea and Rescue is not capable of evacuating an oil rig. That is common knowledge. An oil rig, when it is in danger, it cannot be evacuated safely. We all know that. So just imagine what anguish the relatives are going through when their loved ones are out on those rigs during the months of December, January, February and March.

MR. WARREN: I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is a little bit too hard to bear. I believe that they should not be left to bear this heavy burden. And it is very, very simple for this government to accept the reality and issue an order, regardless of whose toes you have to tread on, regardless of what oil executives you upset, issue an order and demand - if this government believes in its conviction that it owns the offshore, that it owns where the oil rigs are stationed, then let them show their true colours, if we think we own it, if we believe we own it, let us show our true colours and say there will be no Winter drilling. It is very simple!

MR. WARREN: This resolution only refer to the "Removal Order", this resolution does not refer to no Winter drilling. Now I believe the hon. gentleman from St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn) believes that there should not be any Winter drilling.

MR. NEARY: But he does not have the courage to say it.

MR. WARREN: I am surprised, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that when this resolution does come to a vote that this House will vote unanimously to no Winter drilling carried on off the shores of Newfoundland. If this happens then this government will look much, much better in the eyes of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians than they do today.

MR. NEARY: They are playing a dangerous game.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I do not care whether - I suppose personally I care, yes, but the next election does not mean that much to me one way or the other, but I do care about -

MR. ANDREWS: Did you tell the people down in Torngat Mountains that?

MR. WARREN: I am going to win regardless. So, Mr. Speaker, what it does mean to me is that I do not think this government should place their confidence in believing that the best thing for Newfoundland is to continue Winter drilling. This government has not made its decision clear. This government, as I said earlier, is more concerned about having ninety-five people working on the SEDCO 706, or eighty-five people on the Zapatha Uglund. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that those families would be better off if their husbands or their sons were brought ashore in December and let go on unemployment insurance. This is what unemployment insurance is for, it is for those people. Let us stop the rigs for four or five months; I

MR. WARREN: am sure the majority of those families would be quite satisfied to live on a little bit less and have their loved ones safe than have them working off there from December to March not knowing what might happen. Because it happened once, Mr. Speaker, and as sure as we are human beings it can happen again. As the hon. member said, there is nothing impossible. We may bring in all kinds of safety regulations, we may take every precaution that we believe is necessary, but remember the Titanic sunk when no one in that day thought it would. And nobody believed that the Ocean Ranger was going to go down, no one believed that probably an aircraft could be highjacked, for example, but these things do happen. There is nothing impossible in this day and age. And one of the greatest dangers, the greatest possibilities, is that the potential if off there. We know the history of the Grand Banks; we have had lives and lives lost, lost in the sea because, Mr. Speaker, Mother Nature acts in a mysterious way, acts in a most mysterious way. And it is not for us to condemn, it is not for us to sanction, but it happens and who are we to call the shots?

MR. WARREN:

At least there is one shot that we can call. In closing I would like to say that there is one shot that we can call and that is the shot that says: Bring the rigs in in December and send them back again in April or a little later, but let us look at the safety of the individuals concerned. I believe the government will do justice to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador by having no Winter drilling.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker,

I thank you very much.

MR. WOODROW:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

The hon. the member for the

Bay of Islands.

MR. WOODROW:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to

congratulate my colleague, the member for St. Mary's -

The Capes (Mr. Hearn), for so capably presenting the

petition. I would like to say that I am going to give it

my support.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, a quorum call.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member has asked for

a quorum call.

MR. WARREN:

Sure, bring in the members to

listen to the man.

MR. SPEAKER:

Call in the members.

We have to wait three minutes before we can start, unless by agreement we can continue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bay of

Islands.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WOODROW: Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the petition so ably presented by my colleague, the member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn), and would preface my remarks by saying that almost on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, we are reminded of drownings in all parts of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I suppose this is because many of our Newfoundlanders have earned and still earn their livelihood from the sea.

I would like to recall, Mr. Speaker, a little incident that happened in the Bay of Islands in 1962 in which I was involved. In fact, I erected a monument to the lives of people who were drowned between Woods Island and the Benoit's Cove area. Now on that monument also, Mr. Speaker, were names of great sea captains who were drowned years ago off St. George's. I mention this, Mr. Speaker, because the waters of the Bay of Islands are not really vicious waters and they cannot be compared to the waters and the dangers of the Grand Banks, but I thought at least I would make that

MR. WOODROW:

little comparison. The environmental conditions on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland are the worst to be found anywhere in the world. Icebergs, freezing spray, fog, high wind and sea conditions have placed severe restrictions on drilling operations, particularly during the Winter season, when the frequency of storms occur with all too frequent regularity and severity. The Grand Bank area is subject to harsher environmental conditions than the North Sea, the Gulf of Alaska or the South Eastern United States, yet there appears to be an attitude in Ottawa that improving the health and safety of offshore workers is simply not a priority item. As we enter the Winter storm season, which is from December up to March, it appears that few if any contingency plans are in place and, while the provincial government has implemented strict Winter drilling regulations, it appears that the federal authorities are again willing to deal with offshore operations on a day-to-day basis-Mr. Speaker, I am not happy to say this because I do not like confrontation. I like, in fact, people to co-operate, especially in a matter where lives of people are at stake, but you have to state facts - or, in the case of severe storm conditions, on a crisis management hourly basis following the facts. It is obvious too that the federal government is too far removed from the realities of the North Atlantic to adequately deal with decisions affecting the lives of offshore workers.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear!

MR. WOODROW:

They simply do not understand the local conditions on ice, wind and wave, and how conditions can deteriorate on an hourly basis.

MR. WOODROW: Surely if they do, number one, they would have put in place an adequate Search and Rescue capability which this Province has been requesting during the past decade or longer. Number two, they would have maintained the operation of the Shoe Cove satellite station, which provided a much more responsive weather capability. Number three, they would be pressuring the companies to provide support vessels capable of assisting in a capable way in marine rescues. And, number four, they would agree to the provincial government removal orders. That is what the resolution is all about.

I was interested to read the comments of a Mr. Hamish McDonald, who runs an emergency rescue programme at the Robert Gordon Institute of Technology in Aberdeen, testifying before the Ocean Ranger

MR. WOODROW:

Royal Commission, that Canadian standards for offshore rescue vessels and training provide minimum protection for oil rig workers.

According to Mr. McDonald, some Canadian supply boats now have the fast rescue craft, but there have been few additions to the list of mandatory lifesaving equipment for stand-by craft working offshore.

In the North Sea, for example, petroleum operators generally equip their stand-by vessels with safety equipment that surpasses government standards.

In view of the events surrounding the rescue attempts during the Ocean Ranger disaster and those during the period February 16 - 19, 1983, it is obvious that we must reassess our present capabilities and insist that the maximum level of safety is ensured for offshore workers. We must ensure that the working environment is as safe as humanly possible. The Grand Banks marine environment will always pose dangerous risks to anyone operating in the area, particularly during the Winter months. We can minimize the risks, take whatever safety measures are available, bring into operation the most up-to-date technology and enforce operating regulations with diligence, we can and have improved the safety of our offshore workers, but the point must be made that the federal government must come to realize that the Province's removal order is to be upheld.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WOODROW:

We cannot have another situation like the one that existed at Hibernia I 246 and Nordana I 43 locations between February, where there were eighty-four people onboard the drilling unit West Venture with at least ten icebergs and bergy bits in the vicinity of the

MR. WOODROW: rig during a severe Winter storm that lasted two and one-half days. Icebergs could not be towed away due to rough seas; the vessel was moored with all ten anchors; the anchors could not be pulled due to rough seas; no personnel could be removed from the rig by helicopter or supply vessel; successful abandonment via the lifesaving equipment would have proven hazardous due to the high winds and rough seas:

MR. WOODROW: This is the worst possible scenario offshore. Despite the obvious dangers of ice and wind, the Federal Minister of Energy, Mr. Chretien, stood in the hallowed, comfortable hallways of Ottawa stating there was no danger and that the rigs would continue drilling. This is almost incredible.

MR. BAIRD: The gall of him!

MR. WOODROW: They completely ignored the serious facts surrounding the incident and have blindly ignored the need to establish a Search and Rescue facility in this Province - no defensive capability, no armed forces, not satellite station, and on goes the list.

Every year, Mr. Speaker, we have the spectacle of aircraft attempting to carry out search and Rescue operations for strayed seal or bird hunters off our coast. Last year, for example, my colleague, the member for Carbonear (Mr. Peach), documented such a case in which it took in excess of eight hours for aircraft to reach the area of Conception Bay North - over eight hours in an environment where minutes determines survival or death. This is not to criticize the efforts of the dedicated and capable efforts of pilots and rescue personnel who worked under the most difficult conditions: However, it simply makes no logical or strategic sense to have our Province, a marine oriented society and this is what is important, Mr. Speaker - being dependant upon PEI, or New Brunswick or Nova Scotia.

MR. BAIRD: Or anywhere.

MR. WOODROW: We are simply out of range, and the programme out of touch with present realities and needs. Why not Argentina? Why not St. John's, Newfoundland? Why not Gander? The age-old question still demands a response.

MR. NEARY: Where is COGLA located?

MR. WOODROW: I wonder how long more will the hon. James McGrath have to bring those things before the Parliament

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MR. WOODROW:

of Canada.

MR. NEARY:

He is trying to get into the Senate now. He is trying to get my job.

MR. WOODROW:

We urgently need to place before the operators offshore Winter drilling regulations that place the safety of workers first. We urgently need contingency plans, a charted course set out for Winter drilling, a course which will be recognized and agreed to by the federal authorities. Only when we have the safest possible support facilities and the most up-to-date response capability can we say that we have done all that we can within our present day technological information to make the offshore as safe as humanly possible.

There may be times when the rigs will be forced off site, as evidenced last February. The time factor for such action is critical. Any delay could compromise the success of the operation and the safety of rig workers, thus the removal order must be concurred with, indeed supported by the federal government.

MR. WOODROW: As our Winter season approaches, Mr. Speaker, I trust that the federal government, along with our provincial government, will co-operate and co-ordinate activities to ensure the safety of our offshore personnel. Many difficulties were outlined in the recently released Offshore Safety Task Force Report. The report emphasized this co-operative approach to drilling regulations, noting that federal and provincial agencies are applying different acts and enforcing certain conflicting and overlapping regulations. As I have mentioned, the federal government must come to appreciate that we are on the frontline, as it were, when it comes to Winter drilling and therefore conform to the actions needed to assure the maximum safety of our workers.

Mr. Speaker, I support the government on its significant initiatives taken towards this end and I support this important private member's motion submitted by my colleague, the member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn).

I will end up by saying we are looking, Mr. Speaker, at the lives of people. That is what I am thinking about, we are looking at the lives of people. It is not like looking at a water and sewerage project for your district or looking at a local road, but it is looking at a life. I think when it comes to a life everybody should co-operate. Especially in a matter so important as this, I think we should all work together. Not only us. When I say, 'We who are in the front lines' I mean we here in this Province. The people in Ottawa are a move from it. They do not know Newfoundland like we do, we do not know Ontario like they know it, but we are living in Newfoundland practically every day of our lives and I do hope, and I am sure we will - there has been evidence already - that this administration will do all they can to assure that

MR. WOODROW: tragedy of the Ocean Ranger
will never happen again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas): The hon. member for Stephenville.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. STAGG: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to commend my colleague from St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn) for putting this matter on the Order Paper. It was primarily put there dealing specifically with the situation that prevailed on February 16 of this year, but the resolution is sufficiently wide to enable us to have a substantial degree of latitude in the debate. And the request

MR. STAGG: the resolution is one which asks that we in this Legislature concur with the removal order for the period needed to reaccess and revise the Winter drilling regulations.

Now no one who has lived in this Province for any period of time can underestimate or should underestimate the volatility of the sea. There have been great poems written about it, Mr. Speaker. One gentleman wrote the poem, and I should remember his name, he said "Man marks the earth with ruin his control stops at the shore/ Roll on thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll" and so on.

AN HON. MEMBER: Byron wrote it.

MR. STAGG: Byron wrote it. Well, Byron was a man who understood the sea, I do not know if Byron died at sea or not, but he was certainly a person who spent a great deal of time and comprehended it. These words, which were relevant in Byron's day, are as relevant or more relevant today. And as they pertain to the situation that prevailed last year, it is right and proper that we in this Legislature occasionally and frequently have our opinions put on the record. Now it would appear to me from a reading of this analysis, which was done by the Petroleum Directorate in March of 1983 concerning this particular situation, and reading through it it gives an account, hour by hour, day by day, of a situation that was fraught with danger. You will recall the situation here in the House, the House of Assembly was open at the time, when the minister responsible for the offshore gave us regular updates on it and we were confronted with an obstinate refusal on the part of the federal government to concede that a possible emergency existed. Now, Mr. Speaker, that obstinace on the part of the federal government has plagued us for quite some time, it has been well-documented and well-discussed, but we will not discontinue discussing it just because it is somewhat repetitive.

MR. STAGG: I recall at the time Mr. Chretien, as my colleague for the Bay of Island (Mr. Woodrow) indicated, in the comfortable halls of the House of Commons or thereabouts, basically mocking our minister responsible for the offshore, indicating that there was a political motivation in our demand that these rigs be taken off the Grand Banks at that particular time. Now in reading through this I find that one of the rigs, I believe it was the West Venture, reached the situation, while not in imminent danger - the icebergs were not upon it, the ice pack was not there within the immediate vicinity of the West Venture - but within the calculation of time as it pertains to the offshore you deal in hours of the drifting capacity of icebergs and they were

MR. STAGG: at various times within twenty-four hours or eighteen hours of the rig. Now this rig was having great difficulty in becoming mobile, and from the 16th until the 19th of February, I think it was, this rig was in effect attached by its anchors. Now it is quite easy for someone to say, 'Well maybe it should have sheared its anchors.' Well, that is dealt with in some detail in this report, a very comprehensive and very useful document done by the provincial Petroleum Directorate about the dangers of shearing anchors. First of all, no one has ever sheared an anchor in sixty foot waves before. It just has not been done. And if one were to shear - I think there is about eight anchors on these things, or twelve anchors; there are a lot of anchors - and if the shearing capability of the particular shearing device were to be faulty on any particular anchor, you would have a situation where there would be a centrifugal force exerted on the rig to such an extent that it might capsize. So the situation that was brought forward by the minister responsible for the offshore at that time was no laughing matter, it was not a political gambit and the evidence as pointed out in the Petroleum Directorate report has not been refuted in any way. As a matter of fact it is irrefutable. For instance, let us see what was the situation at 7:10 a.m. of February 17th. on February 17th, this is one year and one day after the Ocean Ranger disaster, Mr. Speaker, the SEDCO 706 and the West Venture were coping with the following situation: Winds were 66 knots an hour gusting to 76, maximum combined seas were 60 feet - 60 foot waves! - and pitch and roll and so on -

MR. WARREN: What was it like the year before that?

MR. STAGG: The hon. member opposite in a

MR.STAGG:

Now, Mr. Speaker,

on February 17,1983 -

SOME HON.MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR.SPEAKER(Dr.McNicholas):

Order, please!

MR.STAGG:

- a situation existed

which was comparable, as far as weather is concerned, to the disaster that befell the Ocean Ranger. Now, as I was about to say, the Ocean Ranger did not sink because of the size of the waves because other vessels in the area did not sink. It sank because, it would appear, because of a malfunction in the electrical system that led to its capsizing.

MR.WARREN:

Well, the waves caused

that, did they not?

MR.STAGG:

Yes, it was indirectly

associated with the storm. I guess that was the hon. member's point; he had to rush in with that to make his point, and I would concede that to him, yes.

Now the matter which became of critical importance to us in this legislature, because we, after all, are the people who are most associated with it and our ancestors have been prosecuting the seal fishery and the ordinary fishery for centuries and we are no strangers to the vagaries of the weather and the difficulties that it can produce, so when the minister responsible for the offshore said that the rig should disengage and should come ashore, he was calling upon the centuries of exposure that Newfoundlanders have had to the difficulties of being a nautical people. We have graves, many graves to give mute testimony to the fact that it is a dangerous existence. As a matter of fact, probably the absence of graves is as mute a testimony as the presence of them, because many of our

MR.STAGG: people have been lost never to be seen again. So in was in that context that the Petroleum Directorate, calling upon these centuries of tradition and general knowledge of the situation, but aided with the latest expert advice from the weather people, the Environment Canada people, and NORDCO and so on, and people on the rigs, that the order was given to cease drilling and come ashore. Now what happened when Mr. Chretien got hold of this? Well, Mr. Chretien was not going to have the Government of Newfoundland in any way upstaging him - at least that is what he considered it to be, an upstaging - and he promptly told the rigs to stay where they were, ordered them in fact to stay on site and to continue drilling. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is only luck, it is only by the sheerest luck, by good luck rather than good management that we did not have another disaster out on the Grand Banks at that particular time. And if we had had another disaster, there is no doubt where the responsibility would have lain; it would have lain squarely with the federal government. And in that regard I would like to deal to some extent with the history of the federal government's involvement with our offshore as it pertains

MR. STAGG: particularly to offshore management with regard to the Petroleum regulations. Now the federal government did for many years totally ignore the fact that there was an East Coast offshore. We can thank the Arabs and Israelis in 1973 and their war, and the OPEC cartel which resulted, in making the federal government finally aware that there was potential in our offshore but they were very late -

MR. NEARY: Was that not in 1974.

MR. STAGG: No, it was in June of 1973. We were here in the House at the time, we were relatively insured from that. Anyway, the OPEC cartel led to an increased awareness of the possibilities of significant economic opportunities on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Now we had been putting in place since 1972 an expert team, both at the officials level and at the political level, putting in place the regulations which are the marvel and the envy of the world as it pertains to the protection of one's workers and the protection of one's political and economic interest in a resource of that type. And they were eventually assembled, initially with Leo Barry, who was the Minister of Mines and Energy, later followed by Mr. Crosbie, later followed by the now Premier of the Province, and collectively, working along with the officials who have been with this for quite some time, most significantly Cabot Martin, they have put together a document, a series of documents that are really the last word in regulations in the world. The Nova Scotians belatedly adopted many of them. They do not have the same problems as we have because they do not have any ice offshore, but basically they have adopted them pretty well without acknowledging that they have adopted them, because Nova Scotians do not like to let anyone know that they would copy from anyone else. The

MR. STAGG: subject of Nova Scotians and what motivates the Nova Scotians, Mr. Speaker, I have addressed myself to on other occasions.

I commend the government for its past record with regard to regulations, particularly as it pertains to safety, and the position taken by Mr. Marshall, the minister responsible for the offshore, last February was consistent with that kind of awareness of problems and the willingness to act quickly before anything untoward happened. So indeed it was a wise order that was met with a churlish response from its federal counterpart - churlish is as good a word as I can attach to it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, almost two years ago, in January, 1982, the Government of Newfoundland made a proposal for the settlement of the offshore question. It has been well published, January 25, 1982, and I submit that that proposal as it was then made to the then Minister of Energy, Mr. Chretien,

MR. STAGG: made by our minister, is a valid and workable relationship between our two jurisdictions. And that agreement could have been put into effect very quickly. One has only to look at the resolution of the fisheries question in this Province, We who have been in this Legislature for any number of years, and I have been here since 1971 off and on, know that one of the main questions that comes up in every debate is the question of Newfoundland's relation to Ottawa and the fishery. Now we have had to be taken to the brink of disaster on several occasions in this Province. We had any number of debates here from 1972 until 1976, I was part of them from 1972 to 1975, concerning the Northern cod, and the Grand Banks and the rape of our offshore, and the necessity of implementing the 200 mile limit. There were at least two, I guess, or maybe more, unanimous resolutions of this House that went forward to Ottawa demanding the 200 mile limit.

MR. NEARY: Now you are going to bring foreigners back inside of it again.

MR. STAGG: Well, I will not bring the foreigners back inside, I can tell you that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NEARY: You are supporting an administration that is going to do it.

MR. STAGG: The hon. member may want to address himself to that question. He may have something to add. It would be a unique occasion, Mr. Speaker, when he does have something to add to this discussion.

MR. NEARY: I will at another time, another day.

MR. STAGG: Anyway, we have been brought to the brink on many occasions and in 1976 Canada, at long last, declared the 200 mile limit and to a large extent it has been a helpful exercise.

MR. NEARY: A good Liberal policy.

MR. STAGG: The hon. member says it was a good Liberal policy. It was a good thing done by the then Liberal Government, but I must say, Mr. Speaker, they had to be prompted significantly. And if you look at the fishing effort in the 1970s, it went from something like 800,000 metric tons in 1971 down to about 300,000 metric tons in 1975, so the bottom was falling out of it, so disaster was not looming, disaster was there until they finally acted. And here in Newfoundland since that time we have always wanted joint management of the fisheries resource and it took impending disaster this year before we finally got that, but it did happen. And the restructuring of the fishery is now a fait accompli as far as Newfoundland and Canada are concerned. And it would appear that we were able to have co-operation, and the board that is set up for consideration of these objectives seems to be a workable system.

I have about thirty more seconds, Mr. Speaker. I understand I have just about run out of time. So I would submit that the workable solution that was proposed in this January 25, 1982 proposal for a solution to the offshore question is one that should be encouraged again. Had that been in effect, Mr. Speaker, the difference of opinion that occurred last February would not have reached the proportions that it did. The federal government would have been part of the decision-making process, would have been an integral part of it, and played a knowledgeable role in it rather than the churlish role that they did play and therefore the resolution, as proposed by hon. friend, would not be necessary. As it is, it is a most reasonable position taken by him. We support it on this side and I encourage all hon. member to engage in the debate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. McNicholas): The hon. the member for Carbonear.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PEACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, as well, would like to take a short time from the time allowed on this Resolution today to, as well, support Resolution No. 4 on the Order Paper, which was so capably put forward by my colleague, the member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn), and also to say that it is pleasing to see the number of people who have already spoken in support of the Resolution, the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren), the member for Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow) and the member for Stephenville (Mr. Stagg).

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that the interest referred to earlier by the member for Torngat Mountains when he said there was very little interest on this side of the House towards this important Resolution is evident now on the opposite side from the presence of the members opposite. I guess their interest and their loyalties at this time must lie in the district of Terra Nova rather than in the House.

However, Mr. Speaker, there is very little that one could leave out in making a comment on the member's Resolution. The first WHEREAS of his Resolution referring to the concern of this government, I think it was only in our last Spring's session that there were many hours spent dealing with the topic of Winter drilling in the offshore. At that time, our government put forth some very strong concerns and strong views in attempting to reduce or to stop Winter drilling. And, at that time, if I recall correctly, the Opposition was very clearly sitting on the fence and not coming out with their position. I think it

MR. PEACH: was even the media at the time that had a great deal of difficulty in determining if the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) was advocating Winter drilling or not.

MR. NEARY: Who was the first in the Province to say no to it?

MR. PEACH: Mr. Speaker, it would be only a matter of referring back to Hansard of last year, and I am sure the sentiments of the hon. member opposite would be clearly written there.

The second WHEREAS of the Resolution deals with the implementation of some strict Winter drilling regulations. Again, on several occasions last Spring, Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible presented to this hon. House prepared Ministerial Statements on Winter drilling and Winter drilling regulations. These were regulations that this government at the time felt should be acted on and acted on immediately. And each time I recall that members opposite, led by the highest paid Opposition Leader in Canada, squirmed and weaseled and again sat on the fence with regard to their position. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, they hid under the guise of their federal counterparts in Ottawa and boasted very loudly and clearly when the feds acted completely on their own, without consultation with this government, in ordering that drilling be resumed. I think on one particular day, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition was standing in his place with a copy of The Daily News in his pocket, as usual, and his punch line was 'Ottawa has taken over the offshore - you have lost the battle, give up.' At that time it was very clear, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite had quite a different view from the government with regard to Winter drilling.

MR. WARREN: Do not be nasty.

MR. PEACH:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure

that the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) must be getting very shaky after the announcement yesterday of who might seek the leadership of their party. With regard to, WHEREAS No. 3, I am sure that the part of the resolution, "WHEREAS the Government of Canada has not adopted the intent or the spirit of those regulations" need very little comment, as the position of the federal government then, is now and continues to be clearly evident.

However, WHEREAS number four of the resolution, which deals with some frightening experiences with regard to iceberg movements and the conditions of the sea need to be commented on. Mr. Speaker, the report of the Petroleum Directorate which was passed out in March of this past year, if we refer to some of the incidents there it is very clear to see that many things happened during the months of February and March which were indeed frightening and which indeed led us to want to stop Winter drilling.

And Mr. Speaker to quote briefly from several of those, it was during the period of February 16 to 19 in 1983 that the following situation existed at Hibernia 146 Step Out Well which was at the time being drilled by Mobil. There were at that time, Mr. Speaker, eighty-four people aboard the drilling unit West Venture with at least ten icebergs in the vicinity. These icebergs could not be moved or towed because of sea conditions at the time; the vessel was moored with all of its ten anchors and the anchors could not be pulled in because of sea conditions. The people could not be removed from the rig by helicopter or supply vessel and during this time the rig was continually being treated by icebergs. As well, a successful abandonment of

MR. PEACH: the rig at the time was highly impossible, and I am sure it was based on this evidence that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador concluded that the unsafe conditions existing justified a stop drilling order.

As well, Mr. Speaker, on February 18, there was a 3,500 ton iceberg within five hours drift from the West Venture and this iceberg was approximately forty-five feet by forty-five feet with a 200 freeboard, and with a very short warning time I am sure this was very critical, and at that time there were conflicting statements made as to how long it would take to go through emergency procedures of shearing anchors. And as my colleague from Stephenville (Mr. Stagg) just commented, this is something that has not been done, not been practised successfully.

Mobil, at the time, stated that they could take up their anchors in ten hours and the operators of the drill rig West Venture put it at four hours. So these conflicting comments at that time, I am sure, led to some deep and grave concerns. As well, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the impact of icebergs with regard to Winter drilling, again I refer to an article from the Petroleum Directorate release of March 1983 which said that small icebergs and bergy bits that have escaped detection could impact with drilling units.

MR. PEACH: The movement of bergy bits and small icebergs is enhanced by waves and would result in velocities greater than normal velocities. The drilling units have not been ice strengthened to sustain iceberg impact. I am sure those are things that are of great concern, things that would for sure make any government concerned over the lives involved in Winter drilling.

One of the main concerns that has already been addressed is that of the ability for a rig to be moved from its drilling location. This simply, Mr. Speaker, as part of the explanation, involves the pulling up of anchors and the securing of a tow line to one or more supply vessels. The facts as they relate to that are that, number one, it is difficult to safely pull all anchors when we have winds that have reached in excess of forty knots or seas that are in excess of twenty feet. Added to that, Mr. Speaker, before a rig can go under tow a steel wire rope has to be passed by the rig's crane to a supply vessel. But, in order to do this, a vessel must be within 100 feet of a rig. One of the other precautionary measures which could be taken would be the simple shifting of a rig to avoid the iceberg by what is referred to as sidestepping. This procedure, itself, could take as long as two hours and there is no guarantee then that they would be out of the way of the berg.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am sure we all realize the dangers that exist with Winter drilling. During the month of March and early April of last Spring, the drilling units at the time were predicted to be subject to the same risks as had been encountered earlier, and particularly during the month of February.

MR. PEACH: The Petroleum Directorate, at the time, felt that the risks involved and associated with conducting drilling operations on the Grand Banks in the Wintertime and particularly at this time, were unacceptably high and, therefore, drilling should be suspended, and it should be suspended pending the following: First of all, it was indicated that operating conditions, especially with regard to the number of high instances of icebergs, must improve before drilling would be resumed.

MR. PEACH: Secondly, there must be a full review of all aspects of Winter drilling and all of the operations related to drilling, icebergs, weather conditions and the like. And, thirdly, that there would have to be a significant improvement in the search and rescue capabilities in this Province. This particular part is a very important part of Winter dilling. Although the member for Stephenville (Mr. Stagg) briefly mentioned the Winter drilling relating to the search and rescue capabilities, and I think the member for Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow) addressed it very briefly as well, I am sure that some of the very capable speakers from the backbenches on this side of the House in the rest of time remaining, and next Wednesday, will address that problem in much more and much greater detail.

So in closing my few brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to all members of this hon. House, on this side and opposite, that we do support the member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn), in that "BE IT RESOLVED that this House support the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in this initiative and demand that the Government of Canada and the offshore operations concur with the removal order for the period needed to reassess and revise the Winter drilling regulations", and that, Mr. Speaker, we will again press onward to see that the least possible dangers are encountered by the people who work on our offshore during the Winter months.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):
Council.

The hon. the President of the

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, I think we should

MR. MARSHALL: note for the record that today, Private Members' Day, there have been some very stirring speeches from the government side of the House; they have been four speakers, this is the fifth speaker, there has been one from the Opposition side.

MR. NEARY: At least he said more than the other five.

MR. MARSHALL: There were only two people from the Opposition here all day today.

MR. NEARY: That is right, and we got the government on their toes. You are reacting like there were twenty-five here.

MR. MARSHALL: Oh, yes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to address a few words with respect to this resolution, and I would ask the hon. the future Senator from Panama if he could contain himself for a few moments - I would like to be able to make a few remarks on this resolution.

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

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

MR. NEARY: I would like to remind the House that this is the same pious gentleman, he and the Premier, who keep making snide remarks about this side of the House, getting personal, making low blows. That was about the lowest blow, I suppose, that we have ever heard in this House. But we have learned to accept these nasty remarks from the hon. gentleman. I hope that the CBC will record that the award for the lowest blow today goes to the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall), Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, my point of order is this, that they should practice what they preach, instead of giving a lecture to members of this House. For

MR. NEARY: low blows and lowering the decorum and for slimy, rotten remarks, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman heads the list. The hon. gentleman will get the award of the year for slimy, rotten remarks.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!
I rule that there is no point of order.

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the hon. gentleman gets upset just merely because I wish him well on his way to the Senate.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address now a few words to this resolution so capably introduced by the hon. the member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn) and I congratulate him for it, because,

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, even though the occurrence has passed, the events surrounding it should never be allowed to be forgotten. Because in this Province, Mr. Speaker, the situation that occurred last Winter with respect to the countermand of the stop drilling order that was given has far-reaching significance that extends far beyond the incident which occurred itself, far, far beyond it, Mr. Speaker.

It shows, and it demonstrates one thing, Mr. Speaker, the inability, the complete lack of capacity of a government to manage the offshore of this Province from 2,000 miles away, because they are not in tune with the turn of events and they are not aware.

Now, just let us look briefly at the facts: Around the middle of December - it was actually on the anniversary of the awful disaster, the Ocean Ranger, there were forecasts that were received by the Petroleum Directorate to the effect that the weather was going to deteriorate, that winds could go, on a sustained basis, in the area of about 60 knots per hour and would gust as high as 85 to 90 miles an hour, that waves could crest in excess of 60 feet, and we were also faced with a report that there were icebergs in the vicinity. The International Ice Patrol, stationed in New York, had indicated that it was going to be the worst Winter on record for ice conditions, and, in fact, it was proven to be so. We were also advised that there was what was described as - a bergy bit they call it; it is a misnomer, really, because it sounds like a toy but it is a very lethal toy because the bergy bit happens to be an iceberg of some 100,000 tons which was in the vicinity of about eight to ten miles from the West Venture. Faced with this, knowing the mechanics of the West Venture, the difficulty of it shearing

MR. MARSHALL: its anchors in bad weather and the consequential danger that the hon. member for Stephenville (Mr. Stagg) so ably described in his speech, we had an emergency meeting of this Cabinet pursuant to which we issued an order to the oil companies, to Mobil, the operator, to remove its rigs immediately from the Grand Banks. Now, what happened afterwards was very regrettable. It followed, unfortunately, the unfortunate decision and unfortunately the decision of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland with respect to jurisdiction, and instead of being aware of the facts as anyone who purports to manage the offshore, it was assumed that this was done in response to that decision. The Minister of Energy (Mr. Chretien) styled it as being a political act and without enquiring any further he issued a countermand to the oil companies to keep the rigs out there, to keep drilling and stay out there. We all know what happened. Mobil, the operator, and this is something that is not going to be soon forgotten either, decided to comply with the

MR. MARSHALL:

federal countermand, and they kept the rigs out there. So let us examine and let us put on the record once again what happened just a few short days later. Between a week and ten days later we were treated to the spectacle - treated is not the word - but we saw the spectacle of these rigs having to be towed away from onrushing icebergs with a procedure that was not the preferred type of procedure, where human lives were at risk when these rigs had to be towed away.

So, in other words, the order which we gave despite Mr. Chretien and the federal government styling it as political, being unfounded or unwarranted, was not unfounded or unwarranted, it was proven to be correct by natural events which occurred. And it is only by chance, Mr. Speaker, - and this should be noted - last Winter that there were no other losses of life to the same degree as occurred with the Ocean Ranger. It is only by good fortune -

MR. WARREN: You are responsible for them being there.

MR. MARSHALL:

The hon. gentleman made his speech. I prefer to be heard in silence. I know he will accord me that privilege. But the same thing, Mr. Speaker, occurred, the situation occurred when - and let it not be forgotten - human lives were put at risk, and it was only by pure chance that there was not an additional loss of lives last year. And the reason for it was because of obstinacy by the federal government, by its lack of appreciation of the circumstances which were available to them. Because they were 2,000 miles away they could not see the grim severity of the facts which stared them in the face - and what happened? - they played Russian Roulette with the lives of the workers that were out

MR. MARSHALL: there. And it is fortunate, indeed, when the gun had to be fired, that is when the rigs had to be pulled away, that what was fired were blank cartridges. Only for that, Mr. Speaker, we would have had another spectacle.

Now, I cannot understand, knowing these facts and these facts occurred and they should never be allowed to be swept under the table, why the federal minister has not been called more severely to account for this. Certainly there were editorials. There were many editorials in the Mainland press and the Toronto Globe And Mail particularly, and in the Calgary papers and in the Montreal papers with respect to it.

MR. MARSHALL:

For some reason or other, we in Newfoundland need some people from away to give more authority to the actions that we took so that is why I quote it. I do not know why it is that we have to. Mother Nature really gave us the authority and proved that we were correct.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:

But I have to say that

Mr. Chretien was - there were questions asked in the House of Commons about it, but after the event occurred and we were proven, not that we were proven correct, but Mother Nature treated us to the spectacle which showed beyond doubt that human lives were at risk - he was not even called into account, to my knowledge, in his own Parliament, that is, the House of Parliament of Canada. Instead, the whole thing was left to be swept under the rug and forgotten.

But it is not going to be forgotten, Mr. Speaker. This government is not going to allow the situation. Because, as I say, it shows more than any other fact how imperative it is that the government which is closest to the resource, the government which, by the way, brought this resource into Confederation with it -

MR. NEARY:

How did we bring it into

Confederation? How?

MR. MARSHALL:

If the hon. gentleman

does not know how, I am not going to respond. Everybody, 560,000 Newfoundlanders know how we brought it in. We brought it into Confederation with us.

So it just goes to show that the government that is closest to the scene, the government that is aware of the dangers presented by the actions of

MR. MARSHALL: nature on the sea, who knows better the North Atlantic than the politicians in Ottawa, is not only much better able to manage the resource but it becomes a matter of deep imperativeness that this government be given a real say in the management of the resource, because the events last Winter showed that we understood the situation and the problems associated with it much more than the federal government did.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, those events have occurred and they are over with. I am hoping there will be no repetition of them. We are doing everything we possibly can in the circumstances to see that the drilling on the Grand Banks this Winter, if in fact it does occur during Winter drilling season, is going to occur on the basis that employs the optimum safety for Newfoundlanders. And that is something we will be dealing with in due course.

In the meantime, let us not forget what occurred last Winter and let us not forget another factor as well, a very, very important factor, the lack of presence -

MR. NEARY: (Inaudible).

MR. MARSHALL: Listen to the hon. gentleman, you know, I mean, he would embrace the Liberals - I am sure if Mr. Trudeau came down here with a mallet and banged it off the hon. gentleman's head -

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

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I am talking to my colleague here and I certainly did not say anything to the hon. gentleman to warrant that vicious onslaught, that

MR. NEARY: vicious, low attack which
lowers the decorum of this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

When an hon. member is speaking
he does have the right to be heard in silence.

MR. MARSHALL: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I have
not mentioned, and time does not permit me to go into
great detail with respect to, well, the disgrace with
respect to the Search and Rescue.

At the time that the
Ocean Ranger went down

MR. MARSHALL: the Ocean Ranger went down and Search and Rescue presence was called for, instead of it being in St. John's where it would have been two hours away from the scene, and I underline the words that we do not know if their presence would have caused any lives to have been saved, but there is no excuse under heaven for not having the optimum of safety techniques available when Winter drilling is occurring, instead of it taking that two hours it took, and the records will show, varying times, up to nineteen hours, before planes were available to go out there. And when they got out there the pilot of one of the helicopters told me himself, and this is the pilot - I think everybody saw it on television, the chap who was dangling down from the wench and the wire on the sea to search for survivors, he told me that the equipment that the federal government provided at that particular time, Mr. Speaker, was so obsolete that he had no facility in his plane to make contact with the sea down below by radio. And what he carried in his hand was like a little transistor - not a little transistor radio, but a transistor type of affair, a walkie-talkie, and he had to put his head out through the window, because of interference from the plane, to make contact with the sea.

Now that is the kind of equipment that these very brave men, and certainly the people operating the Air Sea Rescue are very skilled and very brave people, had to operate with. So that was that. And at the same time these people want to administer the offshore. On the Ocean Ranger on that very grim morning, at about five o'clock in the morning when all people responsible and the Petroleum Directorate were down at headquarters, we were looking for some federal presence. I asked about it at the time and I was told

MR. MARSHALL: that there were only three people here in COGLA, three people then stationed in the office in COGLA - two of them were then up in Ottawa and the other happened to be a secretary. So there was no immediate help on the scene. One year later, when this occurred, Mr. Speaker, do you know how many people were at COGLA? There were three people there. When we conducted a hullabaloo about it the federal government said oh they were going to strengthen their office. But they are going to strengthen their office and they have some people down there now, they have certain people, and I do not want to derogate from them at all, they can co-operate and they co-operate with the Petroleum Directorate, but the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that it is very, very difficult to get civil servants, top civil servants from the central government to transfer to Newfoundland if they do not happen to come from Newfoundland. And this is what is happening, so that the people here do not have the ultimate authority, the strings are pulled from Ottawa which is again 1,700 miles or 2,000 miles away. So that is where we are.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is the situation and it is very grim and grave. Now, on the Search and Rescue, to compare once again on the reaction time, last year we called for Search and Rescue and what happened? The report of the Petroleum Directorate shows what happened. The helicopters were in Gander, they were in PEI, they were in Quebec and they were in Halifax and, of course, yes, they reacted much more urgently this time because of what had happened one year before. But it still took, Mr. Speaker, after those instances, after the experience of the Ocean Ranger, it still took twenty-one hours for a helicopter to get from - listen to this now -

MR. MARSHALL: from Halifax to St. John's.
It took four and a half hours - the one from Quebec got in soonest, it took four and a half or five hours. The one in Gander took nineteen hours, and the one in PEI I do not believe got in at all. So that is the situation that Newfoundlanders are supposed to operate under, but it is not a situation that the government of this Province is going to permit the people of this

MR. MARSHALL:

Province to be subjected to. As I say, we hope to get this cleared up and we are determined we will get this cleared up, and we will make a statement on future Winter drilling as soon as we possibly can, after discussions have been completed. Suffice it to say though, Mr. Speaker, that we will not and we are not taking the position that the federal government is taking, as enunciated by Mr. Chretien when he was here in St. John's recently, to the effect that they are going to leave it to the operator. Last year he tried to slough off his responsibility by saying that, oh, the operator decides when they come off the Grand Banks. Well, that is not what this government is going to do, Mr. Speaker. This government and the ministry in this government take their responsibilities much more seriously than that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say that what these events show - as I say, we trust there will be no repetition of them, I certainly hope not, but the events should never be forgotten - it shows that human lives were put at stake, that the federal minister was not called to account in his own Parliament with respect to it sufficiently. It shows the incapacity of the federal government to appreciate situations because they are so far away, and their inability to be able to manage the offshore. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that we look to the future with a great deal of trepidation with respect to offshore drilling. If there is an attempt, and if the federal succeeds in its attempt to ultimately manage the offshore, I would say that this Province is in danger today of becoming the same as, unfortunately, Bell Island became after DOSCO had left, and the federal government would be equated to DOSCO. Because what will

MR. ROBERTS:

Mr. Speaker, where is the member for St. John's North (Mr. Carter) now that we really need him?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. ROBERTS:

Mr. Speaker, if the gentlemen, honourable as they are on the other side, have finished with their inane inanities, I will carry on with a few words with reference to the resolution which stands in the name of my friend, the member for St. Mary's-The Capes (Mr. Hearn). As I am sure has been pointed

MR. ROBERTS: out by a number of other speakers in the debate today, the resolution itself has, of course, been superseded by events. However, the resolution speaks of a removal order, and I assume that refers to the ukase issued by the hon. gentleman who just spoke, the Minister responsible for Energy (Mr. Marshall). If my friend, the Minister for Municipal Affairs (Mrs. Newhook) and her seatmate could carry on their conversation a little more quietly, I would appreciate it. You know I can yell, I think, Mr. Speaker, as loud as any member in the House, and my hearing, I think, is as good as that of any member in the House, but I do not think it adds -

MR. BAIRD: Oh, that is for sure.

MR. ROBERTS: - and I know my brain is better than that of my friend for Humber West (Mr. Baird), the matter speaks for itself.

MR. BAIRD: That is debatable.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that I do not think it adds anything to the decorum of the House, to the efficacy of the debate, or the merits of the debate if we end up shouting at each other. It may well be the blind leading the blind, it may well be speaking to those who do not wish to hear or who cannot understand, but I do not think that raising our voices in the House adds a great deal at all. So I would be grateful if hon. ladies and gentlemen opposite would be content either to carry on their conversations in very low, sibilant tones, or to carry them on outside the Chamber. And I would ask Your Honour to do as Your Honour always does, enforce the rules in the appropriate way by drawing that to the attention of hon. members. You know, maybe, Mr. Speaker, we should abandon desks in this House and simply have seats or benches. More and more this House is being turned into an office, a place where members come by and sign their mail, and I am as guilty

MR. ROBERTS: as anybody. I am not like the gentleman from St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) who is without guilt or without stain or without reproach of any sort. I am like my friend, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer), I am as guilty as anybody here of most offenses. But more and more this House seems to resemble an office. Ministers, busy as they are, bring in their briefcases filled with papers and they read them. People look at newspapers, do the crossword puzzle.

MR. BAIRD: But they are here all of the time.

MR. ROBERTS: My friend from Humber West (Mr. Baird) reads the comics. He does not understand them, but the gentleman from Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow) explains them to him as best he can. That is a case of the blind leading the blind over there.

AN HON. MEMBER: A born loser.

MR. ROBERTS: Yes, a born loser. All of them are born losers. My friend from St. John's West (Mr. Barrett) has once again reinserted himself into the fray.

MR. BARRETT: You have your districts mixed up. I did not say anything.

MR. ROBERTS: Oh, I apologize to my friend from St. John's West. I take his point. He seldom says anything and I appreciate that.

MR. CARTER: Sit down! You are boring us to death.

MR. BARRETT: You should not start off wasting time for so many minutes.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, if hon. gentlemen want to call it six, I am prepared to carry on next Wednesday.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

The hon. member for the Strait of Belle Isle is certainly not being relevant to

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL): this resolution. He does have the right to be heard in silence.

MR. ROBERTS: Well, thank you, Your Honour, I appreciate Your Honour's admonition to both sides of the House. I am sure that both sides will heed it.

Now, before I was subjected to this incessant and violent harrassment by hon. gentlemen opposite, I was making the point that the resolution itself, as I think my friend from St. Mary's-The Capes (Mr. Hearn) would readily concede, has been superseded by events. So for that matter, Your Honour, has Resolution 5, which stands in the name of Mr. Lush, who is no longer a member. Your Honour being cognizant of Your Honour's obligation to maintain the Order Paper, no doubt will cause that to be struck.

MR. ANDREWS: There will be more super events pretty soon.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the hon. gentleman for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Andrews) is masticating but he is a master masticator, or a mastercator we might call him.

Mr. Speaker, let me come back to the resolution because it does raise a very, very important subject and that is the question of the safety of the men who work on the rigs that drill off our shores.

MR. BAIRD: Men and women.

MR. ROBERTS: Now I do not know, my friend from Humber West (Mr. Baird) may have more knowledge of women than I do, but I do not know if there are

MR. ROBERTS: any women on the rigs.
I recall there was a case before the Human Rights Commission of Canada that laid down the rule that hitherto had ruled on the rigs which said 'No women, no drugs, no drink' had to be amended, so there is just simply 'No drugs, no drink'.

MR. STAGG: There are several out there now.

MR. ROBERTS: But I am told there are several out there.

MR. GOUDIE: Two.

MR. STAGG: Eleven.

MR. ROBERTS: My friend from Naskaupi (Mr. Goudie) says two and the gentleman -

MR. BAIRD: He meant a Liberal. There are eleven.

MR. ROBERTS: Of all the parliamentary ways I have ever gotten the finger that is it.

Anyway let me please the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge) and say the persons on the rigs of whatever sex they may be, determinate or indeterminate as the case may be, the safety of these individuals is something which should be of concern to us. Now I am not like the gentleman for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) who every time he speaks reminds me of the lady who thrilled with pride that her son had become a member of the Scottish regiment and the regiment came marching up the street one day, perhaps the Golden Mile in Edinburgh, from the Castle to Holyrood House and there they were in their kilts and with their finery and the pipes playing at their head, and the regiment came marching up the street. The lady was standing watching and she nudged her friend and said, 'Look, there is my Jock and the whole regiment is out of step except my Jock'. Every time the gentleman for St. John's East

MR. ROBERTS: speaks I am reminded of that story because he is the only one who has knowledge, wisdom, concern, compassion or anything else.

MR. CARTER: It is the Royal Mile.

MR. ROBERTS: It is the Royal Mile, yes. If I did not say that I misspoke, but it is the Royal Mile from Holyrood House to Edinburgh Castle. The gentleman for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) is the only one who has knowledge and wisdom. The entire Parliament of Canada not only is ignorant in this matter, to hear him speak, but is filled with malice, a blanket which he casts over each one of the 282 less - of course, Walter Baker's seat is empty - 281 men and women who grace that institution. Everybody is wrong except him.

MR. CARTER: Do not emit a streak of poison.

MR. ROBERTS: Yes, yes. The gentleman for St. John's East does emit a streak of poison.

MR. ROBERTS: The gentleman for St. John's North (Mr. Carter) for once is correct. Now, let us try to look at the matter a little more dispassionately and a little more sensibly. The drilling rigs are out off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are going to continue to be out there. If we learned anything last Winter, we learned that the Newfoundland government's writ does not run on the offshore insofar as the oil companies are concerned. The minister issued statements and orders until he was blue in the face and they were of no more validity than King Canute trying to tell the tides to hold back. Now, there is a message in that for us. The message in that for the government of this Province is that it does not, in the eyes of the oil companies operating offshore, it does not have the legal right to tell them what to do or what not to do. The Supreme Court of Canada may, whenever they render their decision, may uphold the Newfoundland government's jurisdictional claims. If so they will be the first court in Canada to come to that conclusion, because every other court that has considered the matter has ruled that the Government of Canada or the Parliament of Canada have jurisdiction over the offshore. But our government still insists, Mr. Speaker, on playing out this political charade that somehow the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has some jurisdictional claim to the offshore.

Now, forget the ownership. Hon. gentlemen opposite I think have finally grasped the distinction between ownership and jurisdiction, and there is a very great difference. This House, this government, does not own all the land in Newfoundland. You know, the Government of Newfoundland, the Crown, owns a fair amount of it still, but large parts of it, of course,

MR. ROBERTS: have been alienated in one way or another. And yet this House can control, if it so minded, by legislation the use of all land in Newfoundland. The city council does not own all the land in St. John's, but it can control the use of that land because it has the jurisdictional right to do so. The distinction is like night and day. We are talking here about jurisdiction.

Last Winter the gentleman for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall), acting, I have no doubt, in what he believed was the best interests of all concerned, issued order after order after order. And those orders were of no validity insofar as the oil companies were concerned.

DR. COLLINS: They had a lot of moral support.

MR. ROBERTS: I am sorry?

DR. COLLINS: They had a lot of moral support.

MR. ROBERTS: If there was any moral right in the land the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins), who just interrupted me, would not be Minister of Finance because he has impeached his morality time and time again by bringing in cooked estimates of revenue time and time again.

MR. NEARY: He cooked the books.

MR. ROBERTS: Cooked estimates of revenue. He has deliberated cooked the books.

MR. TOBIN: That is not very relevant.

MR. ROBERTS: No, it is not relevant. But since the Minister of Finance was allowed to interrupt me, perhaps I would be allowed

MR. ROBERTS: to speak on morality.
The Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) speaking of political morality, Mr. Speaker -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL): Order, please!

MR. ROBERTS: - would be as relevant as an inmate of a bordello speaking on virginity. I mean, that is exactly where the Minister of Finance falls in this.

Now, the point I am making is that we issued these orders and they had no more validity in the eye -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. ROBERTS: If hon. gentlemen opposite will not do me the courtesy, Mr. Speaker, to let me speak, then I ask Your Honour, quoting the Premier (Mr. Peckford) the other day who sought the same refuge in the Chair, I ask Your Honour to enforce the rules.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I must repeat that the hon. member when speaking does have the right to be heard in silence.

MR. BAIRD: But he is provoking us.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, hon. gentlemen opposite continue to defy Your Honour. I do not say they are doing it consciously because I would not do them that credit. The Criminal Compensation Act we talked about the other day may apply to some hon. gentlemen opposite in that it speaks of inability to form intent. But they are, knowingly or not, deliberately defying Your Honour's ruling.

MR. CARTER:

You are too.

You are pure slime. You are pure slime.

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL):

Order, please!

MR. ROBERTS:

May I continue, Mr.

Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

Yes.

MR. ROBERTS:

Thank you, Sir.

What I was saying

before the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) got off on his highfalutin talk of morality and interrupted, is that we issued these orders. The hon. gentleman for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) might as well have stood on Signal Hill and commanded the winds to cease to blow for all the good it did. Now, what did we do? The government of the Province did not seek any of the legal remedies available to them. And that is the point. that the gentleman for St. Mary's-The Capes (Mr. Hearn) might wish to ponder, that here the present administration are playing this political charade for sheer partisan purposes and no other, of maintaining they believe they have jurisdiction, but comes a clear challenge to jurisdiction and they back off. Do they go into court? Do they take the operators of these rigs to court? Do they take the captains or the toolpushers, whoever happens to be in control - I do not even think that has been resolved yet - do they take those men or women, as the case may be, to court and say, 'You have broken the law'? No, they do not. They accept, The gentleman for St. John's East and his colleagues in the Cabinet have acquiesced, they have accepted. I believe they have accepted what is legally correct as determined by the courts whether I like it or no. It does not matter whether I like it, the

MR. ROBERTS: courts have determined. And until or unless the Supreme Court of Canada overturns the decision of the Newfoundland Court of Appeal the law stands as the Newfoundland Court of Appeal has enunciated it.

So, I say to my friend from St. Mary's-The Capes (Mr. Hearn) that he really ought to look a little closer to home in looking at this resolution. It is the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that has failed convincingly to establish even a moral right. They got into a political squabble and that is all it was. It was conceived as a political squabble, it was carried through as a political squabble and it died as a political squabble. And the spectacle of the gentleman for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) coming on the television with the moral indignation of which he is such a master! Now, mind you, we see the hypocrisy of the administration in, for example, the pension benefits bill, that everybody else has to do what the government will not do, they cannot do it, but no concern whether anybody else can do it. But the hypocrisy of the approach of this administration on this offshore safety! I say, Mr. Speaker, that the people who work on those rigs deserve better.

AN HON. MEMBER: Than they have.

MR. ROBERTS: Yes, they deserve better than they have got from this government, I agree wholeheartedly. They deserve better than to have their safety and their well being made a political football. And I will say that that is what this government are doing and I will say they

MR. ROBERTS: are doing it consciously and deliberately. I will say that where their concern may well be genuine, I do not fault their concern, what I will say is that the concern has been put by the by in an effort to try to make cheap political capital. And that is why I am going to oppose this resolution, not -

MR. STAGG: You are going to oppose it?

MR. ROBERTS: Yes, of course. Of course, of course. The resolution ought to be withdrawn once the debate is over because it is of no import, it has been superseded completely. If my colleagues indicate that we are prepared to vote for it, I will vote for it. Sure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROBERTS: And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL): Order, please!

MR. ROBERTS: - why. Let me tell you why. Let me move the amendment which we have had drafted for some time with this:

That all the words after the word 'workers' in the fourth paragraph, the fourth WHEREAS be removed, be struck out - I have this in writing, of course, Your Honour, type written - and replaced with the following: NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House support a policy of no Winter drilling.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROBERTS: Now that, I think, is what my friend from St. Mary's-The Capes (Mr. Hearn) is trying to get at. You either do that or you have to approach it in a manner entirely different than hon. gentlemen opposite have. Your Honour, I move the amendment, seconded by my friend, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary).

MR. TOBIN: Your friend? Since when?

MR. ROBERTS: Since a long time. I would far rather be friends with him for a lot of reasons than I would be, say, with some of the hon. gentlemen the hon. member for Burin-Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) finds himself in bed with.

MR. TOBIN: I will tell you something, if I did call a fellow who knifed me a friend-

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!
Let us take a look at this amendment just to make sure that it is in order. Maybe, as it is near six o'clock, the hon. gentleman would like to adjourn the debate.

MR. ROBERTS: On that basis, let us call it six, Your Honour. We will see you next Wednesday. I move the adjournment of the debate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Let it be noted the hon. member for the Strait of Belle Isle has adjourned the debate.

It being Private
Member's Day I do not leave the Chair until tomorrow,
Thursday, at 3:00 p.m.