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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1983.

The House met at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, hon. members will  
have to excuse my voice today, I am getting a little hoarse.  
I am sure hon. members there opposite hope that I will lose  
my voice all together.

MR. BAIRD: Thank God for small mercies, I say.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, that is what the  
people in Corner Brook are saying about the hon. gentleman.

My question is for the Minister  
of Education (Ms. Verge), Mr. Speaker. If hon. members are  
not aware of the problems and difficulties being encountered  
by university students who applied for student aid and grants  
and loans this year, they should be. We are told that the  
magnitude of the problem is horrendous and many students are  
so hard pressed that some of them have been forced to drop  
out of university. The emergency bursary fund at MUN is  
completely depleted and the short-term -

MR. ANDREWS: Question!

MR. NEARY: You are allowed a preamble,  
Mr. Speaker.

- and the short-term loan  
ceiling with the bank is under active consideration to try  
to get the amount of credit upgraded. Now would the  
Minister of Education tell the House what the problems  
are, what the difficulties are this year in processing  
student loans?

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

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to comment on this Province's student aid programme because it is perhaps the best in all of Canada. While we made certain changes in the programme in the Spring which did not detract from the total amount of funding available to students, and in fact had no change whatsoever on the most needy students, other provinces of Canada made cutbacks in their programme leaving Newfoundland and Labrador ahead of the pack once again. So the programme of aid available to post-secondary education students in this Province, Mr. Speaker, is quite generous especially when contracted with the means of this Province to support students. And the success of the programme, of course, has been reflected in the record high participation in higher education when it is considered that 9,000 students are in Grade XII this year, and when it is considered that total enrollment at the colleges and most of the vocational schools is as great as it was last year, and, in fact, in some cases more, and when you consider that the

MS. VERGE:

enrollment at the university now is more than the university itself expected, then, Mr. Speaker, you can appreciate the success of the student aid programme.

Mr. Speaker, because of these factors there was a tremendous workload for the administrators of the student aid programme, the people who staff the Education Department of the Student Aid Office at the Thompson Student Centre, but, Mr. Speaker, the staff have caught up with the backlog which did accumulate earlier in the Fall and are now on track and are diligently processing all applications that are coming forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, in summary, the content of the programme is very good, it is the best in the country as a matter of fact, and the staff administering the programme are on top of their work.

MR. NEARY:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY:

The minister is beginning to sound like a stereotype, every day in this House more like a stereotype, All you have to do is turn her on and she gives you the same answer, the same routine all the time, like she is programmed. The minister avoided answering the question. The question is: What are the problems and difficulties in processing student loans? And what is being done to rectify the causes of such an abnormal backlog of applications? We have been told that 50 per cent of the applications this year have gone to appeal, which is most unusual and abnormal. Now could the hon. minister comment on that situation, and tell us what she has done in her department to rectify this terrible situation?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Education.

MS. VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, actually the question I just answered is the first question directed at me in this Fall sitting of the Legislature. So obviously I cannot be repeating myself, I have not had a chance to answer other questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, many efforts have been made in consultation with students to improve the administration of student aid. These include the establishment of a Student Aid Advisory Committee with representation from students at the universities, at the colleges, the vocational schools, people working in administration at those institutions and a high school guidance counsellor. Among the things that are now being worked on are the computerization of the initial processing of student aid applications. Now when applications are received they are processed manually, they are handled by the staff at the Thompson Student Centre to the point of determining the amount of aid approved under the programme, and it is only after that point that computer processing begins with the issuance of cheques.

Mr. Speaker, we will be looking at what is involved in converting that initial phase of the process to computerization; that is perhaps a medium to long-term project. In the interim, Mr. Speaker, with the help of people at the university we expect to be mounting a considerable publicity campaign in the Spring directed at high school students who will be entering higher education institutions in the Summer and Fall, and direct it at present post-secondary students who will be returning in the Fall. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the factors involved in delays in processing applications is that students themselves are late getting in their applications, and then in many cases students do not accurately and completely comply with the application requirements. There are many cases where students' applications have to be returned to them because they are incomplete and, of course, naturally, this slows up the processing.

MS. VERGE: But, Mr. Speaker, I have to reiterate that, while there was a backlog at the student aid office because of the unexpectedly high number of applications and because of some staffing problems, those difficulties have been overcome and the staff at the Thompson Student Centre are now on top of their work and are efficiently processing student aid applications within the limitations of the system whereby applications are processed manually in the first phase of the processing.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. The staff at the student centre are completely frustrated and bewildered over this whole matter, Mr. Speaker, of young Newfoundlanders being forced out of university because the applications were not processed. Now would the hon. minister tell the House -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please! I must remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that when asking a supplementary question, which he indicated, there should not be any need for statements or preambles.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister. Would the hon. minister tell the House if it is correct that approximately 50 per cent of the applications for student loans - and there are no grants this year, I understand, they are all loans - that 50 per cent of the applications -

PREMIER PECKFORD: What?

MR. NEARY: No, hold on now. Wait. I am asking the minister a question.

PREMIER PECKFORD: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please! The hon. Premier on a point of order.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Am I hearing right? Did I just hear right? Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) did not know what our policy was on health, which has been announced about 10,000 times by this administration, and now the Leader of the Opposition gets up and says that there are no grants left in student aid in this Province. I am flabbergasted that the Leader of the Opposition remains so ignorant of what is going on in this Province.

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

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, if there is anybody living in complete darkness and ignorance it is the hon. gentleman. The hon. gentleman should know that the policy of his administration is that you cannot get a grant unless you apply for a loan. That is the policy of that administration, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: To that point of order; I submit that the hon. the Premier did not have a valid point of order, it was more a point of clarification.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Well, Mr. Speaker, let us get back to the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge) and find out if it is correct



MR. NEARY:

that approximately 50 per cent of those who applied for loans found themselves before the Appeal Board, their applications became the subject of an appeal?

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

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, I do not have accurate statistics at my finger tips, but I know that the 50 per cent estimate is way off base. Last year we had no appeals, zero appeals, and at last report to me a couple of weeks ago there was a small number this year, and that is to be expected and encouraged, in fact, that is why we have a democratic appeals procedure. Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada, an agency of the government in Ottawa supported by the members opposite, have published data on each province's Student Aid Programme, 1981-82 is the most recent year for which figures are available, and they show that for the nine provinces participating in the Canada Student Loan programme - and, of course, it is the federal government that provide loans but it is the provinces that have to provide the grants, the bursaries, the free money - by far the highest percentage of student aid as grants as opposed to loans was given out right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. VERGE: And not only that, Mr. Speaker, the average grant was by far highest in Newfoundland and Labrador, way higher than in other provinces, in fact almost double what was the average grant in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, this Province, despite all our difficulties, is continuing that momentum of providing very generous student aid programmes. And, Mr. Speaker, remember the

MS.VERGE: province's aid is in the form of grants, bursaries, money that does not have to be paid by students. The only aid that is being provided by Ottawa is in the form of loans.

MR.NEARY: Mr.Speaker.

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

MR.NEARY: A supplementary, Mr.Speaker.

Instead of trying to sidetrack the issue, what the hon. minister should be doing, as I believe she owes the student, is apologizing for these delays and her attempt to blame these delays on the late filing of applications. The hon. minister should apologize to the students for making such a remark.

PREMIER PECKFORD: On a point of order,  
Mr. Speaker.

MR.NEARY: Is there something wrong with the hon. gentleman?

MR.SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Premier on a point of order.

PREMIER PECKFORD: The Leader of the Opposition is reading his questions. If he reads from a document I think you have to table it in this House. So I think that a valid point of order exists here, because the Leader of the Opposition is reading his questions or reading from a document. And I think there is a

PREMIER PECKFORD: rule, Mr. Speaker, which is applicable here, which says that if you read from a document you have to table it. So I would like to call upon the Leader of the Opposition to abide by the rules of the House and table the document from which he is reading.

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

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, obviously we are on a topic that is making the hon. gentleman very, very testy today. The hon. gentleman should just restrain himself. The hon. gentleman does not realize the serious nature of this problem. It is a horrendous problem.

PREMIER PECKFORD: What does that have to do with the point of order?

MR. NEARY: It has all to do with it. The hon. gentleman is just stalling for time and trying to confuse and distract from the issue, and waving and grinning up at the press gallery, trying to curry a little favour for himself, as he usually does. That is why the press should be sitting up there over the clock, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would submit there is no point of order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order, please! Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, there are forty-four of them over there, and there are only three or four of us over here. They can shout us down, they can take the place on their backs -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: - but we are still going to ask our questions, Mr. Speaker. And I would submit there is no point of order, that the Premier should learn the rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: To that point of order, the Chair certainly does not know if the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) is reading his questions but would certainly be prepared to say that he may be referring to some copious notes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, does the hon. gentleman want my notes? The hon. gentleman is welcome to come over and take them if he wants to, Mr. Speaker.

PREMIER PECKFORD: You cannot pass them across the House like that. Table them with the clerk.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. the Premier can read my writing then he is welcome to my notes.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Well, the only question I have on that, Mr. Speaker, is did he write them?

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge) is this -

PREMIER PECKFORD: Look, Mr. Speaker, he is reading it.

MR. WARREN: Sure, why can he not?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY: There you go! Now, go out and pick it up and read it.

PREMIER PECKFORD: They are well placed because they can see that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) is reading.

MR. NEARY: There he goes, pointing his finger and waving at the press, hoping to get a few favours again.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please! Order, please!  
I would ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to direct a question to one of the ministers.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, they are taking the place on their backs.

MR. NEARY: Now, let me get back to the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge) and ask the minister if these applications and these appeals will be processed before the end of this semester?

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

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) has made several inflammatory, sensational comments about this Province's student aid programme, many of which have already been demonstrated to be completely fallacious. However, one of the exaggerated claims he made is that many students have been forced out of university because of some problems with the student aid programme. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has never come to me, or to my knowledge to anyone in my department, to raise with us particular problems being experienced by particular students. And, Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition is serious about his claims I encourage him to come to me after Question Period and give me names and facts. Because I can assure all hon. members that if there is anyone in university now, anyone at college or vocational school now whose academic career is jeopardized because of any difficulty with processing of student aid applications, then I will personally see that the problems are corrected and that the applications are processed very quickly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, the applications and information now in the hands of the student aid personnel are being processed just as fast as possible, with applications being processed in order of receipt, Mr. Speaker - first in, first out, Applications that are submitted early,

MS. VERGE: completely filled out with all the required documentation, are processed efficiently and quickly. But I have to repeat, Mr. Speaker, that there have been some problems occasioned by late applications and incomplete applications. One particular problem is failure of dependent students to include copies of their parents' income tax returns, and sometimes parents have not kept copies and the students and parents are forced to go to Revenue Canada Taxation,

MS. VERGE: and Revenue Canada Taxation take an inordinate amount of time to supply copies of these necessary documents. So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I invite all members opposite to come to me with names of particular students who have problems with student aid and I will make sure that they are attended to immediately.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the hon. minister misunderstood my question or not. The question I put to the minister is: Will the applications and appeals that are now being processed, will they be processed before this semester ends?

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

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that applications and appeals are being dealt with expeditiously. Now I cannot give definite dates and answers, I mean, Mr. Speaker, there might have been an application that came in today for aid for the Spring semester, but, Mr. Speaker, all applications that are in, that are complete, that do not have to be returned for more information are going to be processed in order, as received, efficiently and expeditiously and the students notified accordingly. And if the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) is worried about any particular student, I encourage him to come to me with the name or names of the students concerned.

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

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

MR. NEARY: That is poor consolation for the students who are waiting for approval of their loans. They do



MR. NEARY: not know whether they are going to be approved this semester or not.

Now let me ask the minister a final question. Has the Student Council approached the minister of the department on this matter, how many times have they approached the department and the minister, and what were the results of these discussions?

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

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, I have had several meetings and a lot of contact with the leadership of the Memorial University students. I have had an excellent, co-operative working relationship with the executive of the Council of the students' Union, I personally met with them a couple

MS. VERGE:

of times this Fall and discussed with them particular problems which they brought to my attention, I might add, in a much more responsible way than the presentation we have all just witnessed by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS. VERGE:

And, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we will be co-operating through the Student Aid Advisory Committee.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge). Could the minister tell the House how many days does it usually take for a student to have his appeal heard as it replies to student aid? How long does it take?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Education.

MS. VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned in answering the Leader of the Opposition, there was no appeal at all last year and, therefore, we have had very little experience with those appeals, so it is difficult for me to estimate the time involved. There is, short of the full-fledged appeal procedure, a review process which has worked very successfully. That is an interim procedure whereby, after the initial reply, a student may have the answer reviewed. And the review process evidently has satisfied virtually all students concerned. And until this semester evidently, students were not inclined to go further, to use the full-fledged appeal procedures.

Now, Mr. Speaker, perhaps part of the explanation for that is that few students knew about the opportunity for appeal, I really do not know. But the fact of matter is last year we did not have any full-fledged appeals, but we did have several cases referred to the review procedure for a second look, and in many cases for an alteration in the original

MS. VERGE: decision. And to my knowledge many students were satisfied by using that middle step, that review procedure. Mr. Speaker, I would have to check on any appeals that were initiated this Fall to see just how long they took. But this is something that I have discussed with the CSU executive and I do not think that there have been any problems with time delays in any appeals that were started this Fall.

MR. WARREN: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, what a poor answer the minister gave. The minister already said there were appeals this year and she does not even know how long it takes. Now could the minister advise if she will, at least on behalf of those students who have appeals before the loan board, or whatever it may be called, would she personally take it upon herself to make sure that those appeals at least are taken out of the basket? Because I know students who have already been told my Mr. Snelgrove and his officials that their appeals have not even been looked at yet and those students have had their appeals there for as high as forty days. So I am just wondering would the minister kindly, on behalf of those students who are living away from home and are being sacrificed because of lack of manpower, number one - would the minister kindly work on behalf of those number of students-whether they are 50 per cent or 10 per cent or 5 per cent - and try to at least let them save the semester for this year.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education.

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, a regular part of my work, part of my routine, is liaising with the officials staffing the student aid office and making sure that they have the resources necessary and are on top of their work and are processing student applications efficiently. Mr. Speaker, just this morning I talked to the supervisor of student aid. Now if the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) has any particular cases that he is concerned about, I mean, he is generalizing and making it sound like there

MS. VERGE: are dozens of people -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

MS. VERGE: - beating down his door -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. VERGE: - then I invite the member to  
come to me and let me know the specific cases -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. VERGE: - because the member has not  
come to me with any specific problems this semester.

MR. NEARY: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, the hon. Leader  
of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Could the hon. minister tell  
the House if one of the recommendations made by the Student  
Council to the minister was that more staff be seconded  
to look after the processing of applications or staff be  
trained to specilize in processing applications and appeals?  
If so, what action did the minister take on that  
recommendation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education.

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, yes, I think there  
is a consensus among everyone involved in the administration  
of student aid, and the students themselves, that it is desirable  
to increase the complement of personnel assigned to student  
aid and, Mr. Speaker, that has been done. There has been  
additional personnel assigned to student aid. And, Mr. Speaker,  
in looking ahead to the anticipated rush season, that is  
Summer, plans are underway to assign even more personnel to  
handle the peak of work which is expected to occur next Summer.  
Summer seems to be the busy season in student aid.

MR. HISCOCK: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HISCOCK: My question also is to the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge). Could the Minister of Education at some later date provide us with the information on how many students received grants last year and how many received grants this year? I know she does not have this at her fingertips now, but it is very, very important, Mr. Speaker. The student aid programme all across Canada has been whittled down and there are changes being made by the federal government, but in the meantime, we have gone a long way from the time when a Liberal administration paid students to go to university, because now we have students not being able to go because of their economic backgrounds.

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

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, I will gladly provide to the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock), and all hon. members, the numbers of students who received grants this year and the number who received grants last year. Mr. Speaker, I remind all members that all of the money for those grants comes out of provincial revenue, all the grants are provincial grants, Ottawa does not contribute to the provision of grants to students. The only federal government aid is in the form of loans.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins). For the past several years, Mr. Speaker, employees of the provincial government living in Labrador have been suggesting and asking

MR. WARREN: for an increase in the Northern living allowance. I understand that the federal Northern living allowance is somewhere in the vicinity of \$4,000 to \$5,000 for a married couple, whereas the provincial living allowance is something like \$1,800 to \$2,000. I am just wondering if the minister is considering being a little more generous to those people who are living in the Northern section of the Province as it pertains to Northern living allowance.

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

DR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. the member is aware, I believe, this whole matter of Northern allowances has become a matter of discussion and concern both by the individuals living in Labrador and also by the federal government, and we ourselves and other provincial governments. There will be, I think, consideration given to it on a broad basis. The hon. member is right, that we have a certain schedule whereby any employee of the provincial government in Labrador gets supplemental pay over and above what he would normally get pertaining

DR. COLLINS:

to his job, and that has been in place for a number of years. I think what one would want to do before giving any thought to adjusting that would be to see how the other matters that I have referred to initially there are resolving themselves. I think that there will be certain discussions and considerations given to the other aspects of things in the not too distant future.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I could not let the Question Period go by without having a little go at my hon. friend there opposite, who is temporarily seated opposite the Leader of the Opposition's (Mr. Neary) seat. Mr. Speaker, no doubt now when the Question Period is over he will run off to his office again and hide away for the rest of the afternoon and then come back next week and give us a lecture and tell us that members' number one priority is to spend their time in this House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the situation in Gander seems to be heating up considerably. The hon. Premier was invited today to attend a meeting. Now, would the hon. gentleman give us an updating on the Gander situation regarding the expansion to the Lakeside Home? He told us a couple of days ago that he had to consult with the minister and he had to consider whether or not he was going to accept an invitation to attend a public meeting. The situation is heating up considerably now. Could the hon. gentleman give us some comment on that situation in Gander?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, it is an awful long preamble, an attack upon me personally. I think it is terrible, Mr. Speaker, that when the Leader of the Opposition gets up he just cannot ask his question, he has to attack me. I am here in the House just about every day for Question Period and for periods of time after that. I have delegations lined up downstairs



PREMIER PECKFORD: most days, Yesterday, I do not know, it was about six or eight meetings between Question Period and twenty minutes to six, then I came back into the House again for the last twenty minutes. Mr. Speaker, I am about doing Her Majesty's work as I am supposed to be, you know. Talking about the attendance in the House this past week or so, the Opposition has had hardly anybody over there. And talking about heat, Mr. Speaker, the heat in Gander, there is a lot of heat being generated in Terra Nova district these days.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: There are a lot of things going on in Terra Nova district and I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) and some of the others are not out there. It seems to me that there was a poll around just a little while ago which showed that the Leader of the Opposition better stay out of Terra Nova district.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of heat, and most of the heat is coming from Terra Nova district, and I pity the hon. member.

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

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

Before I recognize the hon. Leader of the Opposition on a point of order, I just want to state that the time for the Question Period has expired.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Well, that is why I am raising a point of order, Mr. Speaker, just so it will not go on the record uncontested, so that the hon. gentleman will not be

MR. NEARY:

reported and no response from this side, let me say to the hon. gentleman that I have spent more time in Terra Nova than the hon. gentleman has.

MR. MORGAN: That is why you are going to lose.

MR. NEARY: And as soon as we can get out of the House we will be down there again. But the reason the hon. gentleman is so testy about the situation, Mr. Speaker, is that the polls show in this Province that the knives are out for the hon. gentleman, that people think he is going to retire or resign.

MR. PECKFORD: What is the point of order?

MR. NEARY: The point of order is this.

MR. TOBIN: 'Garfield' is going to get your job.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

MR. TOBIN: 'Garfield' is going to get your job.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: The point of order is this, Mr. Speaker, that the statements made by the hon. gentleman are completely irresponsible and untrue, something like the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) would make in this hon. House, and the hon. gentleman should withdraw the statements.

MR. MORGAN: Keep 'Neary' away from Terra Nova, that is what they have been told.

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

MR. NEARY: I am amazed that the Premier would make such irresponsible, low, rotten statements. It is not becoming of the office of Premier of this Province, so he should withdraw and apologize.

And, Mr. Speaker, let me advise the hon. gentleman that at the earliest possible opportunity

MR. NEARY: when I can get out of the House,  
I will be down in Terra Nova -

MR. MORGAN: Good. Good. Good.

MR. NEARY: - and the hon. gentleman will know  
it on the 7 of November.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Premier.  
on the point of order.

PREMIER PECKFORD: To that point of order,  
it is not a point of order, Mr. Speaker, it is jut an  
opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to try to  
respond to something that I said in Question Period.  
It just shows again how ignorant the Leader of the Opposition  
(Mr. Neary) is of the rules of this House. But just let me  
say to the Leader of the Opposition that if he is waiting until the  
House closes, in other words, the House will not close until  
election day, so he does not have to get down there then. That is  
his excuse. Because the polls show that the Leader of the  
Opposition has a popularity rating somewhere between 35 per cent  
and 43 per cent on most of the polls that have been taken  
the last while, and that is pretty disastrous whilst the  
popularity for this side of the House, and the hon. gentleman  
who happens to be speaking now, is well over 50 to 55 and  
60 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and that is what the polls show.  
The hon. Leader of the Opposition is testy because he cannot  
do anything to help enrich his chances of winning the Liberal  
leadership in the Fall.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! The  
Chair considers it has heard enough argument on this point  
of order when indeed it was not a point of order. The hon.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Leader of the Opposition

(Mr. Neary) rose to clarify some points.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

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

MR. GOUDIE: Mr. Speaker, I want to present the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 1983 of the Farm Development Loan Board.

PRESENTING PETITIONS:

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

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to present a petition signed by 194 people from the community of Hopedale, Labrador. The prayer of the petition is as follows: "We, the undersigned people of Hopedale, are very much in favour of relocation and we request both governments to assist us in this endeavour."

Now, Mr. Speaker, for some time in the past several months there have been numerous news stories about the people in Hopedale looking for relocation. I, for one, shiver sometimes when you talk about relocation, but this is a different circumstance altogether. Relocation years ago was done at the request of government.

MR. WARREN: This relocation is at the request of the people in Hopedale. The people are saying, 'We cannot get the services that our fellow Canadians or our fellow Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can enjoy.' It has been emphasized that an airstrip in Hopedale would cost in excess of \$12 million and a water and sewerage facility, according to the Municipal Affairs estimates, would cost \$5 to \$6 million. Those two items alone, Mr. Speaker, would cost somewhere between \$18 million and \$20 million, and according to the preliminary estimates on the relocation of Hopedale to a new location, which has been selected by members of the Department of Rural Development and the town council who went in and did an analysis of areas close by Hopedale, of the place they would move would to, would cost around \$20 million. Now, Mr. Speaker, back in August there was a referendum held in Hopedale and at that time there were 146 for the move and 38 against the move. But since that time, and I think we are well aware of it, there has been a sort of personality conflict with members on the Hopedale council where, in particular, the mayor did not favour the move as such, and there were statements made by both the mayor and other officials on the town council contradicting each other. Subsequently, in fact, I think a statement said that if there was a vote taken today, meaning about two or three weeks ago, that there would be much less than 79 per cent in favour of relocation. Actually, Mr. Speaker, there was a door to door campaign taken on about two weeks ago, and 194 people voted in favour which was an increase from the 146. So, actually, people in Hopedale are becoming more in favour of this move every day, because it is the only course for the 450 people who live in this tiny community.

MR. WARREN: I wrote to the Premier sometime ago as I did to the Prime Minister, asking how both governments can become involved. I met yesterday in Ottawa with Mr. Rompkey and other officials, and the federal government, I would like to tell the House, is committed to co-operate with this government and the initial steps, I believe, have already been taken with the Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Mr. Rompkey's officials having a delegation -

MR. MORGAN: Mr. Rompkey is not a minister now.

MR. WARREN: He still has officials, the same as you do.

MR. PECKFORD: He just delivered the appeal.

MR. WARREN: You can get up and speak afterwards. Mr. Speaker, there is a move afoot and I believe that the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Goudie), if he speaks in support of this petition or makes some comments on the petition, will agree that his Deputy Minister is in favour of having a committee of government officials go into Hopedale. I think the first thing we need to do, Mr. Speaker, before we make any commitment whatsoever for or against the move, is for a group of government officials, both provincial and federal, at the executive level, the higher level, to go into Hopedale and sit down with the people and explain the pros and cons of the relocation. It is going to cost this government, I would estimate, and I am not a financial analyst by any means, but I would estimate probably \$6 million to \$8 million. But then, again, the federal government has to; the airstrip is a federal responsibility, and there is a Native People's Agreement in place now which is 60/40, the wharves are

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MR. WARREN: a federal responsibility. So taking all the federal responsibilities into consideration, this government would probably be liable for \$6 million or \$8 million.

MR. NEARY: What is the total cost?

MR. WARREN: The total cost would be around \$20 million. And if we put this in place, Mr. Speaker, if we seriously look at this, what is

MR. WARREN:

needed in Hopedale will cost in excess of \$8 million for this government alone to give the services to Hopedale that the people want and should have, and that includes a water and sewerage system; they need a new store - the minister of the department has already allotted some \$700,000 for a new store in the community. There is no place at all for the kids to play. The school is surrounded by three roads and there are no playgrounds at all in the community. The houses are built practically on top of each other, in fact, Mr. Speaker, in the next five years with the increase in population there is no room for expansion. There is no room at all to build extra houses.

So the only alternative - but it has to be done with the full co-operation of both governments and with the council and the people of Hopedale. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that if we look down the road four or five years we may see Hopedale being relocated in a suitable location and the people there would enjoy the same privileges as are enjoyed by the people in other parts of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you very much.

MR. GOUDLE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

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

MR. GOUDIE:

Mr. Speaker, in addressing the content of the petition just presented by the hon. gentleman from Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren), I want to make several comments.

I remember one of the visits I made to the Coast of Labrador prior to becoming an elected member of this Legislature. In 1966, I had occasion to



MR. GOUDIE: visit the area on some business with the CBC at the time and, at that time, if I remember correctly, the residents of Hopedale, when I asked them about cutting firewood etc. for use in their homes, suggested that, I believe, they had 121 or 122 trees at that time in the community of Hopedale. They had them catalogued and protected to try to retain the water supply that was there, as small and as scanty and as poor quality as it is. So I have been aware of some of the difficulties of the residents of Hopedale for quite a number of years now.

I want also to point out to the hon. gentleman - he may not have received this letter yet - but I and my department, along with the Premier, have been involved in putting together some information for the hon. gentleman which is contained in a letter from the Premier to him.

MR. WARREN: Under what date?

MR. GOUDIE: It is November 29th, yesterday. I will not then be discourteous enough to read it here into the record, obviously, until the hon. gentleman receives the correspondence, but in any event, what we are saying in our correspondence to him and what I have said on four occasions over the last week and a half to one of the gentleman's constituents, one of the councillors who is involved in this and who has a very strong interest in it, is that we have received a copy through the gentleman representing Torngat district of the study done by Melville Consultants, I think they are called, and have gone through the information contained therein. Obviously, this is a very serious, a very weighty question to address. Just the matter of finding \$20 million alone, if that is the figure - it could be less, it could be much

MR. GOUDIE: more, I think, depending on exactly how the process would be put in place - then obviously, other agencies such as the RCMP, the telephone people, the federal government in the construction of airstrips, etc., so many agencies involved that it is difficult to get an accurate assessment over a very short period of time. But I do want to reassure the hon. gentleman and his constituents, as I mentioned to one of his constituents last night, that the Government of the Province is taking this matter very seriously. We are addressing ourselves to the situation in that manner. My department, the Department of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development, has advertised for a person to come on to our staff working out of the Happy Valley - Goose Bay office to deal directly with the people of the community of Hopedale on this particular matter, so that will give some indication of the seriousness with which we consider this particular proposal put forth by the residents of Hopedale, and we will continue to address ourselves in that way and, as best we can, keep the hon. gentleman from Torngat (Mr. Warren) informed.

I would suspect that over the months ahead, a number of my staff will be visiting that community and, as a matter of fact, I intend to visit the community myself when there is sufficient literature and information available to a little more intelligently address the matter. But, as I mentioned to his constituent

MR. GOUDIE:

who called me again last night, what kind of facility do you put in? Where will the community be located? If it is Big Bay, for instance, which seems to be the popular selection, one of my constituents sent me a piece of material today, a copy of a letter from the king of the day, the King of England, granting to his family several square miles of land in Big Bay. So is that a legitimate document? I mean, it is straight from the king to his family. So I suspect to begin with there might be a court case if that were to be the proposed location.

MR. NEARY: (Inaudible) the Americans down there (Inaudible)

MR. GOUDIE: Or whatever. I mean, it has become such a complicated situation that it is difficult to deal with in the short-term, We are addressing ourselves seriously to it and will continue to do so, and we will keep all hon. gentlemen informed as best we can, and especially the residents of the community of Hopedale.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I notice Newfoundland's answer to gallop is after galloping out of the House again, to get the latest polls no doubt.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the prayer of this petition so ably presented by colleague. And I would like to point out to hon. members of the House that it is a unique petition, it is a unique request indeed. We have heard so many slanderous statements made from members there opposite about resettlement and about relocation, especially the member for Placentia (Mr. Patterson), Mr. Speaker, about people moving off Merasheen Island and Red Island and so forth, and perhaps the hon. gentleman when he

MR. NEARY: gets a chance to speak in the House could give us an updating on the population now of Red Island. But, Mr. Speaker, one would almost be afraid to bring the kind of petition that my hon. gentleman just brought in to the House, it is unique indeed. I believe it is the first time in my twenty-one years in this House - and I am into my twenty-second year now - I believe it is the first time that a petition of that - I could be wrong now, but at least in my time in the House. I am not sure if I would be correct in saying the first time since Confederation, since we resumed democratic government in this Province, but certainly it is the first time to my knowledge that that kind of a petition has been brought in. It is a very significant day indeed, It is a very important petition and I commend the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. Goudie) for seconding a person to handle this very delicate procedure of relocating a community. It will be a traumatic experience for a lot of people, Mr. Speaker, and it is something that has to be proceeded with with caution. The minister just indicated and said that he was going to appoint a full-time person to deal with this. That is good. That is a good move, Mr. Speaker, and it will be done in collaboration and co-operation with all the various individuals and agencies involved, that is good, Mr. Speaker, but I do hope that it will not get bogged down in bureaucratic red tape. I hope that the transition, the movement will take place at an early a date as possible; I understand all the preparation that has to be made. It is an enormous task. We are dealing with human lives, men, women and children, Mr. Speaker, and it is an enormous task indeed. I might point out for the benefit of hon. members, by the way, that every community in Newfoundland that was relocated, resettled, had to present a petition to the administration of the day before - I believe it had to show that 75 per cent of the people.-

MR. NEARY: was it 75 per cent?

MR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. NEARY: Seventy-five per cent of the people had to indicate they wanted to move or it may have been even higher than that, I do not know.

AN HON. MEMBER: Seventy-five per cent.

MR. NEARY: Seventy-five per cent of the people in every community that relocated, even though we get maligned and abused by the member for Placentia (Mr. Patterson).

MR. WARREN: This is 86 per cent.

MR. NEARY: And this one is 86 per cent. But under resettlement it was 75 per cent. And every community that resettled except the one that my hon. friend the member for the Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow) was responsible for, who went and moved the community and then sent the bill into the government, apart from that they all sent in -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY: He went and bought a bulldozer and a truck.

MR. WOODROW: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the member for the Bay of Islands on a point of order.

MR. WOODROW: Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member is deliberately lying. I never sent any bill of \$30,000 into the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I think that should be stricken from the record.

MR. WOODROW: It is not the first time he has said it. I think it should be removed from the record.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

I have to bring to the attention of the hon. member for the Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow), and ask him to withdraw some comments made to accuse another member of the hon. House of deliberately lying. That is certainly very unparliamentary and I would request the hon. member for the Bay of Islands to withdraw it.

The hon. member for the Bay of Islands.

MR. WOODROW: I certainly do withdraw those words, Mr. Speaker, they probably were said a little hastily. But I would certainly like to have the matter cleared up, that I never on any occasion sent a bill of \$30,000, or any bill for that matter, into the Government of Newfoundland any time in my life.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you speaking to that point of order?

MR. NEARY: No. I thought the point of order was disposed of.

MR. SPEAKER: To that point of order, obviously it has to be a difference of opinion between two hon. members as to what was or was not done.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. gentleman got the figure of \$30,000, I did not mention it. The hon. gentleman must have that figure uppermost in his mind for some reason or other. But, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House support the petition and we congratulate our colleague, who is such a fine member, for bringing

MR. NEARY: the petition before the House. And we will all be watching, Mr. Speaker, this very delicate operation indeed to see how it proceeds, in the event that other communities may wish to do the same thing. It is not the first time that a community in Northern Labrador, by the way, has been relocated.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!  
Time for the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) has expired.

The hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, I have a smallish sort of a petition here. There are ninety-seven signatures on it, Mr. Speaker. It comes from the Town of Dildo Cove and from Dildo Cove, right down in the Cove, which is not where the fish plants are located, even though the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) refers to Arctic Fisheries and the others as Dildo, that is South Dildo, this one is in Dildo Cove where there is a stretch of road which is commonly referred to as Reid's Room - a lot of Reids live there, obviously. Mr. Speaker, there are ninety-seven signatures and the prayer of the petition says: "We the residents of Reid's Room protest the poor conditions of our road. We feel that the Department of Highways - Transportation obviously - have not been meeting their obligation in doing maintenance upon this road. The road has been in such a deplorable condition that local residents have had to fill in the potholes in order that the road would remain passable." Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are ninety-seven signatures including my own on this petition. And in supporting this petition for improved road conditions in that area of my district, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw the attention - the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) is not here. I was going to ask him some questions in Question Period about plans for snowclearing this year, but I guess he is out in Terra Nova making some empty

MR. CALLAN: promises.

MR. MORGAN: He is in Labrador City.

MR. CALLAN: Well, he is in Labrador City

making empty promises. But in supporting this petition, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw attention to the fact that just over a year ago the Whitbourne depot, which is the depot responsible for looking after and maintaining not only the Dotties' potties in the main road, in the pavement, which have been there all Summer, the potholes, but also the byroads as well, that depot was under Bay Roberts, Mr. Speaker, up until a year ago. And,

I must say, when the Whitbourne depot was under Bay Roberts, up until a year or so ago, the roads in that area were maintained. Because, Mr. Speaker, there was an asphalt plant in Conception Bay and, of course, the local roads that could be paved were paved by the local crews as part of maintenance and, of course, the main road through the towns of Blaketown, South Dildo and so on were also maintained, a lot better than they are now.



MR. CALLAN:

Why it was that Whitbourne depot, Highways depot, was placed under, I think it is called Point Verde, Placentia, I do not know. But things have seemed to deteriorate since that action was taken. Why it was done I do not know. Perhaps the -

MR. NEARY: For politically reasons.

MR. CALLAN: - government had the same idea in mind for downgrading Whitbourne and that area as it pertains to highways, as they did for downgrading Whitbourne and Markland, of course, when they took away their cottage hospital.

So, Mr. Speaker, I support this petition and I hope and I trust that when this petition goes to the department to which it relates, the Department of Transportation the minister will call in his officials who work and operate in that area and will tell them that this is not good enough, that it should not be necessary for ninety-seven people in that area to have to come to the House of Assembly to get their road maintained to a decent stage, that it should be done at the local level and not have to come to the minister let alone come to the House of Assembly. I hope that is what happens, Mr. Speaker. I suppose the petition and, as I said, I trust that something will be done with this road in the very, very near future. Of course, if it cannot be done in the Winter, and we are now up to the last of November practically, I hope that come early Spring this problem will be rectified for the good people who live in that section of Dildo Cove. Thank you.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I notice nobody there opposite would like to comment on this petition. My hon. friend just tabled a petition on behalf of ninety-seven of his constituents in Dildo Cove. Probably half the members

MR. NEARY: there opposite, or more than half, do not even know where Dildo Cove is located. It is probably the first time they ever heard of Dildo Cove, Mr. Speaker, probably the first time. If the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) was in his seat, perhaps it is the first time that the minister ever heard of Dildo Cove. It seems to me the problem that exists is this, I ask my hon. friend to nod to me if I am correct, that the maintenance of the road to Dildo Cove was transferred from the Whitbourne highway's depot to the Point Verde depot down in Placentia East.

MR. CALLAN: Not really. No, the Whitbourne depot was under Bay Roberts, now it is down there, in Placentia.

MR. NEARY: Oh, I see. Okay, the Whitbourne depot itself was under Bay Roberts and now it has been transferred to Point Verde down in Placentia East, and that is what started the problem for the people in Dildo Cove.

MR. CALLAN: They are not getting the same kind of treatment.

MR. NEARY: Pardon?

MR. CALLAN: They are not getting the same kind of treatment from there.

MR. NEARY: They are not getting as good a treatment from that depot, although I do not think my hon. colleague intends in any way to downgrade the people who work in that depot.

MR. CALLAN: Oh, Mr. Brennan is a fine man.

MR. NEARY: I know some of these people who work in the depot in Placentia, I meet them on a regular basis, as my hon. colleague knows, one way and another, and they are hard workers. They are doing the best they can under severe difficulties, because of lack of money being made available by the administration for upgrading roads and for snow clearing

MR. NEARY: and so forth, Mr. Speaker. These good highways workers are doing the best they can, and this in no way, Mr. Speaker, casts aspersions or any reflections on these people. Perhaps the member for the Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow) could get a bulldozer and a truck and go down and show them how to maintain roads. The hon. gentleman is an expert on it, Mr. Speaker. But in the meantime, we hope that even though the minister is not in his seat, the prayer of the petition will not fall on deaf ears,

MR. CALLAN: Perhaps the member for Placentia (Mr. Patterson) will support it.

MR. NEARY: Somebody there opposite will communicate the message in this petition to the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe).

MR. CALLAN: Tell him not to support it.

MR. NEARY: Well, I would hope that the member for Placentia East (Mr. Patterson) will get up and support the petition, or just Placentia, period. It used to be Placentia East.

MR. PATTERSON: Placentia, full stop.

MR. NEARY: Placentia, full stop. And if the hon. gentleman cannot get up and give us a lecture, give us a little talk and tell us how he is going to support this petition, he might give us a lecture on resettlement. And if he wants to talk on resettlement, then he should consult with the member for Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow). The member for Bay of Islands could give the gentleman a few pointers on resettlement, Mr. Speaker. But we do hope that the people of Dildo Cove will not have to petition this House to resettle, because obviously that is what they are trying to do. Their policy for rural Newfoundland is practically non-existent. All the decisions and the policies and the programmes of this administration are aimed at the urban centres, they are downgrading rural Newfoundland. And the reason for it, Mr. Speaker, is that they have six members from St. John's in an eighteen member Cabinet, and one street in St. John's has more authority and more power than any district in Newfoundland. The whole great Northern Peninsula does not have that power or the authority. Over 33 per cent of

MR. NEARY: the Cabinet is made up of St. John's members and they zero in on urban policies and urban plans, Mr. Speaker. They are neglecting rural Newfoundland and I think it is shameful, and this is just another example of that neglect.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

It being Wednesday I have to remind hon. members of Standing Order 53(4) which in essence says that the Private Member's Resolutions have to be called not later than 4 o'clock. So it is now 4 o'clock.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: By leave. By leave.

MR. SPEAKER: The Standing Order is very clear. Do hon. members want to proceed by leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: By leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Do we have leave to continue?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Old Perlican, Bay de Verde, Grates Cove, and Red Head Cove. The prayer of the petition is to the Premier, A. Brian Peckford, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador from the residents of Old Perlican, Bay de Verde, Grates Cove and Red Head Cove; "Whereas the provincial government have decided in times of economic decision to waste thousands of taxpayer's dollars in relocating the Old Perlican maintenance depot of the Department of Transportation; whereas this department has adequately served this area for thirty to forty years the move does not seem warranted; whereas this portion of the area served by the depot will suffer needless hardship during the Winter months if the depot is relocated, we the undersigned, today affix our names to this petition protesting the relocation of the depot and ask your government to drop all plans for this relocation immediately."

MR. REID: I received this petition this morning and, Mr. Speaker, I certainly do support this petition. This depot has been there for years and years and it served the people well. We thought we had a good thing going for us there because it was situated at the cross roads, there in Old Perlican.

MR. NEARY: Where are they moving it now?

MR. REID: They are moving it up to another district.

AN HON. MEMBER: How far up?

MR. REID: It is not the distance. The distance is five or six miles, but the area to which this depot is going is certainly an area that is one of the worst places that you could possibly put a depot because of the road conditions. The area where it is situated is right open to the Atlantic and is about 500 feet above sea level. They are only moving it about five or six miles, but what I am very concerned about is the distance they are taking it from my district, an area where the snow lies so heavy. This year they are offering us, one more plough instead of the ploughs we had. We normally had two or three

MR. REID:

graders, a couple of loaders and a couple of trucks there with plows and that on them. And certainly I object very strongly because of the fact -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Where are they moving

it?

MR. REID:

It is going up to

Flambro Head.

MR. WARREN:

That is not a very great

distance.

MR. REID:

I do not care about the

distance it is going, it is going in Carbonear district. But the point is where it is going it is certainly not going to serve Trinity South, Trinity-Bay de Verde, like it did before. They have to go right up to Whales Brook, which is Red Head Cove, Bay de Verde, Grates Cove, Old Perlican, Lead Cove, Sibleys Cove and that area. This depot served that area. This is an area where we get a tremendous lot of snow, there is no question whatsoever. And every Winter I get a lot of phone calls because of the way it is being served at the present time.

We have several schools down there in that area, Tricon and St. George's Central High at Bay de Verde, and J.C. Pratt at Brownsdale. This depot actually covers the area where these buses operate. The buses there do not go outside of that area. They are not going into another district. This depot serves the people in the Old Perlican area, it has been there a long time, and has served the people well. It is right at the intersection and I feel it certainly should be serving that area.

MR. REID: The senior citizens are dissatisfied with what is happening. The joint mayors are dissatisfied with what is happening. We have even our own association backing me 100 per cent, and they are the ones who want me - I did not know this petition was going to be here today, but in the meantime, these people are backing me at the present time 100 per cent. I feel this is the worst thing we could possibly do.

Certainly I think that the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe), and the member for Carbonear district, (Mr. Peach), and myself should have certainly sat together and discussed that. The arguments that are coming back to me do not hold any ground to be honest with you, because -

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

MR. NEARY: By leave. By leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! I have to advise the hon. member that his time has expired.

MR. NEARY: No, go ahead. Let him go ahead.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member have leave to continue?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Agreed. Carry on.

MR. REID: I think we should have certainly gotten together and discussed this, and I certainly think that we should never take something away from us in Trinity Bay. We have not got too much going for us in any case. And I am hurt to the core to think that this is being done to the people who elected me right there in Trinity-Bay de Verde. I am hurt to the core. There is no question





MR. WOODROW:

He will not get mad

with the member for Bay of Islands.

MR. NEARY:

And the hon. gentleman

was very sincere, I think, in his presentation on behalf of his constituents and I commend him for that. What we need from members there opposite are more,

MR. NEARY: members who are outspoken, Mr. Speaker, and not fooled by the Premier coming into the House and talking about silly polls that he is playing around with. Mr. Speaker, here is a problem that should not have arisen. If prior consultation had been held between the member for Carbonear (Mr. Peach), and the member for Trinity Bay de Verde (Mr. Reid), and the ministers officials, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that his matter would not have come up at all and it would not be necessary for the hon. gentleman to get his blood pressure up in the House here today to try to persuade the administration to reverse their decision.

Mr. Speaker, do you remember what I said earlier about the people down in my colleague's district, down in Dildo Cove, about this administration not knowing what they are doing? They are uprooting rural Newfoundland like you would not believe. Here is another example, moving the Old Perlican depot to Carbonear district without prior consultation with anybody, just uproot it, move it. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine how arrogant the minister and that administration have become? They do not even consult with their own members let alone anybody else, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WARREN: It is ridiculous. And the Premier said today they always consult with each other.

MR. NEARY: Yes, we hear the pious words from the hon. leader of that party day in and day out about consultation, about commissions and about we consult with this one and that one. They do not even consult with their own members, the hon. gentleman just told us. I hope the hon. gentleman is successful in getting that decision reversed. The people over there, Mr. Speaker, in Old Perlican, and Grates Cove, and Bay de Verde, and Red Head Cove do not deserve

MR. NEARY: that kind of treatment.

MR. CALLAN: Any more than the people in North West River.

MR. NEARY: Any more than the people in North West River deserved to have their depot moved to Happy Valley - Goose Bay, or the people in Dildo Cove. Mr. Speaker, they are making these decisions without any thought or concern for the people who live in these areas, and we support the petition just presented by the hon. gentleman. And the hon. gentleman sounds to me to be angry enough that if they do not reverse their decision, then he might have something else in the back of his mind. And I hope he does, Mr. Speaker, it would teach that hon. crowd over there a lesson, not to trod, to walk, to stamp on his constituents without prior consultation. And they are going to downgrade the service in the process. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine? I do not blame the hon. gentleman for being so concerned when he mentioned all these schools. Can you imagine all the young children, the safety of the children in these schools that the hon. gentleman mentioned? Mr. Speaker, it is shameful! I have nothing but strong, harsh words of condemnation for the minister and the administration. It just goes to show the contempt that this administration has for people of this Province and how arrogant they have become in the last couple of years. And that was one of the big fears, of course, of the people of this Province when they woke up on April 7, 1982, and realized they had put such a large majority on the government side of the House. I wish my colleague well and I want to say to him, 'Do not give up the fight.' The hon. gentleman is quite capable - I am familiar with the hon. gentleman who sat in this House previously - the hon. gentleman is quite capable of fighting for his constituents. Do not give up, do not let

MR. NEARY:   them snow you under, and I  
guarantee you that the hon. gentleman will win his battle.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):                               Order, please!

  It being Private Members'  
Day, on last Wednesday the hon. the member for the Strait  
of Belle Isle (Mr. Roberts) introduced an amendment to  
the Private Members' Motion. I took the amendment under  
advisement and have to advise the hon. House today that the  
amendment is in order. Now, the hon. the member for the  
Strait of Belle Isle is not here today to carry on, so I  
recognize the hon. the member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN:   Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

  Mr. Speaker, I would like to  
have a few words on this resolution presented by the member  
for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn) and, of course, more  
particularly on the amendment which was just ruled in order,  
the amendment to this resolution regarding Winter drilling.

  Mr. Speaker, let there be no  
doubt in anybody's mind that those of us on this side  
of the Legislature are 100 per cent in agreement

MR. CALLAN:

that Winter drilling should not continue off the coast of our Province. And this is especially true, Mr. Speaker, under present circumstances, And the present circumstances, we witnessed here in the Legislature yesterday, Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) asked the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) several questions regarding an incident that took place the night before last on the Grand Banks on an oil rig that was reported to have listed eight degrees recently, an oil rig that broke one of its anchors the night before last in not a major storm - stormy weather, yes, but not a major storm, a November storm, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned yesterday when I spoke in connection with the tabling of the report on Elections, Controverted Elections and Election Spending, I reported that two of us on that Committee travelled to Ontario, to another jurisdiction, to learn about election financing. It was during that same four or five days, Mr. Speaker, when we were in the Province of Ontario, that I watched that CBC programme The Fifth Estate. I was waiting for the programme all Fall, Mr. Speaker, because I knew that Hannah Gartner, one of the reporters there, actually the one who did that whole, The Fifth Estate, hour-long programme, I knew that she had been in my home town during the Summer interviewing one of the widows of the Ocean Ranger disaster, and no matter where I was I wanted to see that programme. And, as it happened, I saw the programme in Saint Catherines, Ontario.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that programme, in conjunction with

MR. CALLAN: the Ocean Ranger Commission of Inquiry that is taking place and still ongoing, that programme and evidence presented before the Commission of Inquiry into the sinking of the Ocean Ranger makes a couple of things very, very clear. We can spend \$13 million or \$26 million or \$39 million, we can spend all the money we want to on that Royal Commission, that Commission of Inquiry into the sinking of the Ocean Ranger but, Mr. Speaker, a couple of things are evident to anybody. Anybody who watched that particular programme, The Fifth Estate, which dealt exclusively with the Ocean Ranger and, of course, evidence coming out daily whenever the Commission of Inquiry sits as it is sitting today and sat yesterday, a couple of things are very, very evident to anybody: Number one, the employees, and in particular the employees who are responsible for the control room and for the controls that keep the rig in a stable position and so on, these employees in the past, and I dare say even today - because even today there is no decision on who is in charge of the rig. Is it the Captain or is it the toolpusher? We still do not have any resolution of that problem - and I dare say, Mr. Speaker, we have untrained men still working on these rigs as they were working on the Ocean Ranger, men who were forced into jobs because of the local preference policy and because of the pressure brought on by this administration, 'jobs for Newfoundlanders', so we had them there, Mr. Speaker, and we have them there even today, who are not trained properly.

MR. CALLAN: So that is one particular thing that The Fifth Estate programme proved conclusively, that that was a problem that existed when the Ocean Ranger went down. The other thing, of course, Mr. Speaker, that was made abundantly clear is that storms in the North Atlantic are different, can be a lot more furious and unpredictable than storms in other areas.

You see, Mr. Speaker, from time to time we hear the Premier and others of his colleagues criticizing the CBC, but in programmes that I have seen, actually the only lessons that we had to learn by regarding the North Sea drilling were lessons that were brought back to this Province by CBC camera crews and investigative reporters who went to the North Sea and who brought back information and who told us what happened with some of the rigs that sank and told us how the towns were changed and the social fabric was changed and so on. And these programmes, Mr. Speaker, like The Fifth Estate were well documented and were based on facts.

I remember an open line host a couple of years ago talking about how he did not like The Fifth Estate because the people there set out to prove a point and they will prove it no matter how they have to twist the facts and so on. That has not been my experience at all, Mr. Speaker, with the journalistic programmes like Land and Sea, for example. Land and Sea, the member for Placentia (Mr. Patterson) appeared on at one time, he and John Lundrigan, talking about resettlement in Placentia Bay, out eating lobsters. But anyway most of the programmes, Land and Sea, The Fifth Estate, and other documentaries that are presented to us by the CBC, even the Fishermen's Broadcast, which the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) has criticized, never been asked to



MR. CALLAN:

appear, he said, and then comes along Ann Budgel several days later and tells us publicly that the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) was on that broadcast twenty-nine times, even though he said he had never been asked.

MR. MORGAN:

I do not talk to the media.

Goodness gracious!

MR. CALLAN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are people in the press who are not to be taken very seriously. As I was driving in this morning, for example, Mr. Speaker, I heard an open line host, one of two on the same programme -

MR. MORGAN:

Your buddy?

MR. CALLAN:

- I heard an open line host, Mr. Speaker, who talks about two females in the House of Assembly. Now then I think that open line host owes an apology to the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge), because apparently he did not think she was a female, because the gentleman on that programme who made the remark knew about the member for Twillingate (Mrs. Reid), because it was the member for Twillingate who put him out of Twillingate and on the radio, and, of course, he knew about the member for Gander (Mrs. Newhook), the Minister of Municipal Affairs, because it was only yesterday in his article in The Daily News that he referred to the member for Gander. So when he said there are only two women in the House, obviously he did not count the Minister of Education as a woman, so he should apologize.

The other foolish statement that that same gentleman made this morning was when he talked about -

MR. MORGAN:

Which one of the two?

MR. CALLAN:

I have made it abundantly clear.

The other foolish statement that he made was that the election reforms that were mentioned yesterday, he said under the present rules, he said, the PC Party in the last election

MR. CALLAN: would have gotten 75 per cent of the \$600,000. Where is the man's head, or what is he thinking about?

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that under the rules in the last election the PC Party got 61 per cent of the popular vote. They would have gotten 61 per cent of \$600,000, the Liberals would have gotten 35 per cent of \$600,000 and the NDP would have gotten 4 per cent.

MR. TOBIN: What has that got to do with it?

MR. CALLAN: But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about investigative and journalistic and honest-to-goodness good reporting and some of the nonsense that you hear thrown out every now and then.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the amendment to the resolution: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House supports a policy of no Winter drilling. And, of course, Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying, as I said just now, that we do not necessarily say that there will be no Winter drilling for time in memoriam, we

MR. CALLAN:

do not say that this should continue forever, but this policy, Mr. Speaker, should be in place this Winter, perhaps it should be in place now even though we are not into Winter really, because from what we have seen happen to the Ocean Ranger and from what happened two nights ago, it could have been a disaster, it could have been another tragedy. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, thank God for closing the door after the horse has left the barn, thank God for that. This administration that talked about the firm court case that they had regarding our right to own the offshore, this same administration which failed in that, which bluffed the people, won an election on it a year and a half ago, that same administration a few years ago, Mr. Speaker. was the same crowd who allowed the Ocean Ranger to be on the Grand Banks in the middle of February. There was no talk about no Winter drilling by this administration. It was after the Ocean Ranger went down that this administration jumped on the bandwagon. And it was after the Ocean Ranger went down that everybody in this Province knew that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) raised some very grave concerns a month before the Ocean Ranger went down. It was then that everybody in this Province knew that the Minister responsible for offshore drilling and responsible for the Petroleum Directorate (Mr. Marshall), everybody knew that he should have taken the Leader of the Opposition more seriously. The captain who quit his job and all the people who complained about the lack of control and who is in charge, the tool-pusher or the captain, it was after the Ocean Ranger. And as I said in an earlier speech in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, it seems passing strange to me that it was the day before the inquiry into the sinking of the Ocean Ranger, one day before they started their inquiry, we had an announcement from this administration that additional inspectors

MR. CALLAN: were being hired by the Petroleum Directorate to supervise the rigs on the offshore. They should have been there long before the Ocean Ranger tragedy. And even now, Mr. Speaker, I am wondering how many are there and how much time do they spend on the rigs? Where did the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) get his information a few days ago, Mr. Speaker?

MR. TOBIN: He dreamt it up.

MR. CALLAN: He did not dream it up. It was verified by the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall), yes, one of the anchors broke loose. It was verified that six of the eight thrusters had burnt out on the way over from Japan.

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, like he talked about the helicopter being dispatched a couple of weeks ago to pick up people in the water.

MR. NEARY: Confirmed by the minister.

MR. CALLAN: Who, Mr. Speaker, gave the Leader of the Opposition his information? Was it one of the government inspectors? I rather doubt, Mr. Speaker, that it was. And that is why, of course, Mr. Speaker, we are suggesting on this side of the Legislature that there should be inspectors on every rig that is drilling offshore twenty-four hours a day, not just to go out and do spot checks but there should be somebody there twenty-four hours a day as there should have been somebody on the Ocean Ranger the night that the terrible tragedy occurred.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that was brought out in that programme, The Fifth Estate, I will be fair, the other thing that was brought home to anybody from all across Canada who watched it, the other thing that was made clear was that there is a lack of good Search and Rescue in this Province. It is

MR. CALLAN: too far away in Summerside or Halifax or anywhere else. That was made clear. But, Mr. Speaker, I have said so often that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and what happened with the Ocean Ranger is like a father giving his son a big car and saying, 'Okay, my son, it is yours, you take off and do what you want to with it,' and the son goes out and has a terrible accident, and, after the accident, the father complains because there was not enough ambulance service in the area to rush him to the hospital on time. Forget about the lack of equipment in this Province to save people's lives in a tragedy, let us try to prevent the tragedy in the first place. And one way to do it, of course, is to prohibit Winter drilling, and if the rigs are not out there, obviously, Mr. Speaker, they cannot go bottom up as the Ocean Ranger did. And, of course, as I have already said, in conjunction with that and coupled with that, let us have inspectors twenty-four hours a day.

MR. BARRETT: Should you cease fishing on the Grand Banks in the Wintertime?

MR. CALLAN: I will not be detracted by the member for St. John's West (Mr. Barrett), the over-paid secretary, Mr. Speaker. He will have lots of time if he would like to stand and speak on this resolution or the amendment to it.

So, Mr. Speaker, until all the things are in place that should be in place to guarantee safe Winter drilling, we are saying let us put a stop to it, let us bring those rigs in during the stormy Winter months.' And, of course, no matter when they are out there, whether it is in Summer, Spring

MR. CALLAN: or Fall -

MR. BARRETT: You cannot guarantee that in the Summertime, let alone in the Wintertime.

MR. CALLAN: - when they are out there, let there be inspectors there twenty-four hours a day. And, of course, as I said, let us get to the bottom of this thing, let us decide that the Captain is the Captain of the ship and the toolpusher is interested in and has jurisdiction over nothing else only turning the screws and looking for oil: let him look after that and let the Captain be the Captain of the ship. Let us get it straightened out. These are the sorts of things, Mr. Speaker, that the Petroleum Directorate should be working at night and day, and these are the sorts of things that the Premier should be fighting for and ensuring will take place night and day, rather than talking silly politics and talking about political polls in Terra Nova and elsewhere.

My twenty minutes have just about expired so, Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that it is our amendment to this resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that this House support a policy of no Winter drilling, Obviously unless we have as good a guarantee as you can get, if that is 100 per cent or 90 per cent or whatever, until all of the pitfalls and all of the glaring mistakes and inadequacies that we have seen in the past, especially as it pertains to the Ocean Ranger disaster, until all of these pitfalls and all of these inadequacies have been rectified and taken care of, let there not be any future drilling. And let there be inspectors and let there be trained men, not untrained Newfoundlanders just because of the local preference policy and just because the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn)

MR. CALLAN: can stand up every two or three months and brag about all the Newfoundlanders we have out there. Let us train them properly first. Let us make abundantly sure that they know what is happening when they are out on those rigs.

And, of course, the other important point of this thing, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion,

MR. CALLAN:

is let there be a way for these gentleman to get off a rig, let there be good safety equipment that they can get into as they leave a rig and not walk out, as they did on the Ocean Ranger, in their night clothes and T-shirts and so on. But let there be good equipment on the rig if they are forced to leave, and let there be good boats there to take them off the rigs, something that they can get into rather than, of course, as we saw happen, trying to get into one of the supply boats and everything totally, totally inadequate for anybody to try and leave a rig with any hope at all of getting pulled out of the icy water, as we saw happen to the Ocean Ranger. So, Mr. Speaker, I support the amendment. As I was reading in the last edition of Ted Warren's column in the Newfoundland Herald, 'Winter Drilling, Coming to Terms With Offshore Safety,' an excellent article, Mr. Speaker, that everybody who is concerned with the offshore should read and take to heart.

I support the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak briefly on this resolution. It will be recalled that the resolution as originally moved, leaving the WHEREAS clauses out, read: "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 "Removal Order" for the period needed to reassess and revise the Winter Drilling Regulations." Then an amendment was moved by the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Roberts)



MR. OTTENHEIMER: which would have the affect of taking out all of the words after 'workers', that is the four preambles and the substantive part would then read, 'NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House support a policy of no Winter Drilling.' Now, Mr. Speaker, the government of the Province is at present involved in negotiations on the very subject of Winter drilling and on related matters. Let me say again that the government of the Province is at present involved in such negotiations, in negotiations on this very subject. Therefore we have to ask ourselves whether being involved in negotiations on that very subject - and those negotiations are not completed or finalized or come to a resolution as of now, and that these negotiations will come to a resolution and be finalized in the very near future - whether it is appropriate for the government, in the House of Assembly, to interfere with that process of negotiation or to make in effect its negotiation public to negotiate in public by supporting this specific amendment. Because, as I say, the amendment if carried is on the very subject which is the subject of negotiations now, and, obviously, negotiations are futile and lack any meaning if, number one, they are carried out in public and, number two, the very matter, the core and kernel of what is being negotiated, a definitive and final position is taken by the government before those negotiations are completed.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: So therefore I move on behalf of the government, and seconded by the hon. member for Baie Verte-White Bay (Mr. Rideout), that the words after 'House' be struck out and replaced with the following, and then this substantive resolution would read 'NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House' and then continuing 'recognizing that the government is at present engaged in negotiations on the subject of Winter drilling, and that it is not advantageous to negotiate in public, endorses the government's policy of recognizing the safety of offshore workers as a matter of the highest priority.' There is one here for the Speaker and Table and for the Opposition.

So the subamendment therefore reads, the substantive part of the resolution, if it were passed with the subamendment, which is an amendment to the amendment, the substantive part, because all of the preambles are always the same: 'NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House' then it goes on, 'recognizing that the government is at present engaged in negotiations on the subject of Winter drilling and that it is not advantageous to negotiate in public, endorses the government's policy of recognizing the safety of offshore workers as a matter of the highest priority.' I suppose it could be argued that there are three matters there in the subamendment which hon. members would have to be convinced of in order to support it: The first is a statement of fact, an allegation of fact, 'recognizing that the government is at present engaged in negotiations' -

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

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

MR. NEARY: I do not like to interrupt the  
hon. gentleman, but I believe the Speaker should rule on  
whether or not the subamendment is in order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: That is correct.  
The Chair thought that the hon.  
member was still making the point of his amendment.

It appears to me that the gist of the  
subamendment would be related directly to the initial resolution,  
that was proposed by the hon. member for St. Mary's-The Capes  
(Mr. Hearn). So I would rule that the subamendment is in order.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, as I say, there are three  
elements in it. The first one, 'recognizing that the government  
is at present engaged in negotiations on the subject of  
Winter drilling,' that is a statement of fact and facts are  
not really debatable, I suppose anybody can deny them, but  
a situation is or it is not. One can have different views in  
interpreting their significance or whatever, but the first element  
there is a statement of fact that the government is at present  
engaged in negotiations on the subject of Winter drilling.  
They are intergovernmental negotiations, federal/provincial,  
and they are also involve the two governments and industry.  
So that is a statement of fact about which not much more can  
be said. The government, it is a fact, is at present engaged  
in negotiations on the subject of Winter drilling.

The second element states that 'it is  
not advantageous to negotiate in public.' It can be argued that  
is not a statement of fact, it is a statement of opinion, and  
whether it is or it is not does not make a great deal of  
difference. It is certainly the conviction of this government  
that it is not advantageous to negotiate in public, and I think  
most people would agree. By the government, I mean when this

MR. OTTENHEIMER: resolution comes, obviously, to a vote later today-as a matter of fact, under our rules there can only be two days on a Private Members' resolution - so all of it-the subamendment, which I propose, the amendment, which the hon. member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Roberts) proposed, and the resolution - comes to a vote today. And therefore the government will be in a position of voting one way or the other on the very subject on which negotiations are ongoing, on the very subject on which negotiations will be finalized in the near future, and, indeed, the outcome of the negotiations certainly could be prejudice, the good faith of the government negotiating on this subject would certainly be open to doubt or to criticism by taking a position publicly- it could not be more public-on the very matter on which the government is negotiating.

So I would certainly suggest

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

that the second element, 'that it is not advantageous to negotiate in public,' is a matter with which hon. members would concur, or I would think they would. That third element says, very effectively it is, says that 'the House endorses the government's policy of recognizing the safety of offshore workers as a matter of the highest priority.' There is no doubt in this government's mind, and I am sure in those who support the government's mind, that we attach the highest priority to the safety of offshore workers. That has been evidenced on many occasions, I do not think anybody seriously doubts that. I do not think that anybody would seriously doubt that the government of this Province recognizes the safety of offshore workers as a matter of the highest priority, not merely of priority, or of importance, or of significance, or of concern but of the highest priority, and you cannot get any higher than highest. And, indeed, what government of any province could be of such a nature as not to put the safety of people as a matter of the highest priority? So what essentially this sub-amendment does is asks all hon. members to concur with the operative part of the resolution which, number one, recognizes that the government is at present engaged in negotiations on the subject of Winter drilling and, two, that it is not advantageous to negotiate in public, and therefore endorses the government's policy of recognizing the safety of offshore workers as a matter of the highest priority. I do not think anybody would doubt that the safety of offshore workers is a matter of the highest priority. I think all hon. members would agree with that, including hon. members opposite. So the only matter on which

MR. OTTENHEIMER: really one, I think, could disagree would be 'endorses the government's policy' of recognizing that. In other words, one would almost have to argue that the government's policy does not recognize the safety of offshore workers as being a matter of the highest priority. I do not know, but I would really doubt that hon. members of the Opposition, whatever differences they might have with the government on this aspect of the offshore, the other aspect of the offshore, or indeed of any government policies, certainly, I would think, certainly in their own hearts and minds would acknowledge that that is in fact the government's policy, that of recognizing the safety of offshore workers as a matter of the highest priority. So that is the sub-amendment, the amendment to the amendment which I have submitted, seconded by the hon. member for Baie Verte-White Bay (Mr. Rideout) and on behalf of the government, and there is not a great deal more really to be said about it, if I am to remain relevant to it, which I wish to do. And I would hope that hon. members would see that really it would be improper, it would be injudicious, it would be imprudent, it could be any number of things, for a government to take a specific, definite, public position on a matter which is under negotiation when the negotiations are due to be finalized in the near future. And, obviously, the other parties to the negotiation would say, 'Well, what is the sense of negotiating with us now when you have already taken your position?' So I submit that the government is negotiating on this very matter, and related ones, but on this very matter and that it would not be advantageous to negotiate in public. That is a mild statement and, indeed, it would destroy the whole purpose of negotiations,

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MR. OTTENHEIMER: to negotiate in public and therefore we ask hon. members to endorse the government's policy of recognizing the safety of offshore workers as a matter of the highest priority.

I think, Mr. Speaker, with those

MR. OTTENHEIMER: few words, I submit the sub-amendment to the consideration of hon. members.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We find ourselves in a situation debating a resolution that I could assume was brought in for one reason only and that was to basically play politics with this resolution and embarrass the federal government and get the federal government on the stand to say they were against Winter drilling. We also have to ask ourselves why is it, after the sinking of the Ocean Ranger, we have to have resolutions brought in like this in the first place. Why is it that we did not in our wisdom, knowing the storms that we have in the North Atlantic, knowing about disasters of the Blue Mist, and the Blue Wave, and the William Carson and other ships that have gone down in our Maritime history, why is it that we did not have resolutions like this in the House of Assembly, adopted and put in legislation? And my question is why did this government not have the proposals, have the legislation brought in, like Norway, to make sure at certain times of the year we would not have Winter drilling? And I could only assume, Mr. Speaker, it is for one reason only and that is greed. Greed on the part of the multinational companies who want to get Hibernia, get the jackpot and get the oil flowing and make a profit, and greed on the part of this provincial government, and also maybe greed on behalf of our own people, ourselves. We have not had the economic base that we would like in this Province and, like the fox who had a piece of meat in his mouth, looked over the bridge, saw his reflection in the water with the piece of meat magnified, ended up going after that seemingly larger piece of meat and lost it all.



MR. BAIRD:

gets back.

Just wait until 'Roberts'

MR. HISCOCK:

and I am sure the member for the West Coast would agree with me -

So I would say, Mr. Speaker,

MR. BAIRD:

Humber West. Humber West.

MR. HISCOCK:

- that a lot of people in the Province, and in our country as a whole, are asking why we did not have resolutions like this brought in, why we did not have legislation. And the only reason, as I said, Mr. Speaker, that I can surmise, is pure greed on behalf of the companies and pure greed on behalf of the government.

I would say also, and the member for Placentia (Mr. Patterson) probably would agree with me, that it is probably greed on the part of the people of the Province who have heard the Premier say time and time and time again that Hibernia is our last hope to have our day in the sun, and, as a result, Mr. Speaker, we find that we are putting the lives of our young people in this Province in jeopardy by this resolution. And while we are debating this resolution, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) brought in a sub-amendment, 'recognizing that the government is at present engaged in negotiations on the subject of Winter drilling and that it is not advantageous to negotiate in public, endorse the government's policy of recognizing the safety of the offshore worker as a matter of the highest priority.' I will concur and I will say, Mr. Speaker, if safety was a matter of the highest priority, why is it that we are now bringing in legislation after the fact, after the barn door is closed, and after now we have lives lost as a result of this policy? Why is it that the government never had the safety of its workers as the highest priority before the Ocean Ranger went down?

MR. HISCOCK:

We are a maritime nation, a maritime people, and our history has taught us how fierce the sea can become. E.J. Pratt's poem Erosion sums it all up in eight lines.

So we know the danger of the sea. We know what a bountiful provider she can be with regard to her resources, but we also

MR. HISCOCK: know how cruel she can be at times. I have heard time and time again people throughout the Province and throughout my district in particular say, "How can TV shows like The Fifth Estate continue to carry programmes on the Ocean Ranger. How come television shows are continually talking about this? Do they not have any compassion at all for the loved ones of the men who died?" They say that when they see a story of the Ocean Ranger it brings tears to their eyes, and they wonder how much more anguish and pain it must bring to the loved ones of those who died. So in saying this, Mr. Speaker, I find it repugnant, almost a year after a Royal Commission of Enquiry estimated to cost \$13 million has started its deliberations, that we still find that the families of the men who died are still in anguish, that their lives have not even been straightened out economically, and they continue to suffer even in that way. Even now we find ourselves continually debating this tragedy politically, getting up on amendments, getting up on sub-amendments, trying to score political points. This resolution was brought in for one reason only, and that is, after the heat of debate last year, to embarrass the federal government. There is no reason other than that. Certainly not for safety reasons, because the safety was the issue, Mr. Speaker, we would not need this resolution, we would have had legislation brought down in the first place. With regard to our own Party and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary), shortly after the tragedy he said we should suspend Winter drilling. But no, the government would not heed that advice, and now we end up having this resolution before us long after the fact. It is all right for the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) to come in

MR. HISCOCK: with this sub-amendment asking us to endorse the government's policy on safety of offshore workers because negotiations are going on, but what about the workers out there now. What about the waffling the government has done after the Ocean Ranger going down? What about the ice last Spring? What about the controversy the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall) had with Mr. Chretien about moving the rigs? Remember, they were going to Nova Scotia, so what about the idea of saying, no, the rigs should go to Mortier Bay? What about all that controversy? Here we found out, while drilling was still going on and while that ice was coming down, we had a resolution before this House that could have been passed unanimously. We could have had a resolution brought into this House and passed within ten or fifteen minutes. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that they are playing politics of the lowest kind, playing politics with the lives of our people who are in that industry, and they are doing it for one reason only - pure greed. Nothing else but pure greed and pure politics of the lowest kind. If this government was really concerned about safety, it would have suspended drilling last Spring, not say that the rigs were going to go to Nova Scotia, not say that they were going to go to Mortier Bay, not say they were going anywhere. But this government now, Mr. Speaker, finds itself in a situation that, for pure greed and nothing else, it needs drilling in the Winter on Hibernia because it needs production brought on as fast as possible. The oil companies want that, the federal government wants that and the Province wants that. And now we are finding out about negotiations. If this government is really concerned about negotiations, it should not negotiate about

MR. HISCOCK:  
comprehensive deal.

safety, but for an overall

This government and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) should ask the federal government to lay aside the issues of Winter drilling and safety and, instead, negotiate Newfoundland's claim to the offshore.

After all, the government asked the Supreme Court to put aside a decision on the Upper Churchill case so that Newfoundland and Quebec could continue negotiations, so why can we not do the same thing here? We must negotiate recognition that the offshore and its resources belong to Newfoundland.

MR. HISCOCK: The Liberal party has always claimed that it belongs to this Province but still we must negotiate . But, no, Mr. Speaker! Instead we find that this administration is playing politics of the worst kind at the lowest level since I have been in this House, bringing in sub-amendments 'recognizing that the government has the safety of its workers in mind.' If they had the safety of its workers in mind, they would have passed legislation. This is an administration that I, as a young person in this House, have to listen to time and time again what Liberal administrations did in the past, that they never checked their facts, did not do enough research and therefore we have deals like the Upper Churchill. Well, I say, Mr. Speaker, this is a perfect example that Conservative administrations, under Mr. Moores and Mr. Peckford, did not do their homework! Through pure greed, and greed only, they brought in the multinational companies and allowed them to drill at the worst time of the year. There was no question in their minds that an accident might happen, it never crossed their mind that that could possibly happen. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Dinn) gets up and spouts off this move created 1,500 or 1,600 jobs. Well, I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker, and you can ask any of the people who work on these drillships, that if it was not for the Ocean Ranger disaster nothing would have changed out there; they would still be out there losing their fingers, breaking arms and legs and having other industrial accidents. This government brought in the policy of priority hiring of Newfoundlanders first for one reason only, the pure, raw politics of it, and they put them aboard the rigs, put them aboard the supply vessels and then forgot about them. It was only through the disaster of the Ocean Ranger that they were brought back to their senses. Now over a year has passed and we still do not have proper safety regulations, that the oil industry says it will only bring in safety regulations

MR. HISCOCK: that are to its own advantage. It is up to the government of the day, whether it be federal or provincial, to make sure that there are proper safety regulations, and we find out, Mr. Speaker, that this is not taking place. It is like the disasters that happened before with the Blue Wave and the Blue Mist. As a child in school they collected ten cents from each of us to submit as donations. As I said, Mr. Speaker, if the safety of the offshore workers was a matter of highest priority of this government, why is it that we find ourselves now, at the end of November, bringing in a resolution like this? As I said before, we have seen - and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) has been here longer than I have - we have seen time and time again government and Opposition members bring in resolutions and saw them approved on the day they were brought in. No, Mr. Speaker, this resolution was brought in because of pure, raw politics just to embarrass the federal government. We find out now that the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall), the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) and the Premier want Winter drilling to continue because they cannot stop it. And that comes down to the fact of the matter, that they established a precedent when they brought in the companies without having proper rules and regulations in place and it is too late to do it now. That also shows

MR. HISCOCK: in many ways who is calling the shots out on the Grand Banks and the Labrador Coast, and it is not the federal government nor the provincial government but the huge multi-nationals; Canada wants to have oil self-sufficiency by 1990 and the multi-nationals are not going to allow anything to stand in their way. And this government is so bankrupt it is unbelievable! If a small business submits a claim to the government, it may take three or four or five or six or seven months to get it collected. And what is this government doing about the terrible state of our economy? While Labrador West, Corner Brook, St. Lawrence and other places along the South coast are in dire straits, while the logging industry and the inshore fishery are failing, and construction industry too - and I can go on and on - we find this government is building Arts and Culture Centres in Labrador West and building extensions to Confederation Building. That is what they are doing while businesses around this Province are going down all the time. And now this government is bringing in a resolution after the fact. It is very easy to bring it in after the fact, Mr. Speaker. It is very easy, as I said, for any of us to get up and spout off and make points back and forth. But I tell you that the people who have lost their sons and husbands and brothers in this tragic disaster do not want to hear on CBC tonight, or read in The Evening Telegram or The Daily News tomorrow, that we were waffling back and forth and procrastinating and talking about the idea of an amendment and a sub-amendment with regard to a resolution. It is a shame. It is a reflection on this government, which is bankrupt not only economically, but bankrupt of ideas. It is cruel and callous that a member of that government, a backbencher, could actually



MR. HISCOCK: have the audacity, the nerve to bring in a resolution like this. And now that the government finds itself in an embarrassing position, it has to turn around and move a sub-amendment to it.

Mr. Speaker, this is one resolution that should never have reached the floor of this House. Legislation should have been passed long ago, long before Winter drilling ever took place. After the Ocean Ranger disaster took place this should have been a top priority of the government. But no, Mr. Speaker. We had the member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) finding out that the oil rigs were going to Nova Scotia, and he thought they should be going to Mortier Bay. There is no question that the reason why they were being moved in the first place was because of the ice problems and that, but they would not have been out there at all if this government had brought in rules and laws in the first place.

But I contend, Mr. Speaker - it is too late now - that the federal government finds itself in a situation that they cannot change it and the provincial government finds itself in a situation where they cannot do it, because Canada wants to be self-sufficient in oil. The government here needs the money, needs to have this political feather in their hats, so we find this resolution brought in. I do not believe really, Mr. Speaker - and I will be accused of being cold and callous - that this government has the safety of the people in mind. They are concerned with one thing only, Mr. Speaker, and that is raw politics. This government got elected two years ago on a mandate to settle the offshore. And what do we find

MR. HISCOCK:

out? That mandate is attained. What are we hearing as we travel around this Province? 'Wait until the next federal election! We are going to have Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Crosbie and Mr. McGrath in there again and we will settle the offshore then.' Nobody is caring about the hard economic problems of Corner Brook, of Labrador West or of St. Lawrence. It is pure politics! And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, when it comes time for the federal election and when it comes time for the provincial election here, the people of this Province are going to give the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador such a jolt that the member from the West Coast and the member for Harbour Grace may be out on the Grand Banks themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BARRETT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. McNicholas): The hon. the member for St. John's West.

MR. BARRETT:

Thank you very much,

Mr. Speaker.

I thought it might be appropriate to have a few words on this particular resolution, Mr. Speaker. There have been some amendments and sub-amendments from the original one, but in listening to some of the members opposite, one cannot help but be somewhat amused over a very serious subject. They choose to dance and play around with situations seemingly at whatever whim is necessary, but they seem to have lost track, I think, of the entire purpose for this particular resolution. It was brought in in relation to suspending operations because of severe ice conditions that were prevalent in the area of Hibernia and drilling in general off our East Coast

MR. BARRETT: last Spring. It had absolutely nothing to do with the weather conditions that were prevalent at the time the Ocean Ranger was lost, and, somehow or other, the Liberal Opposition seem to have gotten both intertwined and intermeshed and, of course, there is no relevance between either one.

This resolution deals with ice conditions which indeed did not exist at the time the Ocean Ranger went down. There was no ice within 500 miles of the Ocean Ranger on that very disastrous evening. That is an entirely different, separate set of circumstances, circumstances that could happen at any time in the year, And if anybody is aware of conditions that prevail off our shores weather-wise, they are aware of the fact that our marine circumstances dictate the fact that this kind of circumstance that created this tragic loss can occur at any time of the year.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. McNicholas): On a point of order, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary).

MR. NEARY: A quorum call, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Call in the members. There is a quorum present.

The hon. member for St. John's West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BARRETT: Thank you very much,  
Mr. Speaker.

It is again indicative of the quality of the Opposition. They poke their heads around corners, sneak in and out of the House and at whim will

MR. BARRETT: look and count - I think about as far as they can get is eighteen or something - and then dart outside into the corridors again to look. But anyway it is nice and it is comforting to see that there are three of them over there today at various times, but never more than two of them at any one time. I think there is a deodorant problem or something because they cannot stand one another's company or something, but they seem to do all they can to avoid being in one another's company at any particular time. We have musical chairs again now, so we are left with one or less than one.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I think the first point in this particular part of my response to the motion was to try to establish the difference, for the members opposite, as to the conditions that were prevalent at the time that this resolution was introduced to the House and those that existed at the time the Ocean Ranger sank and the fact that there was absolutely

MR. BARRETT:

no similarity between both conditions whatsoever. All of the rest of the trailings resulting from that, of course, are the normal tactics of our friends opposite to try and shade any resemblance to the truth of the matter and to address the resolution as it is written.

One of the other interesting observations that seems to have come forth from the other side was somehow tying all of this into our local hiring preference policy, and obviously that must stand very sore with them as well. It seems that the members opposite feel that the only people who are qualified to do anything are people who come from somewhere outside of Newfoundland. Just because a rig is brought into this jurisdiction or a supply boat is brought into this jurisdiction with a crew of people aboard, does not attest to their credibility or attest to their ability to perform any function on that vessel any better than anybody locally.

There is no question, Mr. Speaker, that all people who are assigned to these rigs and supply boats are given very adequate training and at no time would the master of any ship permit his ship to leave without having adequate precautions taken in the form of crew training. The people who were in charge of the rig that disasterous evening were not Newfoundlanders; they were people who were assigned by the drilling company and the contracting company to perform a task for which, I am sure, they were quite ably prepared and were given all of the experience that was necessary. No one has experience in trying to survive a disaster such as confronted the crews on that particular evening. There is no training programme that can properly address itself to those circumstances.

For us to suggest, as the Opposition would have us attempt to do by their amendment to the

MR. BARRETT: resolution, to suspend all activity during the Winter season in drilling, I do not know what the criteria would be to suspend it in drilling for our offshore resources any more than it would be to suspend vessels going to the Grand Banks to engage in fishing or to the Northeast Coast of Newfoundland to engage in fishing activities, to go to the Northeast Coast or into the Gulf to engage in the sealing activities, to go to sea in small boats at any time of the year to develop the fisheries and to gain a harvest and a livelihood from that activity. The fact that people go to sea in ships or in rigs is one of the hazards of life and of their lifestyle. And there is nothing that can be done or legislated that will stop these disasters from occurring. Sometimes they can be minimized, but it is doubtful that any technology exists that could have had any affect on saving lives at that particular time.

I would like to remind members that that same evening there was a large freighter in the immediate area affected by the same storm, and that was a freighter of foreign registry, a foreign crew, presumably a very experienced crew, and it also suffered the fate of having had the people attempt to abandon ship. And those people that attempted to abandon that vessel were lost. The sea's conditions were such that any attempt to dispatch a lifeboat resulted in the fate that unfortunately befell those on the Ocean Ranger.

Mr. Speaker, I can only suggest that at the time the motion was made it was done in recognition of the danger that existed and a condition that was prevalent that required action, and that action was initiated by this government. Unfortunately the government who claims significant jurisdiction, the federal government, did not choose to see

MR. BARRETT:

it that way.

However, after continuous lobbying and pressure by members of this government and the Petroleum Directorate, the oil companies, the people who were out there saw that it was necessary and they voluntarily suspended operations and moved their rigs away from that affected area. Not only did they move them away, but

MR. BARRETT:

they stayed away for some period of weeks until conditions allowed them to return. Last Spring happened to be one of the worst Springs for ice conditions influencing that particular location. It is not necessarily the pattern that these conditions are consistent every year. So to come out with a philosophy of no drilling regardless of conditions is seemingly just not acceptable in the attempted development of this resource.

Mr. Speaker,

the sub-amendment that was proposed by my colleague, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) today would appear to properly cover the circumstances as they relate to this issue now at this point in time. We have a situation where meaningful negotiations are going on with all interested people and jurisdictions in this particular matter. There is no doubt that these negotiations should be allowed to be continued without having to openly debate them until such time as a consensus is reached and a report is, in fact, presented.

So, Mr. Speaker, I

would have to say that I, in this instance, will have to support the sub-amendment which is now before the House. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague indicated earlier when he spoke in this debate, the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock), that we intend to vote against this sub-amendment.

MR. BARRETT: Why?

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman asks why. Well, Mr. Speaker, we do not happen to believe on this side of the House that the safety of workers on rigs



MR. NEARY: or on service vessels  
is negotiable. It is not a negotiable item, Mr.  
Speaker.

Besides that, I have a gut feeling that the  
sub-amendment should not have been accepted anyway, it  
was out of order, it destroys -

MR. BAIRD: Oh! Now you are questioning  
the Chair!

MR. NEARY: No, I am not questioning  
the Chair. It destroys the principle of the resolution,  
Mr. Speaker. But Your Honour allowed the sub-amendment to  
stand, and we have no choice but to debate it, forty-four  
on that side, seven on this side. Let us first of all  
recognize what it is we are doing here, Mr. Speaker.  
We are negotiating the safety of lives of people who  
work offshore exploring and drilling for oil. That  
item, as far as we are concerned, is not negotiable.

Now, Mr. Speaker,  
our position is, as outlined by the member for Bellevue  
(Mr. Callan), simple, and it is this; that we are against  
Winter drilling, say, from January up until the end of  
March, unless and until the technology becomes available  
that indicates that it is possible to get men off these  
rigs in severe storms. That technology is not yet  
available. As a matter of fact, the member who just spoke,  
who has a vested interest in these matters, just told  
the House, admitted in his remarks - a condemnation of his  
own position, Mr. Speaker, of supporting the sub-amendment -  
admitted that the technology has not yet been developed  
to get people safely off these rigs in case of an  
accident in a severe storm. And that is true, Mr.  
Speaker, that is a fact that cannot be denied, the  
technology has not yet been developed.

MR. NEARY:

Now that is only

one aspect of it. There are three or four reasons why we object to Winter drilling at this particular point in time. Number one is the technology is not available to get people off these rigs in the case of a storm. Number two, that the service vessels are not adequate, are not the right kind of vessels to carry out rescue operations. Item number three is that the matter of who is in charge of the rig has not yet been resolved. Who is in charge of the

MR. NEARY:

rig whether it is a master mariner or a toolpusher a landlubber, Mr. Speaker? These are three major items that have not yet been resolved.

I had the occasion there a few weeks ago, probably the only member of this hon. House -

AN HON. MEMBER:

No.

MR. NEARY:

- my hon. friend says

"no". But, anyway, probably one of two or three in this hon. House who was curious enough to ask permission to visit one of the offshore rigs. Permission was granted and I went to the airport one morning, Mr. Speaker, went to the airport, climbed into my survival suit, boots and all, put on my life jacket, climbed aboard the helicopter and went out to SEDCO 706. I might say during the day I had an opportunity to land on two other rigs, the Zapata Uglund, and the West Venture. I only landed on these two rigs, which gave me an opportunity to see three rigs in operation on the Grand Banks.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when I came back I wrote the Federal Minister of Energy (Mr. Chretien), and I wrote the Provincial Minister of Energy (Mr. Marshall), and I sent copies to the Premier, I wrote letters expressing my views and my opinions on what I had seen with my own eyes first-hand. I do not have to listen to the testimony presented to the Ocean Ranger Commission of Enquiry, I saw it myself first-hand and I had an opportunity to ask questions of the people who were in charge of the rig. Mr. Speaker, I will tell this House now that I was scared and frightened when I went and examined the lifeboats on the rigs and the distance

MR. NEARY: they are from the ocean. It is frightening. It would scare you to look at it. And I said to the expert who was explaining the launching of lifeboats and the drill procedures and so forth, I said, "Look, I do not wish to embarrass you in any way, shape or form, but I would like to ask you a straight question, point blank, you can answer it if you like, or you do not have to answer it." And there were two or three officials there, "Well", he said, "what is the question, Mr. Neary?" I said, "I would like to ask you if it is possible--I believe the lifeboats are a distance of seventy or eighty feet from the ocean. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, forty to sixty foot waves going in through the columns of that rig in one of the savage storms that we are used to in the North Atlantic?" I said, "Can you tell me if it is possible to launch these lifeboats successfully in a severe storm, like the night the Ocean Ranger sank?" And I can still see the look of bewilderment on the face of the official who looked at the other two officials who accompanied us. I said, "Well, if I am embarrassing you you do not have to answer it." And I do not believe he gave me a straight answer, but he certainly left me with the impression that the answer to my question was negative, was no, that it was not possible to launch a lifeboat successfully in a storm.

Now, my hon. friend, the member for St. John's West (Mr. Barrett) I believe it is, compares a semi-submersible oil rig with a fishing boat. He said, when a fishing boat goes out, are they not risking their lives? Of course, Mr. Speaker, they are risking their lives. You risk your life when you get aboard a plane or when you go out in

MR. NEARY: a fishing boat, but one thing we have to say about the fishing boats is that you can launch a lifeboat or a life raft from a fishing boat, that has been proven. As a matter of fact, an expert giving testimony before the Ocean Ranger Commission of Enquiry the other day stated that in the North Sea they had converted trawlers as rescue boats for the offshore. So the hon. gentleman's argument does not hold, Mr. Speaker.

These are the main reasons why we object to Winter drilling and why we are going to vote against this sub-amendment. We are told, by the way, we are told by the minister

MR. NEARY:

who speaks for the offshore, on the benches there opposite, that it will be mid-December before a decision is taken, mid-December, he says, and this is the first day of December - two weeks from now. Right in the middle -

MR. CALLAN: This is the last of November.

MR. NEARY: Last of November. Well, it will be two weeks, approximately two weeks, and then we are not sure whether a decision will be taken then, Mr. Speaker. In the meantime, the oil companies do not know where they stand on this matter. Let me see if I can find where he said here in Mr. Warren's article, which is a very fine article and I would recommend that hon. members of the House to read it - 'A spokesman for the companies themselves have been characteristically silent throughout the current debate. The company officials say they would like to see the two governments reach an agreement on the issue, but their decision to ignore last year's provincial stop drilling order serves to underline the industry's commitment to Winter drilling. Furthermore, the federal Energy Minister suggested it might become uneconomical for the rig operators to drill off Newfoundland at all if work had to be halted each Winter.'

Mr. Speaker, as much as I like the federal Minister of Energy, and that is a great deal - I think he is a very able and competent individual and I like him very much, he is one of the few politicians, in my opinion, in Ottawa - as much as I like him, Mr. Speaker, I have to disagree with his position concerning -

MR. BAIRD: Do you trust him?

MR. NEARY: I certainly do trust him. I would trust him more than I would trust the hon. member. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chretien told reporters that

MR. NEARY: it is his view that improvements in offshore regulations have made it possible for Winter drilling to take place safely. In his words, the companies have to drill under safe conditions and conditions are very strict.

Mr. Speaker, I am not satisfied with that explanation. I do not think it is necessary. I do not think it is at all realistic. I do not think it is uneconomical, as the minister says, to allow these rigs out there drilling in the Winter months when they cannot meet the requirements and cannot satisfy, at least us on this side, on the points that we have raised. But that does not mean that we have a closed mind, that we are going to be against the Winter drilling forever and forever. Mr. Speaker, that is not what it means. What it means is that while the Ocean Ranger Commission of Enquiry is going on - and if the administration, by the way, there opposite had followed my advice I gave over a year ago, they would have asked the Royal Commission of Enquiry to submit an interim report, an interim recommendation on Winter drilling. They just ignored that request, Mr. Speaker. So we are told by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) that negotiations are currently going on, and we are told by the minister who speaks for the offshore that these negotiations may not conclude until mid-December, two weeks from now, right at the worst time of the year, when we already have had a couple of severe storms. We saw what happened in one of these storms. SEDCO 710 burst an anchor, snapped an anchor, Mr. Speaker. And I had an opportunity to look at the anchors, the anchor chains on these rigs when I visited SEDCO 706. Are hon. members aware of the size of the links

MR. NEARY: of these chains? Perhaps  
my hon. friend, the member for Trinity-Bay de Verde  
(Mr. Reid), who may be knowledgeable in these matters,  
may understand what I am talking about. The links in  
these chains are about



MR. NEARY:

that size, heavy, the heaviest I have ever seen, they are heavy links. I am told there are two or three hundred thousand pounds of pressure on these anchors in storms, and yet, Mr. Speaker, the links, the chains snapped, burst like a piece of string in what was considered to be a sort of a mediocre storm, it was not a severe storm. And there were two chains on that anchor and if the other chain had broken -

AN HON. MEMBER: It must have been a weak link.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, there is the possibility of a weak link in the chain, that is possible.

MR. CARTER: There is the weak link over there.

MR. NEARY: There is the weak brain over there. Mr. Speaker, if the other chain had snapped what would have happened? A couple of days before that SEDCO 710 listed eight degrees, frightened everybody on board to death, and yet they are asking us to wait a couple of more weeks. You have a rig out there with six of her eight thrusters not working, burnt out when SEDCO 710 was being transported from Japan to the Grand Banks. - Hon. members, I suppose, are aware of what the thrusters do. They keep the rig in position. Actually, with thrusters you really do not need anchors. The principle of thrusters is that they are what keep the rig in place when they are drilling, but here they have to take the added precautionary measure of putting down the anchors because the thrusters were not meant for the savage storms of the North Atlantic, Mr. Speaker. Six of the eight are not working so that raises the question of whether or not the rig, if it is necessary to move the rig, can manoeuvre under her own steam.

MR. NEARY: or would she have to be towed. It is a pretty serious matter, Mr. Speaker. I know the hon. gentleman who speaks for the offshore would like to know where I get my information. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that is why he gets up as he does in this House and pooh poohs the questions that we ask the hon. gentlemen. He would like to know where we are getting our information. That is what bothers him and worries him so much, Mr. Speaker. Then we have heard the argument from the hon. gentleman that the Minister of Energy in the Government of Canada is less concerned about safety than the hon. gentleman is.

I have a letter of reply that I got when I wrote the minister after I came in off the rig. I would like to table it, Mr. Speaker, so that hon. gentlemen, if they are interested enough, will pick it up and read it to see that statements made by the provincial minister are not true. He says, "I can assure you -

MR. MORGAN: Who says that?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chretien.

MR. MORGAN: Oh, he says that.

MR. NEARY: "I can assure you that I take a personal interest in the matter of safety during the Winter and at all times of the year. This is, of course, of utmost concern to anyone involved in this type of operation." I do not have time to read the whole thing, I am going to lay it on the Table of the House to explode the little political games as played by the provincial Minister of Energy.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion it is time that the administration made a decision on policy



MR. NEARY:

there opposite. It is regrettable, Mr. Speaker, but it is one of the flaws in the character of the present administration and the gentleman who heads it up. They just cannot resist it. They cannot govern. One of the flaws in their character is they cannot govern, Mr. Speaker. They like to play around with little political polls: Today I am not sure if I am 35 per cent, 47 per cent, 50 per cent or 60 per cent, the hon. gentleman flung so many figures on the table. But whatever figure it is, Mr. Speaker, the only thing that I can say to the hon. gentleman is I hope we do not peak too early. We are just about even Stephen now according to what the figures - this is a Tory poll, by the way. And what an admission to make! We are practically even Stephen and we still have two years or two and one-half years to go before an election. We have not even started on him yet, Mr. Speaker. So I would say it is about time that they started to develop a policy, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

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

MR. MARSHALL: I do not see where the last remarks of the hon. gentleman are relevant, have anything to do with the resolution. I mean, if the hon. gentleman wants to give an apology for Terra Nova, at least he could have the good grace to wait for next week, until the results are in. The fact of the matter is, you know, Terra Nova and the polls have nothing to do with the resolution at hand.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, to that point of order.

MR. NEARY: I believe Your Honour is aware, I do not have to remind the Chair, that all the hon. gentleman is trying to do is bully the Chair. There is no point of order, it is merely a difference of opinion between two members. And my remarks are as relevant, Mr. Speaker, as the Premier's were today when he started flinging figures about Tory polls across the House. The reason I raised it in debate is to show members that this is what they spend their time at. Instead of being concerned about the safety of men who work on these rigs and on the service boats, this is what they spend their time at. They must look under their beds every night to see if I or -

MR. MORGAN: The Liberals are soon going to be an endanger species in the Province.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would submit there is no point of order, it is just an attempt on the part of the hon. gentleman to use up some of the four minutes that I have left.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

To that point of order, I do rule that there is a point of order. I find it very difficult to relate polls-taking in the district of Terra Nova to safety offshore.

I also have to inform the hon. member at this time that his time has elapsed.

MR. NEARY: That was the purpose of the exercise, to run out the clock.

MR. HEARN: Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn) will conclude the debate.

MR. HEARN: Mr. Speaker, it is a very difficult task to conclude debate on a resolution that has been amended, and an amendment that has been amended again. However, I think that my hon. colleague for St. John's West (Mr. Barrett) in his speech puts everything in perspective when he said that the resolution itself was taken out of perspective. We ended up today hearing a lot of discussion, especially from Opposition benches, on the Ocean Ranger and the night the Ocean Ranger was lost and what we should have done and we should not have done etc.

And the resolution itself does not address itself to the Ocean Ranger specifically, or to one specific storm. What we are basically saying is that we have no business being out there when wind, weather, wave or ice conditions dictate that we should not be out there.

MR. BAIRD: Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN: We heard the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) state that they are against Winter drilling, period, from January until the end of March. Then he goes on and he talks about the troubles that the SEDCO 710 had a couple of days ago. This is November. We can have severe storms in November, Mr. Speaker. In Newfoundland, and especially off the Coast of Newfoundland, some of the severest conditions that we have are in the month of April when we have severe Winter storms and the heavy ice conditions that persist off our coast. These ice conditions even go well into May. In certain sections, especially on the Grand Banks, we have heavy ice conditions in May. So I do not think we can set a time for Winter drilling and say that the only time it is dangerous to drill off the Coast of Newfoundland is between the January 1 and the end of March. That is being very, very irresponsible.

MR. HEARN:

I also suggest to my hon.

colleagues across the House, who are as scarce as hen's teeth and have about the same biting effect, and who use foul methods to try to manipulate the issues and the people of Newfoundland in order to feather their own nest, that they should also get their own act together. Last week we had the first couple of speakers. The hon. member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren), one of the true leaders over there, got up and stated that he supported the actual resolution. Shortly after that we had the aspiring leader come into the House on one of his infrequent visits to state that he was against the resolution and, of course, there was a flurry of conversation and notes, and he said, Well, I guess if we are for it we are for it. If that is taking a stand on the seriousness of Winter drilling and the safety of human life off the Coast of Newfoundland, then they had better get their act together and get it together fast.

It is about time that a stand was taken, a stand that assures and ensures the safety of life off our coast, and this is where I agree. Today we started off with the hon. member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan), and I must say his speech was to the point, it was serious, he was not playing politics. He spent a fair amount of time talking about the Royal Commission, and also the CBC report that covered the loss of the Ocean Ranger. And I think these are things which we certainly should consider, because that report certainly was done in a very indepth way and it pointed out to many of the people who will be making such decisions and, of course, to Newfoundlanders and Canadians in general, that drilling off the coast of Newfoundland is no picnic

MR. HEARN: at any time, specifically in the Winter. But, once again, Winter? when does the Winter start and when does it end in Newfoundland?

Any of us who remember the old Newfoundland songs that are on the go, one of the most famous is the 'August Gale' which relives the story of what happened during the month of August in Newfoundland, when perhaps one of



MR. HEARN: the greatest storms that ever rocked the Island took place. So if you have a storm in Summer, it can have just as dangerous an effect on the people working offshore as it would during the Winter. So it is not a matter of timing, it is a matter of not being out there when conditions dictate they should not be out there. Now, I do not think anybody disagrees with that, and this is basically what we are saying in the original resolution.

The member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) mentioned that Hibernia was our last hope, we are putting all our eggs in one basket and despite what the costs might be we have to proceed to develop. We all realize that the development of Hibernia is going to be extremely important to the economy of Newfoundland: It is going to be a help to develop the tremendous amount of natural resources that we have, it is going to be a help to develop the renewable resources that we have, our fisheries, our forestry, etc., but it is not the end all and be all. Consequently, we cannot say that Hibernia is going to be our salvation. And at no time do we place as a higher priority the development of Hibernia over the sanctity of life off the coast of Newfoundland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN: During the past number of years statistics show that the average number of icebergs off the coast of Newfoundland during the Winter and into the Spring months was nine, the average number, nine icebergs. We have had many Winters

MR. HEARN: when there has been little or no iceberg activity off the coast of Newfoundland. We have had Winters when there have been no real severe storms off the coast of Newfoundland. But last year, certainly, we had more icebergs off the coast of Newfoundland than ever before, and we also had a tremendous amount of severe storms.

MR. WARREN: You cannot dictate to nature.

MR. HEARN: That is it exactly. The hon. member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) must have been reading my notes because he mentioned the poem Erosion BY E.J. Pratt. I also had a note of that because I think that poem illustrates to us the tremendous effect of the sea. Man despite all his technology is no match for the force of the sea. The final words of that poem, if I remember correctly, said: "It took the sea an hour one night/An hour of storm to place/The sculpture of these granite seams/Upon a woman's face."

Mr. Speaker, I ask that none of us ever take the chance on something like that happening again. The enquiry that is presently underway into the loss of the Ocean Ranger that has been mentioned several times today, has been ridiculed by Opposition members in the House for its cost. Today we read in rebuttal from the people involved in the Ocean Ranger study that they are going into depth, d-e-p-t-h, but they are not going into debt, they are maintaining the guidelines, the financial guidelines set out for the study. They are on course, within budget, and doing such a tremendous job that they have been

MR. HEARN: recognized by Norwegian authorities, who are experts in the field of offshore drilling etc., for not only the amount of work they are doing but for how little it is actually costing to do such an indepth study. That study is going far beyond finding out the reason why the Ocean Ranger was lost. Out of that study hopefully will come recommendations that will ascertain the safety of the people who will operate off our shores; this will be involved with improvements on the rigs themselves, improvements in survival equipment, improvements in lifeboats, and the recommendation hopefully that there are times, as has been mentioned today, when despite lifeboats, despite the structures of the rigs themselves, despite survival equipment there are times when we have no business being out there, because despite, as I said, all our technology, we are no match for mother nature when she gets in an angry mood.

So with these words,  
Mr. Speaker, I adjourn the debate on the resolution.

On motion, sub-amendment, carried.

On motion, resolution as amended,  
carried.

MR. RIDEOUT: Mr. Speaker, I move the  
adjournment of the House if that is okay with  
everybody.

MR. NEARY: Would the hon. gentleman tell  
us what we are going to debate tomorrow?

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

MR. MARSHALL: With Your Honour's permission  
I will tell the Opposition, yes.

Tomorrow we are going to  
continue our usual orderly way of addressing the business  
of the House. We will, first of all, finalize the motion  
there. Then I want to tell the Leader of the Opposition that  
in deference to the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr.  
Warren) who was unavoidably out of the House for two  
days, we had been going to debate the constitutional  
amendment but because it affects so many people in the  
hon. member's district we waited until he returned.  
Now, he has returned, so after that we will debate the  
constitutional amendment.

Then there are other bills  
that have to be debated.

MR. NEARY: What are they?

MR. MARSHALL: Well, there are the finance  
bills. There is one of particular urgency as well,  
which is the amendment to the St. John's Leasehold Act  
which we will be demonstrating to the House when it is  
introduced, how the House can become an immediate and real

MR. MARSHALL:

vehicle of reform.

MR. NEARY:

What is the number?

MR. MARSHALL:

It is on the Order Paper

there.

MR. SIMMS:

It is on the Order Paper.

MR. MARSHALL:

No, I like to give it because

I realize the hon. gentleman has to be guided, you know.

Order 19, Bill No. 11, "An Act To Amend The Leaseholds in

St. John's Act".

Then we will proceed to the Workers' Compensation Act, and then we will attend to the other myriad measure that this government has introduced for the betterment of the society of Newfoundland.

MR. NEARY:

Yes, anything but the state

of the economy.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday at 3:00 p.m.