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(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Patrick McNicholas

Tuesday

4 June 1985

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

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

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

MR. HODDER:
Mr. Speaker, last night in the Government Services Committee, a motion was made that I, as Chairman of that Committee, report to the House the absence of the press at last night's meeting. A vote was taken and was carried 3-0, and I do so now report.

Mr. Speaker, since I could find no precedent for a direction to a Chairman of an Estimates Committee of this nature, I allowed the vote, but I would ask Your Honour's ruling, perhaps at another time, on this particular type of motion, in that it was somewhat new in my experience.

However, Mr. Speaker, to point out the dissatisfaction of the Committee as far as the lack of press was concerned, later in the meeting a motion was made to adjourn because there were no press present. Since the motion was not debatable, it was immediately put, and the motion was defeated 4-3. Mr. Speaker, I, as Chairman, broke the tie and voted against the motion, since I felt that the function of the House is not dependent on the press being present, although I must report, Mr. Speaker, that all members of the Committee were upset that there were no press present, particularly in light of the fact that very sharp debate ensued and they felt that the

press should have been there to hear it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
To the point of order, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) is exactly right, that he was directed by the Committee yesterday evening to report this matter to the House of Assembly. Now, the gentleman has asked for direction, since he says this type of motion is new to him and there is no precedent for it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he is the Chairman of a Standing Committee, and I think we saw yesterday evening in the House a very good precedent of where a Chairman of a Standing Committee is under the direction of the Committee in the person of the member for St. John's North (Mr. Carter) reporting on the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. So I would submit to Your Honour that there is a precedent established that the Chairman of a Standing Committee is under the direction of the Committee of which he is Chairman.

Be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the point of order put forward by the member for Port au Port in another vein. He expressed the concern of members that the press was not in attendance and the importance of the press being there and, Mr. Speaker, there can be very little doubt that the press is very important in this whole affair of considering estimates of the House. As a matter of fact, I

would submit to my colleague from Port au Port that the press is the very essence of the House itself being able to function as it should. It is the mirror that holds up the actions of government to the public. It goes to the very heart of Parliament itself. If the member knows his parliamentary history, as I am sure he does, then he must recall that the very reason for establishing Parliament in the first place was to scrutinize the spending of public dollars by a group of elected people. And the only way that that information can get out to the public is through the press.

I would note too, Mr. Speaker, that the Chairman of that Standing Committee used his ability to break a deadlock, if you will, or to use his vote to break a tie on a motion of adjournment. I think the motion of adjournment, as I understand it from my colleagues who sat in that Committee, was put to emphasize the point that if the press is not in attendance then there is very little point in carrying on such debate as was carried on yesterday evening because, as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, the key to this whole affair is the press being in attendance.

MR. BAIRD:
(Inaudible).

MR. TULK:
Now if the member for Humber West (Mr. Baird) wants to make a point he is welcome to stand after I finish. I think this point of order is very important in that we have undergone in this House since 1979 the taking of the estimates out of this House and putting them into Committees. Now if that works, fine, there is no objection

to it, but I think it is becoming more and more apparent that that process is breaking down or there is some doubt as to whether it ever functioned or not.

If it could help Your Honour in ruling on the point of order, I would like to read at least certain parts of a letter that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) wrote to the Press Gallery on May 31 of this year expressing our concern and our desire to see the press present at those meetings. If I could, I will read that into the record.

'The committees on estimates of the House of Assembly provide the most thoroughgoing, most specific, most detailed examinations of government operations available. They represent the single most intense scrutiny of how the people's money is being spent, whether it is being spent responsibly, whether it is being spent correctly, whether in any way government is abusing its trust. It is, therefore, startling and discouraging that attendance by the media of this most significant function has been, to date, haphazard, scattered and in some cases non-existent and I think we all have had examples of that in the past little while. Personally, on a number of occasions in the House of Assembly, I have alerted the government to the point that committees are without purpose unless press attendance guarantees that their deliberations find their way to the public. I have also insisted of the Government House Leader that he provide the Opposition with sufficient notice of the agenda of these meetings' - and I will get to that point in a little while - 'to ensure that scrutiny of government expenditure

be a prepared and deliberate function. In underlining the importance of these meetings, I, as Leader of the Opposition, and all members of the Liberal caucus have been conscientious and emphatic. None the less, I am disappointed that, despite urging within and outside the Chamber, the press, with one bare exception, has neglected to attend these meetings and, as a necessary consequence, to inform the public of their content and import. The purpose of this letter' - and I suggest the purpose of the motion yesterday evening, Mr. Speaker, and the purpose of my standing here today - 'is to restate my concern on this matter and it is further to enquire if there are any specific considerations why attendance has been derelict, unsystematized, and at best spotty. If there is some one circumstance which can be corrected why the press is not attending, that circumstance shall, if it lie within our competence, be corrected. I would appreciate hearing from you at the earliest opportunity on this matter. Sincerely yours, Leo Barry'.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I must say the Premier yesterday was very cooperative, very concerned at those committees' function. He held up to something yesterday evening that we do not very often see in the Premier and that is that he was prepared to cooperate in any way possible to see that happen. Yet, immediately at 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. yesterday evening, we were informed by the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) that there was going to be a Committee meeting this morning. I think the Premier should take a very serious look at this whole thing, at what his

Government House Leader is doing. I must say the Premier was not in the House when it happened.

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

I would like the hon. member to confine his remarks strictly to the point of order.

MR. TULK:
I understood, Mr. Speaker, that I was talking to the point of order, the point of the media being able to get into those meetings. If the media had no more notice of that meeting than we had yesterday evening, then I could understand if indeed there was no media present this morning, but I understand there was so they must have made a special effort.

Now let me say to the Premier, because I know he is concerned about it, that part of the discussion that went on yesterday evening in the Committee where the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) was Chairman, was the fact that perhaps we should have somebody from both sides of this House meet with the press and see if they do have specific problems that can be ironed out. Perhaps, just perhaps, the press do not have the resources in this Province to cover two and three meetings going on at the same time. We have an example again this evening of two meetings going on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Shame!

MR. TULK:
Thanks to the scheduling there are two meetings this evening again. The press, like the rest of us, have been working all day, they had their day's work to do.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What has this got to do with it?

MR. TULK:

It is to the point of order. They have their work to do all day and perhaps it is very well the case that the resources of the press people in this Province are spread too thin and they cannot attend two or three committee meetings at the one time.

Perhaps, indeed, that investigation will leave us to believe that the estimates committees, given the scarce resources of the press in this Province, be brought back into this House so that the people of this Province are aware. And I do not believe the Premier is trying to cover up.

MR. FLIGHT:

He is.

MR. TULK:

I do not believe he is.

MR. MARSHALL:

On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

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

MR. MARSHALL:

Look the hon. gentleman is up on a point of order. Surely he can make his points in a little bit more succinct manner than he is doing now. What he is doing is making, in part, a political speech, reading a good lecture to the press, and a good lecture to everybody. We can respond to his point of order, and we will respond. But I do not think that the hon. gentleman should be able to monopolize this House making a political speech under the guise

of making a point of order.

MR. TULK:

To that point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of privilege, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, it is not a point of privilege. The Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall), in direct contradiction of what his Premier suggested here yesterday evening, is standing because he cannot stand the heat that is being generated. That is the real reason. He is determined to muzzle the Opposition. I suggest to Your Honour that this is not a point of privilege, just the Government House Leader, who has not been able to schedule his own side, trying to keep this side from delving into the affairs of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To that point of privilege, there is no prima facie case. But the hon. member, in speaking to the point of order, was getting away from the point that was raised by the hon. member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder). I am sure every member will agree that it is desirable to have the press present at Committee meetings and meetings of the House here. But the fact is that the Committee, as I have ruled in another matter before, are masters of their own committee and their own rules as long as they confine themselves to the rules we have laid down in this House. And the member for

Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) has reported the matter that there was no press present, but there is actually no point of order.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, a new point of point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

The member for Port au Port rose on a point of order, and I was speaking to that point of order. I was attempting to point out to the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) and to the government, who are responsible for scheduling so that the press can be there, that what has to be worked out here with the press - not against them, not against the Opposition - is a means of accommodating both groups of people. otherwise we should take the necessary action of bringing the estimates back into this House where indeed they do belong.

MR. MARSHALL:

I am going to rise again, Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege that is a little bit more serious than the point of privilege that I first brought up.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of privilege, the hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

The point of privilege briefly stated is this, Mr. Speaker. Your Honour had a point of order brought before him by the hon. member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder). The hon. member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) got up and spoke at great length with respect to it, he had ample opportunity to speak. Your Honour

got up and made a ruling with respect to it and, then, Your Honour, the member for Fogo got up again on precisely the same point of order which constitutes indirectly, really, an appealing and a flaunting of the ruling of Your Honour.

Now, the fact of the matter is, I rise on a point of the privileges of the House because there is certain order of business in this House and no member in this House can monopolize this House or indicate to this House that he or she does not agree with the ruling of the Speaker, either directly or indirectly.

Your Honour made a ruling with respect to the point of order that was made, the hon. gentleman was not satisfied with the fact, he thought that he should be able to speak longer and make his political speech, so he gets up again on another point of order. Now that, in effect, Mr. Speaker, is a grave breach of the privileges of this House, and I refer you to Beauchesne, pages eleven and twelve, and in that it is stated that points of order, when they are brought up, they should be points of order, they should be responded to briefly and succinctly, and when a ruling is made a ruling is made, and the Speaker's authority is to be respected. The hon. gentleman is acting in complete derogation of Your Honour's authority in this House and thus he is gravely infringing the privileges of this House.

MR. TULK:

To that point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the point of privilege, the

hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker well knows that the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) has no desire to question his Honour's ruling, and has never had any such desire. I am not operating in the same vein as the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) did yesterday afternoon. I do not question Your Honour's ruling. I say to the Government House Leader that he has not risen on a point of privilege, but to try to muzzle the Opposition in this Province and to keep the estimates where he wants them, in the dark dungeons of this Province.

MR. FLIGHT:

Bring them back into the House. Bring the estimates back.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To that point of privilege, I must rule there is no prima facie case. The point of order the hon. member got up on, as I understood it, was about rescheduling the Committee meetings. I feel that is not a point of order, it is a matter that should be dealt with at some other time.

MR. FENWICK:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

I wish to bring to the attention of the House a very significant accomplishment by a drama group in my district, the Carol Players. The Carol Players of Labrador West have just finished representing Canada at the International Amateur Drama Festival in Dundalk,

Ireland. I hope I pronounced that right, Mr. Speaker. Competing against eight other countries, they won the best actor award for the roles of Jerry Doyle and Paul Rowe, and the best play award. I would like the House to send congratulations on their doing Canada, our Province and Labrador West proud.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Stephenville.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to pass on our congratulations from the Liberal caucus to the Carol Players. That is quite a feat, and it is good to see them promoting drama, and going away and promoting this Province. I think we should give them as much credit as possible. I would like to see them come to St. John's and give us a little show in the near future, and maybe we can all see them. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER:

I should, of course, mention that it is not point of order.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMONS:

Stranger in the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon.

the member for Fortune - Hermitage said, 'Stranger in the House.' I thought he was going to say stranger in the night, because I think that is what he is known as around town now, a stranger in the night.

I would like to rise, Mr. Speaker, in response to the point made by the hon. the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) and my hon. colleague, the member for Stephenville (Mr. K. Aylward), to echo on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador our congratulations on the accomplishments that have been made by the Carol Players. Of course, we were very much aware that they were going across to Ireland to participate in this very significant cultural event and we are very, very pleased to see that they have done so well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House I asked the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) about his concern for the fish stocks off our shores, and the minister and I agreed it is a very serious issue, in view of the fact that many of our fishermen are looking forward to establishment of the 1977 200-mile limit bringing us better stocks off shore. In view of the fact that the federal government has allowed this West German fishery to go on for two months and the provincial minister and the Department of Fisheries seem,

at least on the surface, to be kept in the dark with regard to those matters and there is little consultation going on, in view of the fact that we in this House, all of us, have objected for years to trading fish for fish, I want to ask the minister in this particular case is there any doubt in his mind about the international situation going on here, are we now trading fish for perhaps other trade agreements with EEC countries and so on, is the federal government turning a blind eye to this rape in return for "good foreign relations with EEC countries in return for Newfoundland fish"? I want to ask him if he is at all concerned with that aspect of what we see happening offshore?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I think we replied in some detail to that question yesterday but let me say to the hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that it is no news to anybody in Newfoundland and Labrador that there has allegedly been overfishing of cod stocks off our coast for the last number of years by the Spaniards, for example, on the Nose and the Tail of the Banks. It has been know, it has been said publicly and, while I appreciate the concerns of the hon. gentleman, I just wonder where they were two or three years ago when there was another government in Ottawa and there was no public outcry then, Mr. Speaker, about overfishing off the shores of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. RIDEOUT:

But, Mr. Speaker, we have on several occasions now over the last two or three months, and I am sure it has happened over the last two or three years as a government, expressed our concern to the federal government. We have made it clear, Mr. Speaker, in no uncertain terms, the Premier, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer) and myself, that whatever corrective action needs to be taken has to be taken in that offshore to protect the fish stocks for the use of Newfoundlanders and for the use of Canadians. We have not been reluctant to raise it, we have not been reluctant to be determined, we have not let the matter drop and neither shall we, Mr. Speaker, because we believe it is right and proper that we use whatever tools are available to us as a government to persuade the federal level of government that this matter has got to be corrected because it is serious and the implications are serious for all of Newfoundland and all of Canada.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

The minister either did not understand or did not answer the question. Is he concerned about the international aspect of this whole thing that may be going on offshore? Now, he makes the point that the government has made serious objections to overfishing offshore. Now I ask him if he would table those objections in the House, the formal requests to

the federal government for action that has been made by this government? Will he table them in the House? Do they exist? That is the question. And in view of his seriousness about fish being destroyed, the serious matter that we are looking at here about millions and millions of dollars worth of fish being destroyed, let me throw another suggestion to him. Would he first of all table what has been going back and forth over the past number of years between the federal government? Would he also table any objections that he can find from this side to his objections? And has he considered at all demanding from his federal Tory buddies in Ottawa that a moratorium be place on offshore fishing by foreign countries?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I have no problem whatsoever in tabling representation that I have made to the federal minister over the last five or six weeks. But let me say to the hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker, if he wants to be political and cast -

MR. CALLAN:

He was not political.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Just watch your colleague when he gets up. Where has the hon. gentleman been this last three or four years? Where has he been on the issue of overfishing offshore by the Spaniards and other people out on the Nose and Tail of the Banks? The only time we heard the hon. gentleman mouth his concern was since September or October of last year when there was a new political regime in Canada. Now,

Mr. Speaker, let the hon. gentleman put his money where his mouth is. I certainly do not mind tabling the correspondence that I have sent to Ottawa over the last few weeks.

MR. TULK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Let me say to hon. gentleman, as the member for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) knows when he was the Minister of Fisheries and I was his shadow, that any time there was any overfishing offshore and it was raised in this House, we agreed with any objection to Ottawa. Let him table that, he can go to Hansard and find it. There is no point in the minister standing up and trying to cover up his own inaction by referring to past inaction. You are the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) now, you are the government, you have your Tory buddies in Ottawa, so what are you doing about this action offshore?

MR. MARSHALL:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

The hon. gentleman is obviously trying to substitute bombast for substance. The hon. gentleman is in a supplementary question and I think he should be made to ask the question and not get on with his rather infantile shouting and bawling across the House at the hon. minister.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To that point of order. I was just going to draw to the attention of the hon. member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) that he was dragging out his preamble in the matter.

The hon. member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, there would be no long preambles from this member if that minister got up and answered the question. Now, let me ask him another question since he obviously is not going to answer the question about a moratorium on offshore fishing. Let me ask him this question. Does he now believe that he can trust his Tory Central Canadian buddies to take care of the offshore problem that we are experiencing in this Province or will he now set up his own independent enquiry into this whole matter of overfishing and alleged bribing of federal fisheries officials offshore? Will he now set up his own independent enquiry or is he going to stand up and give us another theatrical lecture?

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the best theatrical lecture that you get in this House from time to time is when the hon. gentleman starts screaming and bawling and waving his arms. It cannot be tit for tat, I suppose, in this House. If one asks a sensible question, Mr. Speaker, leaving the political innuendo out of it, one probably has a chance of getting a sensible answer. So that works both ways.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman asked us about our position on overfishing. Well, this is a

public document: Discussion Paper on Major Bilateral Issues, Canada-Newfoundland. It has already been tabled in this House, Mr. Speaker. It was made public in September, 1984. Let me quote from Page 11, Mr. Speaker: "Foreign overfishing outside the 200-mile limit has prevented the restoration of the important Grand Bank cod stock and stocks in the Flemish Cap area. Extension of Canada's exclusive fishing zone to include the full extent of those grounds is required." Mr. Speaker, how much more definitive do you have to be? This has gone back over a year, and I am sure we can go back over years when my friend, the member for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) was minister, perhaps even when the present member for Twillingate (Mr. W. Carter) was minister, when this Province spoke out time and time again, and we will continue, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

I would suggest to all hon. members that they keep both questions and answers brief.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. gentleman asks three or four questions in one particular question. You try to respond to him, Mr. Speaker, and then they invoke order, or say you are going on too long or expanding too much. But the bottom line is that the position of this Province has been clear for the last several years, and I certainly will, as I said to him a few minutes ago, let him know what we have done on it over the last few weeks since I

became responsible for what is happening in the Department of Fisheries.

MR. TULK:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:
The minister can read out what he said about the Tail and Nose of the Grand Banks, but I asked him to table the actions they suggested be taken with respect to this overfishing, and the Premier knows what I am talking about.

Let me ask the minister this question: If he will not agree to put in place his own independent inquiry into this whole matter, will he seek assurance from the federal minister that we will have the greatest representation on any inquiry that he is now conducting? Now, answer that question. It is very straightforward.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman can get up and give orders. I do not give him orders on how to ask his question and I do not intend to take orders from him as to how I will answer, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that there is a police investigation underway at the present time on this particular matter. If and when there is a more definitive, full-fledged public inquiry initiated or instigated into this matter then, at that time, Mr. Speaker, we will make our position clear as to where we stand on representation on any such inquiry.

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
Before recognizing the hon. the member for Twillingate, I would like to welcome to the galleries from Marystown Central High School, Grade VIII students with their teacher, Mr. Clayton McCarthy and their driver, Mr. Arch Spencer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, the question put by the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) has not been answered, and I think that sometimes drastic problems require drastic measures. Would the minister undertake to talk to his federal counterpart with a view to having a freeze put on any further foreign quotas until the whole matter of the rehabilitation of the stocks has been established and until the whole matter of overfishing has been resolved?

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Now, Mr. Speaker, that is certainly a sensible question, obviously coming from a person who knows what he is talking about in the fishery. Mr. Speaker, he should be the official fisheries critic then we could get sensible questions every day, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Let me say to my friend for

Twillingate (Mr. W. Carter), Mr. Speaker, which will be seen very clearly in correspondence that I will table, hopefully, tomorrow, that I have already as minister made some suggestions along those lines to the Federal Minister (Mr. Fraser). As I have said in this House, I guess over the last day or so, we will be meeting face to face. We were supposed to meet a week or so ago but the budgetary process interefered in that. But we will be meeting in the latter part of next week and I have put some suggestions to the Federal Minister that I think he should consider in terms of tackling this problem. And one of the suggestions that I have placed before him is the suggestion along the lines just mentioned by the hon. gentleman for Twillingate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Menihek.

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

One of the members opposite suggested last week that maybe I should get a bright orange jacket in order to make it a little bit easier to be recognized down here, but I will take that under consideration.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Why orange?

MR. FENWICK:
Why orange? Why not?

My question is to the minister responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

The question I have is with regard to the methods used to hire the twenty to twenty-five people who work on Summer help in the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, who do the mowing of the lawns and the planting of the trees and so on. I have been informed at this point that there is no public advertising for these particular jobs, that there is no competition for them whatsoever, that they are good Summertime jobs paying something like \$7.05 an hour. I would like from the minister some indication of how exactly these individuals are hired?

MR. DINN:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DINN:
Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is a very simple problem. There is a collective agreement that the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation has with its employees, and that collective agreement, number one, is followed to the letter.

Now number two, with respect to Summer employment, well over 300 people will be employed on a temporary basis with the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation this Summer coming up. Most of these positions are done through the collective agreement. In other words, people who were on last year are hired again this year or are hired during the Winter when there is a Winter maintenance programme. That is number one.

Number two, with respect to other positions, that is, temporary

positions that do not fall within the ambit of the collective agreement that we follow to the letter of the law, those positions are Summer students. Most of these positions, whether they are in Stephenville, St. John's, Corner Brook, Gander, Goose Bay, Labrador City, those positions are normally filled through student Summer employment.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:
I think you missed the point there. I know they are Summer students. The question I was asking is, how are they being hired? I might as well come right to the point and explain why I am asking that question. I was in conversation with the individual involved who actually does the hiring, and the question I put to that individual was is it necessary to have a recommendation from the minister responsible for this department in order to be able to be hired? The answer I received was, no, not always. And I took that as a qualification that it certainly helps to have. I have received some information from people whose names I cannot, unfortunately, divulge who say the minister opposite has used those particular positions to reward individuals who worked on his election campaigns.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:
Now I am absolutely sure that the minister would not do such a thing, so I want him to rise and tell us that this is not true.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, of course the Minister of Mines and Energy, the minister responsible for housing, knows pretty well all of the students who live in St. John's and Stephenville and Corner Brook! I mean, it was only last week that I met with the students, so I cannot say that I categorically do not know or I had nothing to do with it. I recommend, I certainly do recommend people who come to me. If I am worth my salt on behalf of my constituents I should be doing it every single day. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I get recommendations from hon. gentlemen opposite. I noticed I have not had any recommendations from the hon. member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick), but maybe he should be doing more with respect to trying to help people in his district get some Summer employment because there are jobs available. If the hon. member would get off his butt the odd time and help out his people then maybe his people, would have more Summer jobs.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

I thought I asked one clear question with a preamble, and I am going to ask it again just to make sure we get a clear answer. The question I have is, can you stand there and assure us that individuals who worked in your election campaign are not now

employed with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation? Do not give me Labrador West or Stephenville, give me the St. John's area. Give us an assurance of that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, I hope every single person, every youth who worked on my election campaign, because they must obviously be intelligent people, are working for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation if they can get Summer student jobs. I certainly would hope that if they applied for a job that they would have as good a chance as anyone else. As a matter of fact, with my recommendation I would hope they might have a little bit of an edge. But, Mr. Speaker, I certainly did not browbeat anybody at Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Bonavista South.

MR. MORGAN:

I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries. Some weeks ago I posed a question to the minister regarding the then proposed deal between Canada and Russia with regards to increased allocation of fish stocks to that country, a real good deal for Russia but a bad deal for Canada. The minister then indicated he was going to oppose that deal. My question is what was the reply to the opposition that we put forward as the government of the Province of

Newfoundland? The second part is whether or not the deal has been signed between Russia and Canada.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the deal has been signed, but it certainly will not be signed between Russia and Newfoundland; it is my understanding it would be signed between Russia and Canada. So I do not know whether or not the particular deal has been signed but I will check on that for the hon. gentleman and let him know.

We raised our objections to the Russian-Canada deal for several reasons, I guess several reasons which had been pointed out by my colleague back, I guess, last year when the original deal was put in place. We do not think there is a real lot of advantage in there for Newfoundland fishermen. There is some talk that it might be possible to sell some cod under that deal which might be beneficial perhaps, during the glut period. We are not convinced that there is a lot of advantage there for Newfoundland fishermen, so we have made that position known to the federal government. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what their response, if there has been a response, is, but I will have it checked with the officials and I will let my colleague know as soon as I have the information.

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. member for Bonavista South.

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Speaker, my information is to the effect that the licences to the Russian trawlers have been issued, the Russians are now fishing off our Coast, fishing the quotas allocated in that agreement despite the fact there has been no negotiations finalized with regard to their purchasing of any fish from Canada.

Mr. Speaker, based on that I would like for the minister to immediately initiate an investigation through his counterpart in Ottawa as to why these sweetheart deals are being made with the Soviets over last four or five years in particular? Added to that, the investigation should determine whether or not it links into a major incident offshore in Newfoundland waters in 1978 involving a Fisheries patrol vessel from Canada and a Soviet factory ship. From information that has come to me it is a very serious matter, that it ties in. The damage done to the Soviet ship was to the effect it had to be covered in some way, not by funds, not by monies, but by allocations of fish. That is the indication I have received. I would like for the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) to ask the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Mr. Fraser, to immediately commence an investigation to determine whether or not that incident offshore in 1978 links into why Russia is getting those sweetheart deals from Canada and getting increases of allocations of fish year after year from Canada.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I certainly will be glad to do that and I assure my

colleague that I will. Perhaps he would like to let me have whatever information he might have so that I will be prepared when I sit down with him next week to make whatever kind of representation is necessary. If there is anything to this and there is some connection, then obviously it is a matter of concern and we would be very concerned about it.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, the previous Liberal government had allotted \$16 million for a federal Forestry Research Center, \$3.5 million had to be spent this year. The present federal government has presented its budget and there is no such provision included in it. My question for the minister: Is Newfoundland going to have a federal Forestry Center?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to inform the hon. member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert) that Newfoundland does have a federal Forestry Research facility.

MR. GILBERT:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A supplementary, the hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:
In view of the fact you are not going to answer that one, Mr.

Minister, the new one that we talked about, as I am sure the hon. minister will remember, goes back about two years ago when the possibility of a new Forestry Center was discussed. At the time there was a hue and cry from various places all over Newfoundland - Grand Falls, his own district, St. John's, where it was located and Corner Brook - and it was Corner Brook that was picked by the government. The Premier and the then Minister of Forest Resources and Lands (Mr. Power) came out in favour of Corner Brook. Now I have here a copy of the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry dated May 8. At this meeting a statement was made by the assistant deputy minister that the decision to defer this center was purely a political one, not a bureaucratic one as was suggested when my colleague from St. Barbe (Mr. Furey) asked this question earlier in the Session.

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

I ask the hon. member to put his question.

MR. GILBERT:
As this is a political discussion, will the minister be going to his federal colleagues and making an equal representation that the center promised by the Tory Prime Minister during his last campaign will be coming to Newfoundland?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I wondered if the hon. member was ever going to get to his question because I think we could all anticipate it.

MR. GILBERT:

I gave you a short one.

MR. SIMMS:

I gave a short answer to his first short question which was a straightforward answer. Now when I give a short answer the hon. member wants me to be lengthier in my reply because his question was about two minutes long. Now, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you and tell the members of the House this. Everybody is very familiar with the situation as it applies to the federal Forestry Research Center. Mr. Wilson, in his statement last Fall, indicated that there were three categories of projects, one of which included the project that was proposed for Corner Brook and that category, that particular project was deferred until funds were available. That has been made clear by the federal minister. But let me also say, Mr. Speaker, this government and this administration need not take a back seat to anybody, especially members opposite, as it applies to the representation that we have made to have that Forestry Center located in Corner Brook I would like to ask where was the federal member for Humber - Port au Port - St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) for two years after he made the commitment to move the center to Corner Brook? He could not deliver, Mr. Speaker, that is the bottom line.

The other point is I would like to know clearly what is the position of the Opposition in this particular matter. The member who just asked the question, I presume, speaks for the Liberal party, the Opposition party in Newfoundland. Two months ago, a month before the election, Mr. Speaker, that same member was giving me a tough time because the facility was not located in Grand

Falls.

MR. SPEAKER:

I ask the hon. minister if he would just answer the question posed to him.

MR. SIMMS:

I would be happy to. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, in responding and in giving my answer, I asked what the position is of the Opposition in this House. I want to know, because, Mr. Speaker, that member, three or four months ago, was crying for the facility to be put in Grand Falls. Now, three months later, he is crying for the facility to be put in Corner Brook. What is their position?

MR. BAKER:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that the purpose of the Oral Question period is for members to ask questions of ministers and I feel, Sir, that we are getting far away from that, and that the hon. minister is eating up the time of Question Period that could be used by members opposite to ask him further questions. I think it is a deliberate attempt, again, to muzzle the Opposition.

MR. GILBERT:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

To the point of order, the hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, the minister referred to me as supporting, three months ago, having this established in Grand Falls. That is not quite so. It was about two years ago. The then Minister of Forest Resources and Lands, the Premier -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

That appears to be a different point of order completely. The point of order raised by the hon. the member for Gander (Mr. Baker) is well taken. I did request hon. members yesterday to pose as short a question as they could, and for the ministers to answer as briefly as they could. I would ask your co-operation in that matter.

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

To conclude, and to respond to the question asked by the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert), I think the situation with respect to the federal Forestry Research facility is clear. There is a facility now in Newfoundland, and it is located here. The issue of when it is going to go to Corner Brook is one that is in the hands of the federal government. We need not take a back seat to anybody. We made representation on numerous occasions to fulfill that commitment, and we will continue to do so. It is unfortunate that the member for Humber - Port au Port - St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin), the federal member, was not able to deliver in two years, after he made the challenge to us, to support Corner Brook for that location.

MR. GILBERT:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. POWER:

Actually Mr. Rompkey was responsible for that.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, deferral in light of the Prime Minister's pledges is simply not good enough. Finally, has the minister made representation to the Prime Minister on the matter of a Forestry Research Centre for Newfoundland, Corner Brook in particular?

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

Could the hon. member repeat the question? I did not quite get it, I am sorry.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

A further supplementary since you did not get that one, Sir. Have you as the minister made direct representation to the Prime Minister on the matter of a Forestry Research centre for Newfoundland, Corner Brook in particular, and would you table it?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and I are very close, personal friends but I have not recently had a chat with him about this particular matter. But I can assure the hon. member, and members opposite, that I have indeed made representation to my federal counterpart, Mr. Merithew, on numerous occasions, in between sips of tea. Hon. members are very jealous because I am able to have a cup of tea with a federal minister. It is the first time in about fifteen years that anybody on this side was able to do that. But I did make representation, Mr. Speaker, to my federal counterpart, and my colleagues, the member for Humber East (Ms Verge) and the member for Humber West (Mr. Baird), have fought diligently, have gone to Ottawa themselves, made representations, and the hon. the Premier has made representations to the Prime Minister to have that facility located there.

I trust Mr. Speaker, that answers the question, and I trust that the hon. member will feel free to ask questions of that nature any time in the future. I will be only too happy to attempt to answer them for him.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HISCOCK:
My question is to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout), but since he is not here I will have to direct it to the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Here he is. He is here.

MR. HISCOCK:

Then I will direct it to the Minister of Fisheries.

With regard to the lateness of the fishing season and the coldness of the water in particular, it may be that UIC will have to be extended that much longer because of the failure of the fishery due to problems with ice and the coldness of the water. Fishermen are still waiting for forms because there is a problem with UIC. Some have been sent out, others have not been sent out and they are still waiting for them. There is untold, unnecessary hardship being experienced by these fishermen who have gone all Winter on their savings from the fishing season last year, and I would like to ask the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) what representation has he made to the federal government to make sure that this is speeded up? And, number two, the federal minister ended up saying that \$5.5 million was allocated for UIC for the special programme and they said it would be for one week. We are now going into our third week. Is there only \$5.5 million committed to that programme or will there be more money committed to the programme each week as the situation goes on? When are they going to get it?

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

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is quite correct that the \$5.5 million was allocated for one week. I think where the one week comes into it, as I read the word from the federal government, is that the federal Department of Fisheries would monitor the

situation on a weekly basis as far as ice conditions are concerned, and so on, and report on a weekly basis to Employment and Immigration Canada which is actually administering the programme. I believe that might be what the hon. gentleman is talking about.

On the other matter relating to whether or not this programme can be extended to include fishermen, particularly in the Northern areas, after the ice may no longer be a problem but where the temperature of water is a problem and so on, again it is my understanding that the federal Department of Fisheries will make recommendations on that to Employment and Immigration Canada. We certainly will make representation on behalf of the Northern fishermen as well. The forms, I understand, Mr. Speaker, are being sent out directly by Immigration and Employment Canada and if there is a particular problem with a certain community that has not received them, then perhaps the hon. gentleman might want to let me know and I can have my officials get in touch with those people and any support we can give them we will be glad to give.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has now elapsed.

Answers to Questions for which
Notice has been Given

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

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, I have the answer to the question in the name of the hon. member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) on the Order Paper of May 6, 1985, which I table.

MR. FENWICK:
That was a month ago, well. Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:
Well, they ask such penetrating questions it takes a period of time to answer them, you see.

Petitions

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

MR. FLIGHT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great sense of pride, a great sense of satisfaction, and a great sense of responsibility to present a petition with 237 names on behalf of the NewLab group who have been trying, Mr. Speaker, unsuccessfully up to this point in time, to have the government pay some attention to the gouging and to do something that will prevent the people of Newfoundland from being gouged again next Winter with the kind of electricity rates we saw this Winter.

Mr. Speaker, the issue will not go away. The Minister of Energy (Mr. Dinn) can roll his eyes all he likes, Mr. Speaker, and he can read his paper. Newfoundland Hydro, Newfoundland Light and Power and the Government of Newfoundland can pretend, now that it is June, electric consumption is dropping off, the fuel adjustment cost is dropping down, that the people are lulled into a blissful sense of forgetfulness,

Mr. Speaker. The Premier, Newfoundland Hydro and Newfoundland Light are taking the position that it is so good to be clear of those pesty people who were giving us all the trouble all Winter. Well, Mr. Speaker, the issue will not go away. There are five months left, and come November, the people of Newfoundland will be gouged again by the hydro companies in this Province, by Newfoundland Light and Power. There is no indication at all, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of Newfoundland, Newfoundland Hydro or the minister, particularly the minister, is showing any concern for this problem at all. What the government is hoping is that when electrical costs start to drop in this Province and with people going on vacation, in this kind of an atmosphere they will forget, Mr. Speaker, the high cost and the terrible, terrible devastation they faced last Winter.

Mr. Speaker, I notice now that the Minister of Energy (Mr. Dinn) is looking at the Newfoundland Hydro report. Well, I looked at that too, Mr. Speaker, and in there is \$24 million to date spent on the development of Gull Island. Now, if anyone in this House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, including the Minister of Mines and Energy, can tell us what we have to date for that \$24 million then, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat, but I could remind him that pro-rated, that \$24 million could have kept the cost of electricity very low for the working poor in this Province, for the people on fixed income.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let the minister beware that that NewLab group has not give up. They are holding their meetings, Mr. Speaker. They

are watching to see what government is doing for them. They realize the old trick the government is playing, out of sight, out of mind - low electricity rates in June/July, nobody consuming electricity, people away on vacation. In June, July, August and September we will not have the problem. But we will have it, Mr. Speaker, and in worse terms. The fuel adjustment charges next Winter will be higher than they were last Winter.

Newfoundland Hydro concedes, Mr. Speaker, that based on the present water levels - the runoff is complete, finished - based on the present water levels in the reservoirs, we may be looking at low water levels earlier than we did last year or any other previous year, in which case, Mr. Speaker, we will be seeing a fuel adjustment charge being applied earlier than ever before, and the people of Newfoundland facing a bigger rip-off next Winter than they did last Winter.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am sure the minister is going to get up and address himself to this petition, and when he does, to help set at ease the minds of the people representing the consumers of this Province, the NewLab group, in particular, I would like for the minister to tell us what his government is doing, what steps they are taking to make sure the people of Newfoundland will not be subject to the electrical rates they were subjected to last year.

Mr. Speaker, I think my time is up, but before I sit down, I would like to ask the minister if he would indicate to us at what time the Premier of Newfoundland is going to present to this House of Assembly a petition he has

received bearing the names of 35,000 Newfoundlanders? Mr. Speaker, while that petition sits in his office and is not presented to this House, 35,000 people are being denied their rights to present a petition and to have their voices heard in this House. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, as do the NewLab group, what the Premier is doing with the petition containing 35,000 names of Newfoundlanders who were devastated last Winter and face devastation again this Winter unless the Premier and the Minister of Mines and Energy (Mr. Dinn) take action to avoid the type of electricity rates we saw last year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear the Minister of Mines and Energy support this petition.

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to point out, I scarcely think that the hon. gentleman really represents the NewLab Action Committee. As a matter of fact, the actions of the NewLab Action Committee have been infinitely more responsible than those shown by the hon. gentleman there opposite. I would ask that anyone look at and assess the past five minutes in which the hon. gentleman, who is supposed to be the energy critic for the Opposition, has made some of the silly statements that the hon. gentleman has made.

For instance, we are now the government and the government is responsible, I know, for

everything, but I am quite sure that this government is not responsible for the water levels. We are not rainmakers, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FLIGHT:
It is the water levels that will decide the fuel adjustment charge.

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

MR. MARSHALL:
We are not rainmakers, Mr. Speaker, and the fact of the matter is, I think that the responsible people in the NewLab Action Committee who, by the way, Mr. Speaker, we have met with in our caucus, and we have had a very good and frank exchange with -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. MARSHALL:
- would cringe if they heard the hon. gentleman get up and purport to speak on their behalf.

The fact of the matter is the situation is known. It is a problem. Hydro generation in this Province is really a problem, we understand that.

When the water levels are low, we have to resort to fuel and there has to be a fuel adjustment charge. Now, we are not responsible for the water levels, Mr. Speaker. The hon. gentleman gets up and makes all sorts of wide statements with respect to Gull Island. If he wants to know about Gull Island, what he ought to do is ask his leader, who was the minister who brought in the bill to start up Gull Island, and

not this minister, who sat down there and made comments at the time against it. That is the first point. Secondly, that is not included in the hydro rates, in any event. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, it is a little bit more serious situation and demands a little bit more serious treatment than the hon. gentleman is prepared, or I believe really, is capable of giving it. The fact is when the water levels are low you cannot get power from Hydro, you have to use fuel. Does the hon. gentleman understand if there is no water, you cannot use water?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. MARSHALL:

Now, we could have been protected from these fuel adjustment rates, quite frankly, and this is the tragedy that we are realizing every single day in this Province. If the Upper Churchill give-away had not occurred - and, of course, it was the hon. gentlemen there opposite who gave it away.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. MARSHALL:

And they are the people who speak with forked tongues, who now get up in this Legislature and treat in such an offhand way what, admittedly, is a very serious problem, a problem which, in large part, is the making of the hon. gentlemen there opposite.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:

So, Mr. Speaker, we take that petition seriously because the people on the executive of the NewLab Action Committee are very sincere and they are addressing this problem in a more responsible manner than the hon. gentleman there opposite is. And we realize it is a problem. It is a critical problem. But I feel that the people of Newfoundland realize that problems of that nature are better dealt with by the government on this side of the House as they showed on April 2 when they gave us such a large majority in the election.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I will say if the hon. gentleman, who is the energy critic on the Opposition side, wishes to get any kind of rational responses to, I suggest he pose rational questions, and he not get up and try to make statements like he made with respect to a responsible group, because I can certify, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. gentleman does not represent the NewLab Action Committee. The NewLab Action Committee are infinitely more responsible and knowledgeable and capable than the hon. gentleman of grasping the problems at hand.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I have to give my support to that petition presented by the

hon. member on my side here. I still cannot understand why the hon. minister opposite who keeps saying that the responsibility does not lie with government. I mean, we realize he cannot do anything about the weather, and if there is a shortage of rain, we understand that, but the shortage of rain means that the problem is going to get greater and greater again next Winter.

MR. FLIGHT:

With the fuel escalation charge.

MR. EFFORD:

With the fuel escalation charge.

We also found out that there was a federal subsidy on wood burning heating systems, which ended on May 31, which could have eliminated a lot of problems. The COSP programme was discontinued by the Federal Tory Government. That would have certainly eliminate the problem or to shorten the problem.

But the problem remains and it is grown greater and greater.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

Now my friend here just said that due to the time of year the light bills are falling some, but due to the cold weather, certainly, it has not decreased that much. And with the implementation of the programme over the Summer period extending or averaging the light bills so that what they used in March and April was not so high as they could pay that over the Summer months, but that still does not solve the problem. The problem is going to be there next Winter greater than this past Winter. The income of the people who this greatly affects still

stays the same.

As an individual from a rural area, I realize that most of the people in the area are barely, barely making sufficient ends meet to provide the necessities of life in the Summertime. But when it comes to the Winter months there is no way they can live comfortably or live within anybody's means with the high cost of electricity.

I found on numerous occasions this past Winter, friends of mine, constitutents in the area had to choose between paying a light bill or eating food. I mean this is a fact. This is not something where we want to ridicule the people opposite or to ridicule anybody, this is a fact.

MR. FLIGHT:

Starve or freeze.

MR. EFFORD:

People had a choice of paying their light bill or doing without their food. And if anybody in this House of Assembly does not agree with that statement, all I will ask them to do is to spend one day with me and I will take them to the families who have been in that position and who are in that position.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

This is a serious, serious thing. Every time this is brought up in the House of Assembly all we get is, blame it on the previous governments. It is time for this nonsense to stop, stop blaming it on someone who did something wrong last year or the year before. If we are going to do something about the problem or the government is

going to do something, they have to face the problem there now, do something, and forget about the childishness of what the former government did or what the government did ten or fifteen or twenty years ago. Those are the people who are not suffering now, the people of the day are the people who are suffering.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are disowning them.

MR. EFFORD:

We are not disowning. We are concerned about the people out there now who got kids who cannot eat the proper foods.

MR. FLIGHT:

It has nothing to do with these high electricity rates.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

If we had a lot more megawatts (inaudible)

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

It is a good thing they are not in government.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Just a second, I have five minutes to make a statement. If you people want to stand up afterwards you can stand up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Tell the man in front of you to stop talking.

MR. EFFORD:

What I am talking about, I mean if you people figure that because you can sit down and jeckle each other about what went on fifteen or twenty years ago, and the kids out there are going to eat better food, well, then I will jeckle back and forth with you.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is right.

MR. EFFORD:

But the whole point is that this is serious, jeckle, heckle, anything you say or what you look like is all the same. But the point is the children are doing without the proper food on their plates just because of what is happening. Now something has to be done about it, and it is not going to be cured by you people making fun of putting the responsibility on something that happened fifteen or twenty years ago.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Right on.

MR. EFFORD:

Now this is what you have to do. I mean government has to sit down and realizes the problem and sees the seriousness of it. Apparently, they have so much prosperity in their own homes that they do not understand how much the people are suffering.

MR. FLIGHT:

The Premier can pay his light bill no problem.

MR. EFFORD:

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would very seriously ask the members opposite to very seriously do something about this problem. The Summer months are going. I mean there is only another couple

of months and our Summers, God knows, are short enough. The cold weather will be setting in and we are right back into the problem again before there is something done about it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

We know the problem now we want to hear the solution.

MR. EFFORT:

Now unfortunately that is our weather problem but, nevertheless, the cost factor is still there.

MR. FLIGHT:

The Premier promised (inaudible) -

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order please.!

Before recognizing the hon. member for Eagle River I would like to welcome to the gallery Mr. Lloyd Powell, town councillor from the Town of Bonavista.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

I would also like to introduce to hon. members our new page Miss Peggy Coady here on my left.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from 120 residents of the community of St. Lewis in Eastern Labrador. The prayer of the petition is, "We, the undersigned, hereby petition the federal government and CN Marine to re-enstate two CN Marine boats for the Southern Labrador run. We the residents rely entirely on CN

Marine boats for moving our freight, passengers and mail to our Summer fishing stations. This is the only link we have with the outside world and any further reduction in the two ships for the Southern Labrador route will cause unnecessary hardship and delay and frustration. We thereby ask the federal government and CN Marine to reconsider its decision to have the two ships dropped from the route and replaced by one that will end up leaving Lewisporte and going on up North and making a circle every ten days. CN Marine says -

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, it is not a point of order, and I do not waste any time of the hon. member's five minutes but I mean surely it is a matter that needs to be addressed and needs to be some direction given. The hon. member clearly stated when he stood to present his petition, and quoting the prayer of the petition, that this is a petition addressed to the federal government. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure but I do not believe that it is proper and in order to present a petition addressed to the federal government to the Provincial Legislature. It seems to me

PREMIER PECKFORD:

They could have the residents of St. Lewis petition the provincial government to make representation to the federal government.

MR. SIMMS:

If that is what the prayer of the petition meant then that is fine but it should be clearly pointed out.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Well, they are uneducated people.

MR. SIMMS:

The hon. member says they are uneducated people, I do not buy that. I am sure they are educated and understand, but in any event that is irrelevant. The point of order is that the petition is addressed to the federal government. I think it is important that we determine whether or not that sort of petition, Mr. Speaker, should be acceptable in the House and perhaps it might be wiser for you, if I may suggest, for Your Honour to take the matter under consideration and not take it out of the member's time but perhaps take a ruling no it because I think it is an important question.

MR. HISCOCK:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker, the petition itself originates from the Province, it is a petitioning CN Marine, it is petitioning the federal government and the provincial government and asking that CN services do not be reduced, that we have seen \$37 million cut back with regard to CN Marine in the Province, we have seen a 15 per cent increase in rates in passengers and freight, we have seen a reduction of air service subsidy by this government from 20 per cent -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! As I understand it the hon. member is stating that this petition is addressed both to the federal and to the provincial government and if it is as he states, addressed to the provincial government, it is in order.

MR. HISCOCK:

So with regard to the petition, Mr. Speaker, we find out that CN -

PREMIER PECKFORD:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

The hon. the member for Eagle River stood in his place and he read the prayer of a petition and that petition said, "we petition the federal government." Now if the hon. member has another prayer there from another petition which says, "We, the undersigned, are petitioning the provincial government to make representation on behalf of the community -" well then fine, the petition is in order. But that is not what the hon. member read.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, first of all I am surprised that the Premier would indeed stand in his place and question the ruling of the Speaker of this House. That is one of the things he has been throwing across this House that we should not be done, so I would ask Your Honour

to make note of that. The Speaker interprets the rules, not the Premier.

And let me make one other point, Mr. Speaker, we in this House, and I would ask Your Honour to consider this in ruling on the Premier's point of order, we in this House have often encouraged members and allowed petitions to be presented, as a matter of fact I think there was a petition on the fisheries restructuring programme and so on that was presented in this House that did concern the federal government. And I would ask Your Honour to take the petition in the light in which it is given and, indeed, if at some point he rules that the petition should not have been presented, then perhaps come back and rule on the Premier's point of order.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, to that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

Further to that point of order, the hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

We are not questioning, Mr. Speaker, that matters that come under the federal government cannot be presented to this hon. House in the way of a petition if the prayer of the petition says that, "We, the undersigned, are petitioning the provincial government to make representation on behalf of us on something that is in federal jurisdiction," and we have done that over and over again in this House, but that is not the point.

The prayer of the petition that the hon. member read said, "We, the undersigned, petition the

federal government." We are not saying that petitions cannot come here looking for support from the Province to support something that is in federal jurisdiction, no problem, but what the petition said, or at least what the hon. member read from the petition, 'We petition the federal government'. That is all we are saying, so that it is clear that the petitions in future are ones which are presented in the right manner, even though they might come under federal jurisdiction.

MR. HISCOCK:

To that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

To that point of order, the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is correct in what I had read that way but the other part is that we have presented petitions in this House in a formal way that was asked that the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) redirect it to Ottawa. The prayer of the petition, or the written part that was presented ended up referring to the federal government and CN Marine. I had hoped that we would have the latitude within the House, of what has been done in the past, to allow this position to be presented but I, and the residents of Eagle River, will stand by the ruling of the Chair and if the Premier feels it should not be submitted, that he does not want to embarrass his friends in Ottawa, then I will quite easily withdraw this petition, Mr. Speaker, even though the 120 residents of St. Lewis, Labrador, would object strongly.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, could I make one

final submission.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

I do not think hon. members opposite should get the impression that we are trying to forestall the presentation of that particular petition because they know that is not accurate. It is a matter of establishing the proper rules and the proper methods for presenting matters such as this - a petition. In the rules itself, it says you cannot present a petition addressed to the federal government in the provincial Legislature, that is just not permitted, and as I indicated on my first argument in the original point of order that I would be prepared to, I am sure members on this side would be prepared, not to charge any speaking time against the hon. member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock), who now has his five minutes expired anyway, but suggest that the hon. the Speaker might wish to have a look at that petition to make a ruling on it so that in the future it is presented in a clear and proper fashion. That is our only point over here not to charge any time against the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

To that point of order, again, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the petition being presented, as I said, many times before petitions in this House have been presented

but seeing that the member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms) still thinks he is Speaker, still thinks that he has to give direction to the Speaker and tell the Speaker how to do his job and also the Premier is so upset I withdraw the petition until further notice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

To that point of order, I did not hear the original introduction of this particular petition and I admit I should have, but the hon. member for Eagle River did indicate to the point of order that he was addressing both the federal and provincial government and it was on that point I had ruled there was no point of order. However, at the present time I understand the hon. member is withdrawing his petition anyway, so the matter is solved.

Are there any further petitions?

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Another petition, the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker, 'We, the residents in Southern Labrador from L'Anse-au-Clair to Paradise River, hereby petition the provincial government and Canada Post to upgrade its mail delivery to Southern Labrador. At present, mail can be as high as eleven days before it is recieved in a community on the coast after being mailed from St. John's. We realize that there is a problem with weather but not to the extent of the problem we are having in poor mail delivery. We ask that the provincial government make

representation to the federal government and Canada Post to reinstate forty hours for rural post offices in Southern Labrador because in the Winter we receive mail only three times a week, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and if there is bad weather, then we have to wait for another three days before mail comes in and out. We, the residents of Southern Labrador, ask that an enquiry be done into the poor mail service on the Labrador Coast in Spring, Summer, Winter and Fall. We are asking only for our basic rights of mail delivery, whereas larger centers now have mail delivery five times a week and in many cases this is hand delivered.'

I hope that the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) will say to his federal counterpart and the Canada Post that there is a need to upgrade the mail service. I also said to the Minister of Transportation the other day that the provincial government, Mr. Speaker, subsidizes Labrador Airway just a little over \$900,000 a year. If this subsidy was increased and Labrador Airway ended up having mail delivery five times a week to Labrador then we would not have this problem, but as it stands now, Mr. Speaker, the mail hours are cut down from forty hours to thirty-two, mail arrives sometimes very late on Friday and it is not opened until Monday. Of course, what happens Monday if the weather is bad is you do not get your mail out until the following Wednesday. So it can go to six days at least before you get mail out in answer to mail you received.

With regard to mail itself, Mr. Speaker, the cut in hours from forty to thirty-two was done in Newfoundland, but in the Prime Minister's district, which borders

on my district of Eagle River, in Labrador, such was not the case. They continue to have a much better mail delivery even though they are in the same area.

I would hope that the federal government and Canada Post would reconsider the mail situation, and that the provincial government would reconsider cutting the subsidy to Labrador airways. The provincial government has been giving almost \$1 million subsidy to Labrador Airways but in the latest budget it was cut from 25 per cent to 20 per cent, a mere saving of \$100,000. Maybe government could take that \$100,000 and give it to Labrador Airways to ensure ensure better transportation of passengers, freight, and mail.

The 130 residents of West St. Modeste, Labrador, ask that better mail service be given and I hope that the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. R. Aylward), the member for Torngat Mounts (Mr. Warren) who is aware of the mail problems, and even though we may be of a different political stripe, this is one thing, as far as we are concerned - with the increase in postage rates, with the highly paid executives they have in Canada Post, when we ask that the hours of postal workers in areas of Labrador be increased from thirty-two hours to the original forty hours we are not asking for very much, we may be asking for \$25,000 to \$30,000. And when you consider the studies that are done by Canada Post, when you consider the advertising they do on TV and radio as well as other things which apply to Canada post, then I think they could find some way of improving the mail

situation in Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the petition be laid on the table of the House and referred to the department to which it relates, and with the co-operation we now have between the federal and provincial governments, I hope we will get some results from this petition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the petition presented by my colleague, the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock). Mr. Speaker, it is not the first time that we have dealt with a matter in this House relating to federal jurisdiction, and I am certain that it will not be the last time that we will be dealing with matters relating to the federal government.

Certainly the people of Southern Labrador have that right, to petition their provincial government to make representation to their federal counterparts. Goodness knows, Mr. Speaker, that government is far enough away from the residents of Labrador South, and this is the closest government to them, or certainly should be, so they certainly have the right to make representation through this House so that the provincial government will make the necessary representation to their federal counterparts.

It is always rather disconcerting, Mr. Speaker, when any area suffers from a reduction of service, be it

related to transportation, or be it related to mail delivery, or whatever, and the more remote a community is from the centre of activity, certainly the more important mail delivery becomes. And I would expect that mail delivery is held certainly with a greater degree of importance by the people of Southern Labrador than it is probably in any other area of this Province. It is something that is held very dearly, it is something that they look forward to, receiving their mail on time, receiving their mail every day, and when we get it cut down, as it has been in this particular case, I am sure that the people feel, and possibly rightly so, that they have been discriminated against, that they have been denied a vital service, particularly again, Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about an area where people are not blessed by an overabundance of services. I am sure that the people in Labrador are not blessed by an overabundance of services, so, Mr. Speaker, we should certainly be maintaining the level of services with respect to mail in Southern Labrador. It is not something whereby we should penalize those people. We should certainly maintain the level of services to the forty hours that apparently was the custom.

It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, when we have government policy penalizing people for where they live. And this is what this is apparently doing, penalizing people because they are living in small and remote communities, penalizing these people in an effort to reduce the deficit of this country. And that seems to be a poor way to penalize people that live in isolation and are penalized because they live in

those small, remote, and isolated communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a very humane policy. It is a policy that lacks heart, it is a policy that is very insensitive to the needs of the people living in rural areas and particularly remote areas like Southern Labrador. So, Mr. Speaker, I support the petition wholeheartedly and I would hope that the government, the appropriate department will take the necessary action, will take the appropriate action and see to it that the request, the very reasonable and very humane request of the residents of Southern Labrador is responded to and that instead of reducing this vital service to the residents of Southern Labrador that, at least, the present level, the status quo is maintained. And that is the very least, Mr. Speaker, that these residents from Southern Labrador could expect from their government, that is the very least they could expect for the tax dollars they pay, that the services be maintained at the present level, that the status quo in this particular instance be maintained. We are not asking for anything great, Mr. Speaker. We are not asking for anything that is unreasonable. It is a very reasonable request, and I am sure, a service that is treasured dearly by the residents of Southern Labrador.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support the prayer of this petition, the very reasonable request of the residents of Southern Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I also rise to support the petition that came out from the people in Southern Labrador who are concerned about the cut in the mail service in Labrador. I think, Mr. Speaker, living in Labrador for some nineteen years and having worked with the people there, I understand the frustration that they have to go through with the mail service. In fact, I will be only too glad, Mr. Speaker, at any time for any member on any side of the House to come down and see some of the correspondence that I have had with the post office and with Labrador Airways as pertaining to the mail delivery service in Coastal Labrador.

I believe that the wishes of the people are genuine, they are real concerns. Only just last week I received a letter from a Mr. Robinson in Makkovik who waited nine days for his teacher's cheque to arrive. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, there were planes going back and forth but, unfortunately, the mail did not arrive on any of those planes. I have no reason at all, Mr. Speaker, to stand up and support a petition that is put forward and asking this government to act upon. I think, Mr. Speaker, we can look at both sides. We can see that the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) is doing what he can to make sure that the people in Coastal Labrador will have an adequate mail service and, I believe, in due course we shall see that we need a better service in Coastal Labrador than we have now. I support the petition and the people in Fox Harbour or St.

Lewis, wherever the case may be, are concerned because for many days and as high as weeks at a time the people cannot send out their UIC returns or receive their family allowance monies that they are waiting on, monies that they have spent because of the terrible mail service, many of the people are unable to avail of this service. I support the petition and hopefully we can convince the Canada Post, my good friend Mr. Warren in Canada Post, we can convince him -

AN HON. MEMBER:
No relation?

MR. WARREN:
I should make it clear, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. House that Mr. Warren, who is the Chairman of Canada Post may be a distant relative, but nothing very close. I advise the hon. House that I am sure all the Warrens in this Province or all the Warrens in Canada have more sympathy for the people on the Labrador Coast.

Thank you.

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

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition on behalf of some 200 people.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please! The hon. Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, this relates to the question that we had a little earlier on a point of order raised about the presentation of

petitions. It is a little more serious now as far as I am concerned because the matter that we raised initially dealt with the presentation of a petition addressed to the federal government.

AN HON. MEMBER:
And now it is a copy.

MR. SIMMS:
Well, no, that is not the point, Mr. Speaker. Subsequent to that the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) withdrew that particular petition. He then, after presenting that petition and hearing the argument that we put forth about it being perhaps improper to have a petition re-addressed to the federal government, decided to withdraw it.

His next petition dealt with a matter under federal jurisdiction, as we are all aware, it was just discussed and questioned, concerning the Canada Post operations. Mr. Speaker, I asked for a copy of the front page of that petition. I wanted to find out exactly what the wording of the prayer of the petition said. Here is what it said, just the first two lines - it is a very serious matter that I am going to raise, Mr. Speaker - it says: "We, the residents, of Southern Labrador from L'Anse-au-Clair to Paradise River hereby petition the federal government and Canada Post." Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the word 'federal' has been scratched out and the word 'provincial' written in. I suspect, I cannot prove it, I would assume the hon. member will be man enough to admit whether he did it or not, but I would assume that was done by the hon. member. Now that is my suspicion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is a very, very serious matter not to be scoffed at, not to be bluffed off or passed off as political argument or anything else. I think it is a very serious matter. And if it is accurate the hon. member certainly should be reprimanded for doing that kind of a thing. Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, every member in this House could bring in any petition they wanted and scratch out words and add words. Mr. Speaker, we all know that that would be improper and incorrect. We are here to present the wishes of the people whom we represent and who have asked us to make this petition.

Mr. Speaker, I draw this matter to your attention in the hope that Your Honour will investigate this particular matter, I do not necessarily want a ruling on it now, but I believe, as one member, that this is highly improper and should not be allowed.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

To that point of order, the hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, on page 210 of Beauchesne, Section 673, it says: "Petitions may be written, typewritten, or printed; they must be free from erasures or interlineations."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I submit we have here now a petition that was typewritten and now it has ink scratches over some of the

typewritten words and other ink words put in as opposed to the typewritten words. So it seems quite obvious that, in addition to what the hon. minister has said, this petition is out of order.

MR. HISCOCK:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

The member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms) ended up getting up and disagreeing with the other petition and I ended up withdrawing one of the petitions even though the Speaker ruled that it was not a point of order, that the petition that I was presenting was quite valid and was quite in order. The subsequent petition that I ended up presenting was presented to the House. It was mailed to me as the member for Eagle River. It was not sent to the member of Parliament for the area and it was sent from the point of view that it was asked to be tabled in this House of Assembly.

MR. SIMMS:

Routine (inaudible)

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. HISCOCK:

With regards to the part of the petition of scratching out 'federal' to 'provincial, yes, I ended up changing it, Mr. Speaker, and I make no excuse for it. It was done, Mr. Speaker, not maliciously, it was done from the point of view of making sure that the intentions of the people of Eagle River when they sent this

petition to me to be presented in this House, whether they had inadvertently putting the word 'provincial' instead of 'federal', it was done so that the people of Eagle River can get their due representation. Instead of having the Premier get up and the former Speaker, and in cutting out the time, instead of trying to embarrass the House here by taking time from the petition, who do they not use that close co-operation that Ottawa has with St. John's, Newfoundland.

Whether it was wrong, as the Premier pointed out in presenting the petition, of scratching it out. As I said it was not done to mislead the House. It was done only to correct the intent of the petition. If the petition was to be presented in Parliament, I would assume it would have been sent to the member of Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FLIGHT:
Right on.

MR. HISCOCK:
As I said, Mr. Speaker, it was done that way. So I myself do not stand up and I do not cross that off lightly. It is not a matter of malicious or misleading, it is a matter of making sure that wishes of the people of Eagle River are made, Mr. Speaker. For whatever reason the Premier and the former Speaker are picking holes in this. If we have to go back to each petition that has been presented in this House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, then we can go so far as to say there are a lot of petitions that are technically presented that should not have been presented.

As I said, if the Premier wants and the minister of Forestry wants

it, again I can quite easily take that petition back, have it recirculated in the communities from which it came, and making sure that the word 'federal' is struck from it, and that somebody within the district itself puts in the word 'provincial'. So that is the reason.

And as for embarrassment, Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of embarrassment at all. The people of Eagle River when they sent this, wanted it sent to be presented on this floor.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

PREMIER PECKFORD:
There are just two points here. Number one, the Minister of Forest, Resources and Lands (Mr. Simms) and myself and others on this side allowed the time to elapse for the member to make his point on the petition. It is only after he had had his five minutes on the petition that we raised a point of order, so that we allowed the petition to go ahead, even though, we had some serious concerns. Until the hon. member was completed with his five minutes on it, then we wanted to raise it because there are two points there. One is Beauchesne, page 210, Section 673, but the other more important one was that the people of the area concerned presented a prayer to that petition. Now what the hon. member did was change that prayer, and really, therefore, changes what the people signed in that area at that point in time.

Now, if that was allowed to stand, it is not the issue so much as

what the people in his district, in L'Anse-au-Clair area intended, it is an issue of can any member on either side of this House, from time to time, scratch out, add to, write on a petition, thereby changing its intent, thereby changing, you cannot have that. So, it is not so much that we do not understand that obviously the people in that area intended to ensure that the hon. member brought it here as well as send it somewhere else, and whilst we can make a point on that technicality and be valid, in our view, on it, as well as Section 673 in Beauchesne, but it is more important for the future to establish the rules which are going to govern what are the nature of petitions to be presented because we did not interfere with the hon. member's right to present petition until after he had presented it.

MR. TULK:

You also attempted to try and stop him.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No, no, we did not stop him, the petition went ahead, and it was presented. But we must establish rules in the future that petitions must be legitimate and must represent the views and ideas of the area from which the petition is coming and that it must have, at least, some order about it in its prayers.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) has

indicated to the House that he indeed altered the petition, and so technically he may be in breach, that is for others to decide. But, Mr. Speaker, surely nobody is suggesting that he, in so doing, misrepresented the concern. The prayer of the petition is that something be done to improve the postal service.

My second point, Mr. Speaker, I refer you to Standing Order 90 which says, "A petition to the House shall be presented by a member in his place who shall be answerable that it does not contain impertinent or improper matter; and every member offering a petition to the House shall sign it with it with his own hand." In other words, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the substance of the petition there are only two requirements and they are both contained in Standing Order 90. One is that 'it be in no way impertinent or improper' and secondly, 'the member presenting it sign it'.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the first few words of Standing Order 90 are important, I believe, it says, "A petition to the House..." Our orders are silent as to the form of petitions except in the particulars that are outlined in the following Standing Orders of 92 and 93 and so on. In other words, our Standing Orders are silent. And you have to construe, Mr. Speaker, that if a member of this chamber receives either directly or in the mail or by whatever means, there is conveyed to him a petition, you have to assume that the petitioners - and I am talking not about a photocopied petition but an original petition - if a group of petitioners convey to a member of this Chamber a petition with original signatures, you have to

assume that those petitioners realize that the gentleman or lady concerned is a member of this House, not a member of some other house. You have to assume that the petitioners, in conveying that petition, want it to be presented in the Chamber of which that individual is a member. So, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that when Standing Order 90 begins 'A petition to the House...' it means, in effect, a petition conveyed to a member for presentation in the House.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, on Standing Order 90, there is nothing in that Standing Order that says the subject matter must relate to provincial jurisdiction or federal jurisdiction or municipal jurisdiction. How many petitions, Mr. Speaker, do we have in this House which address matters within municipal jurisdiction, for example, or within the jurisdiction of some body not directly answerable to this Chamber?

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we get into the situation where the only petitions you can have in this Chamber are those which directly come under the purview of provincial jurisdiction, it will very seriously restrict the number of petitions that you can present.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:
I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that there are only a couple of requirements for petitions which are eligible for presentation in this Chamber: one is that they not contain any impertinent or

improper matter - and nobody is suggesting that is the case here - and secondly, that the member presenting the petition must have signed it; otherwise, I construe from Standing Order 90 that a petition can address any subject matter that the petitioners elect to have it address, and then it is eligible for presentation in this House.

The other point I made earlier I just want to reiterate very briefly. The member has freely acknowledged that he altered the petition, but not for the purpose of in any way misrepresenting the concerns of those people. The petition, it can be seen, to whomever it is addressed, is for better postal service, and certainly, his whole speech, a quite able and adequate speech, addressed that very point. So, in my view, Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

I think I have heard enough comment.

To that point of order, I would like to have a look at that petition and also to review the comments made by hon. members on both sides and review various authorities. I will take that matter under advisement and hope to be able to rule on it tomorrow.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
On a point of order, the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:
I would say to the hon. the member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms), that

that petition was presented in accordance with the wishes of the petitioners. I wanted to make sure that the objection raised by the Premier and the member for Grand Falls would not reoccur on the second petition. I did not intend to mislead, Mr. Speaker, I simply wanted to make sure that the wishes and intent of the people of Eagle River would be carried out and that the petition would be presented smoothly and expeditiously instead of becoming involved in the rambling we ended up getting into. That was my intent, Mr. Speaker. It was not done to mislead. It was done from the point of view of the people who sent it, who I talked with on the phone. They asked me to present the petition. I expected fives minutes for each side. That was my intent, Mr. Speaker.

DR. COLLINS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. COLLINS:
Mr. Speaker, to that point of order. I think the hon. member left out two significant points when he rose there. Firstly, as the hon. the Premier said, the petition, as he read it out, was allowed to go through the full five minutes. At no time during his remarks did the hon. member indicate that he had changed something in the petition. I would have thought if he was intending to do something for the benefit of the House, he would have pointed out exactly what he was doing. It was only after the petition had gone through its full course that the hon. the member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms) found out something had happened and brought it to the attention of the

House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMONS:
On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
On a point of privilege, the hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, this circus has gone on long enough! We have been here ever since Question Period trying to get through the petitions so we can get on with Orders of the Day and bring the Premier to task with respect to his estimates, and that hon. crowd over there, under the guise of protecting rules of the House which they have managed to pervert since the day they took over, are over there now stalling, stalling, stalling, and now we have the ultimate parliamentary expert, the gentleman from St. John's South (Dr. Collins), who is going to give us the benefit of his wisdom. Why do they not call off the charade, Mr. Speaker, and stop depriving us of our privileges so we can get on with the job at hand, the estimates, which is what we came in here for this afternoon?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

To that point of privilege, I do not think there is any point of privilege. What I was trying to determine when the hon. the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) got up and then the hon. the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins), it would appear to me - and I was just

about to comment on it - that they are both referring to this point of order that I said I would like to take under advisement and rule on tomorrow, so actually, there is no point of order before the House at the present time.

MR. SIMMONS:

Good! Let us get on with it!

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A further petition, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of some 200 residents of Clarke's Head in the district of Fogo.

The prayer of the petition reads: "We, the concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador, do hereby protest the high increase in electricity rates in our Province."

MR. FLIGHT:

Another one!

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, I support the petition, and if the parliamentary expert from Grand Falls were in his seat, I suppose I would be cut off again and we would see them try to block petitions from being presented in this House and try to keep the Premier off his estimates.

Mr. Speaker, the prayer of the petition addresses the high cost of electricity in Newfoundland and Labrador and the inability of our people to deal with that high cost of electricity. And the member for Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight), among other people has made ample representation on this whole

affair of what is going on in Newfoundland, what is happening to our people. We have seen the government, through the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) and the Premier stand up there, and I think the Minister of Justice (Ms. Verge) stand up and prefer to support petitions when, in actual fact, all they have been doing is talking around the matter. One of the points of order that could have legitimately been raised in this House, Mr. Speaker, is whether when you rise in your place to speak to a petition you declare whether you support it or not. We have seen members opposite do the opposite, just stand and speak around the subject.

The government, Mr. Speaker, is hoping - the Premier is over there with his fingers crossed - hoping that the problem, like he hopes about so many other problems, he is hoping the problem will go away.

MR. FLIGHT:

And it is going away in the short term.

MR. TULK:

It is going away for the Summer. I am not sure that it will, because people this Summer are probably going to be paying for the electricity that they burned last Winter. So it may not go away. And they can hope, they can dream and they can hope that it goes away, Mr. Speaker, but I -

DR. COLLINS:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! A point of order, the hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker. Standing Order 92, "Every member

offering a petition to the House shall confine himself to a statement of the parties from which it comes," not his own statement, "confine himself to the statement of the parties from whom it comes, the number of signatures attached to it and the material allegations it contains."

Mr. Speaker, I do not think what I heard of the petition contains anything about what this government hopes, or any other sort of political attributes that the hon. member is making in regard to this petition. I think he is distorting the wording of the petition, he has confined himself to the statement from the parties, not his own statement, a statement from the parties, the number of signatures and the material allegations. And beyond that he is straying and that is out of order in my view, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
A point of order, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker, I just have to make one comment to the hon. gentleman from St. John's South (Dr. Collins), the minister of non-finance, he is red in the face, he has been in the sun and the sun must have affected his brain, there is no point of order.

DR. COLLINS:
Those are brilliant arguments.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
To that point of order, the hon. member for Fortune Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:
I welcome the Minister of Finance, the champion of parliamentary rights, we wondered where he was twenty minutes ago when the Government House Leader abused the rules of this House for ten or fifteen minutes in speaking to a petition, when he reigns all over way, right back to Churchill Falls and every other irrelevancy he could dream up to kill time, Mr. Speaker, suddenly the champion of parliamentary rights emerges. There is no point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:
To that point of order, I understood the hon. member was speaking to his petition and developing it. I would say that has about another minute and a half left to complete the same.

The hon. member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker, that is the prime purpose of the government, rising on points of order, the Minister of Finance is to not hear the truth. They want to bury the truth. And Mr. Speaker is right in that I was speaking to the petition when I was pointing out the concerns of the people of Clarke's Head, in the district of Fogo that the Premier loves to watch. They do have a concern about the high cost of electricity and they are petitioning this House and the government to do something about it. Unfortunately it seems that from the number of other petitions that we have heard in this House, their prayers, the prayers for the member for St. John's South, their prayers seem to be falling on deaf ears. There

is a period of grace for the government, they have five months, five or six, possibly six, five or six months to address the problem of high electricity rates in the Province or, otherwise, next year they will be tearing their hair again about the fact that there is this problem of high electricity rates.

The member for Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight), the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry), has offered numerous solutions to this problem and, yet, all we get from the government is for them to stand up and refer back to former Liberal governments. And I do not believe there is a member left - finally we can tell the Premier - there is not a member left, and we are proud of that former government, and make no mistake about that, but we can stand and tell the Premier and his House Leader that there is not a member left from the former Liberal Government of this Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, you mean I have to sit down? Leave? Leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave.

MR. SPEAKER:

By leave?

The hon. Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support that petition. Citizens in this Province are concerned about high electricity rates, this government is concerned about high

electricity rates, this government is working diligently to do what it can about high electricity rates. It is having meetings with Newfoundland Hydro. It is encouraging Newfoundland Hydro to take initiatives to do what it can about it. Mr. Speaker, we recognize the problem. We are not leaning on the legitimate concerns of the people to make political points which I am afraid our friends opposite are making, they are grabbing after this like a dog after a bone, thinking that they can get political benefit from making snide remarks about the legitimate concerns brought forward by the people of this Province. We are working as hard as we can on it. It is a difficult problem. Costs have gone up, costs of electricity have gone up, costs of bread has gone up, costs of clothing have gone up, all costs have gone up and, unfortunately, costs in any direction are hardships on the people. The people are suffering from high electricity rates, we are working hard to do something about it, and we will not turn their legitimate concerns into petty political points.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the petition so ably presented by my colleague, the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk). Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) says the cost of bread has gone up, the cost of sugar has gone up, the cost of milk has gone up, but it has not to the extent that the cost of electricity has gone up

under this administration.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the major requests of the NewLab group to Premier, to this government, was to set up a public enquiry with consumers, the people who are being gouged, having representation on that enquiry. Now what is so difficult, Mr. Speaker, about that? What the NewLab people want to do with that public enquiry is to determine for themselves whether they are getting ripped-off, whether it is possible to have lower electric rates in this Province, whether it is possible to have lower fuel adjustment costs in this Province. The Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth (Mr. Matthews) says it is not possible. The NewLab group is not prepared to listen to the dribble from the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth, the hypocrisy from the Minister of Justice (Ms Verge) and the hypocrisy from the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins). Now, Mr. Speaker, they want to look at the cost of distribution of electricity, they want to look at the cost of generation of electricity in this Province, they want to look at how much it is costing to keep Newfoundland Hydro in place, they want to know if it is possible or if it would serve any purpose to nationalize Newfoundland Light and Power. That is what that Committee wants to do, Mr. Speaker.

MR. J. CARTER:
Do not be so foolish.

MR. FLIGHT:
Why does not the member for St. John's North (Mr. Carter) tell the Committee not to be so foolish. I am representing them in this petition, Mr. Speaker, and that is

what they are asking. They want to look at all the aspects that cause electricity rates to be so high that the ordinary people of this Province cannot afford it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what they want to know is if the SSA, the sales tax, can be taken off electricity. They want to ask that question.

DR. COLLINS:
What is it on?

MR. FLIGHT:
On the fuel adjustment. It is on the electric rates. The minister would not know because he probably does not have to look at his light bills.

DR. COLLINS:
But what is it on?

MR. FLIGHT:
It is on the SSA, I said. Sales tax is on the total of the -

DR. COLLINS:
For whom? For whom?

MR. FLIGHT:
The user of course. For whom? Not for the minister. The minister does not even look at his light bills. Go look at your light bill.

DR. COLLINS:
Go home and read it. There is no tax on electricity.

MR. FLIGHT:
NewLab, Mr. Speaker, have not got to carry the can for the minister because he can afford to pay his light bills, it is for people whose electric bills are costing them their mortgages, as the member said a few minutes ago, who cannot afford to buy food.

I wish the Premier were here. Why is the minister or the Premier refusing to set up a public enquiry? NewLab are not asking for an enquiry that will cost \$700 a day for the Chairman and \$600 a day for every member, they are asking to have an enquiry and they may be prepared to volunteer their time, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Whose time?

MR. FLIGHT:
The people representing NewLab.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the NewLab Committee have asked for an enquiry to satisfy themselves that they are not getting ripped-off in this Province. They want to look at the cost. Why are electricity rates so high in Newfoundland? Is the \$24 million that has been wasted on the Lower Churchill being written off? Are the people whom NewLab represent writing off the \$24 million wasted, to this point in time, on the Lower Churchill? That is the kind of questions they want answered and they do not need a \$700 a day enquiry. I guarantee you that any enquiry set up will not be ridiculed the way the Premier's Committee on Unemployment is being ridiculed, if you were listening to the news this morning. The consumers of this Province will not ridicule that Committee, so why, Mr. Speaker, do they refuse to set up a public enquiry? The Minister of Justice (Ms Verge) should stand in her place now and tell this House why she supports the Premier in refusing to set up a public enquiry. Why does the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) refuse to set up a public enquiry? Why does the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Windsor) refuse to set up a public

enquiry? Why does he support the Premier and the Minister of Mines and Energy (Mr. Dinn) in refusing the NewLab group the public enquiry they have asked for? Why?

MR. WINDSOR:
Why would the President of Treasury Board do that?

MR. FLIGHT:
Why does not the President of Treasury Board say that he supports the public enquiry and then, maybe, the Premier will appoint a public enquiry. At least the NewLab people who are representing thousands and thousands and thousands of Newfoundlanders who cannot face another Winter with electric rates like we faced last Winter, they cannot do it, they will be devastated, they will be wiped out. Why can we not have the enquiry? We have an enquiry on employment unemployment, Mr. Speaker, that is costing \$650 a day for the chairman, why can we not have the same kind of enquiry to look into the high cost of electricity?

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
A point of order, the hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, I just picked up on my desk here - I assume all members have this schedule as of 4:30 p.m., June 4 1985 - a schedule of the Estimates Committees. I notice, despite the considerable difficulties that

have been documented in relation to two or more Committees meeting at the same time, that the government is persisting in scheduling two committees again tonight. Mr. Speaker, I have an obligation to be at the Resource Committee where we are dealing with the Fisheries estimates, but I also have a considerable interest in raising some matters related to Education in the Social Services Committee, so that from the standpoint of a member it imposes a hardship for a member to be able to try and do his job having to be in two places at one time, but also in terms of the limited resources of the press. It is not the federal House where Canadian Press can have a half a dozen stringers around and assign one to each of several rooms. We know the situation in this Province, we know the media fairly well, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, the government is being quite unreasonable. I remember a number of years ago in this House the gentleman from St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) waxed long and eloquent about how he was going to open government up. Well, he is on a path now in the absolutely opposite direction. He is on a path to close government, to ensure that the public does not, through its representatives, have the accounts of this Province properly scrutinized. Mr. Speaker, if the government will not do it of its own free will I believe this House should instruct the government - and I am prepared to put down the appropriate motion - to instruct those committees not to meet concurrently, not to meet at the same time.

MR. HODDER:

Why do you not do education? Why do you not come over and do the schedule?

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. McNicholas):

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing worse than a reformed drunk, as they say.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

No, Mr. Speaker, they do not get the issue at all.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I have to ask the hon. member for Fortune-Hermitage to withdraw that remark.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, the analogy that is often used is that a person who switches sides sometimes becomes a crusader for the other side, and it obviously was in that context that I meant it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

Of course! Of course!

MR. CALLAN:

There must have been a lot of truth in that.

MR. WINDSOR:

Name him, Mr. Speaker. Name him!

MR. SIMMONS:

No, Mr. Speaker.

I will withdraw anything if that

is the case, Mr. Speaker. I was using a metaphor and in no other context, I tell the House, Mr. Speaker. The metaphor is well understood that you get a person who suddenly jumps sides and suddenly he becomes a good crusader for the other side. And that is what I have seen here today, the person who used to stand beside us, Mr. Speaker, from Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Name him! Name him!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

Do I understand the hon. gentleman has withdrawn the remark?

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes, Mr. Speaker. Of course, Mr. Speaker. Of course.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman for Port au Port used to stand with us and he used to fight with us, shoulder to shoulder.

MR. TOBIN:
What is he speaking on?

MR. CALLAN:
He is speaking on his feet, of course.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, I was on a point of order, and I was interrupted by the gentleman on a point of privilege. We have dealt with the matter of privilege, and now I am back on a point of order. And in the process, Mr. Speaker, I was saying that the gentleman for Port au Port stood with us and fought with us to ensure that there was a proper scrutiny of the Public Accounts, and now suddenly, because he is on the other side, he becomes a crusader for that

particular side.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

I do not want to interrupt the hon. member, but I understand that we dealt with this particular point earlier today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

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

I understood that we dealt with this matter earlier today and the scheduling of the Committee meetings is not a matter for the Chair to decide.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
Is this a further point of order?

MR. SIMMONS:
It might be a joke to the government, but we have two Committees meeting at the same time. We cannot do our job, we cannot be in two places at the same time. And I was saying in the process, Mr. Speaker, that I am prepared to put down the appropriate motion, if I have the leave of the House to do so, to ensure those two Committees do not meet at the same time.

DR. COLLINS:
On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

A point of privilege, the hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way rose on a point of order. Your Honour interrupted him and said that his point of order was invalid because it had already been dealt with and taken care of. When Your Honour sat down then, he insisted on getting up again on the identical point of order. This is a total disregard of Your Honour's ruling and I do not think the member opposite should be permitted to turn this House into a bear pit by ignoring the Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. COLLINS:

The Chair has to be followed. Whether hon. members like it or not, the Chair is the judge here. The hon. member is turning this House into a bear pit, into a farce and into a circus by ignoring Your Honour and I do not think members of this House are going to put up with it. I would ask Your Honour to restrain the hon. member opposite, and if he will not restrain himself willingly, I suggest Your Honour take the appropriate action to make sure that he is restrained.

MR. SIMMONS:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

DR. COLLINS:

It is a point of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

To that point of privilege, the hon. member for Fortune-Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I was not questioning Your Honour's ruling. What I was doing is what I believe is still, despite the muzzling by the government, permitted in this

House, and that is the right of a member to rise and seek the leave of the House on a matter. I rose to seek the leave of the House to introduce a resolution. I immediately got the indication there was no such leave and I sat down. Now, Mr. Speaker, if you take that right away from me, there is no point being here at all.

MR. TULK:

To that point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of privilege, the hon. member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, the member for Fortune-Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) is right. He rose in this House to ask for leave, and Your Honour was right when Your Honour ruled that he had ruled on the point of order previously. But the member for Fortune-Hermitage surely has a right to ask for leave. And he did that. He was in no way questioning the authority of the Speaker in this House at all, he was just trying to see if the Premier was going to carry on the kind of co-operation that he carried on yesterday evening.

For example, this side has had an agreement that on Wednesday there will be no Committee meetings. And today we have a schedule in front of us, which we received at 4:30, showing us that now there is a meeting of the Government Services Committee on Transportation on Wednesday morning. And, Mr. Speaker, the whole point is that you cannot do your job in this House any way.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of privilege raised

by the hon. Minister of Finance. The hon. minister has a definite point. I have already ruled on this point of order. There was no indication to the Chair that leave of the House was being asked on any matter. I do not think I need to say anything further on this matter.

Orders of the Day

MR. MARSHALL:

Committee of Supply.

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

Committee of Supply

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):

Order!

Shall 2.1.01 carry?

MR. TULK:

Not at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Premier under the Heading we are now discussing, his own department. We have seen for the past number of weeks something happening to our fishing resource about which we have not gotten any answers from his Fisheries Minister. We have asked him several questions as to the action he intends taking, but what we have heard from him was a various number of promises to do this, do that, do something else - he is going to

consult with his federal colleague - when in actual fact we suspect that very little has happened. What we do get is a series of political platitudes, talking about former Liberal governments, former administrations, and little statements pointing to the Premier's position and the government's position on the Tail and Nose of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap. If it were not so serious, Mr. Speaker, it would make you laugh.

The Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) rose in his place this afternoon and quoted to me some actions that they had taken.

MR. TOBIN:

Were you ever out there?

MR. TULK:

No, unfortunately, I was not. I would very much like to go out there.

The Tail and Nose of the Grand Banks, by all reports, is being seriously overfished and that, we have all agreed in this House, should come under Canadian jurisdiction as well as the Flemish Cap. There is absolutely no doubt about that. And that is what we got from the Minister of Fisheries this afternoon when he rose in his place to tell us what the position of the government is with regard to foreign overfishing, with regard to alleged bribes and inaction by federal officials and so on. That was his answer, Mr. Chairman, to what action the government has taken.

A couple of weeks ago the Premier consented to an all-party resolution in this House condemning the federal government, in essence, which was

the proper thing to do at the time, condemn the federal government, and asking that our jurisdiction be extended, asking that overfishing be stopped, and asking primarily that they consult with us. We have not seen that happen. We have not heard anything. Yesterday the Premier again came into this House and said he heard something through the media, he called the federal Minister of Fisheries, I think that was his answer, and then got back to the provincial Fisheries Minister.

It is very obvious that the provincial Minister of Fisheries is being left completely out in the cold, that this government, through its Minister of Fisheries in Newfoundland, is being ignored, yet, when you stand in this House and ask the Minister of Fisheries if he would consider a moratorium on foreign overfishing until the problem is solved, or ask him if he will set up his own independent enquiry into a resource without which we would be truly, as the Premier says, a have-not Province, we would not be a Province at all - Bangladesh would be rich compared to us without our fishery resource and yet it is being destroyed by foreign overfishing, by people who have absolutely no right to do the kinds of things they are doing. I want to say to the Premier, and I think the Premier realizes this, that it may be far more serious than just accidental overfishing. As a matter of fact, we may have a case here where our own Canadian Government - and I would ask him to consider this very carefully, and the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) should consider this very carefully - in order to get certain trade concessions from EEC countries and other foreign

nations may very well be turning a blind eye to what is happening off the Coast of Newfoundland.

Now, that is very serious. If that kind of thing has gone on, or if it is going on, that kind of thing is very serious. It is also very serious if our surveillance people are being bribed. It is scandalous! With all the allegations that are being made, surely the Premier, who has stood in this House and talked, shook his arms, who has done everything he can do, called upon everybody in Newfoundland to ask Ottawa for jurisdiction and control of that resource, surely now the Premier because we have a change of government, a different party in power in Ottawa, surely the Premier is not now going to sit in his seat and just send little telexes, and make little telephone calls? Surely he is going to set up his own independent enquiry into that whole situation to see if indeed it is happening.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I am going to sit down and give the Premier a chance to stand up and say that as of this afternoon he is going to have his own government conduct their own independent enquiry into this whole matter of overfishing and alleged bribery offshore. Do not slough it off!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased that the hon. the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) has raised this issue, because it seems that all the member wants to do is slough it

off into another enquiry. Now, the hon. member knows full-well that even if an enquiry were set up we do not have the authority and the jurisdiction to look into the surveillance matters and the overfishing matters. So it would be a paper tiger, it would do absolutely nothing.

The hon. member for Fogo, I suppose, suspects in his own narrow, political mind that he is somehow onto a good thing here and now is time to get the Province to set up an enquiry under this matter. There have been all kinds of allegations, but, Mr. Chairman, if we are going to conduct ourselves as responsible public figures in this Province, then obviously we have to deal with what the facts are. Now, one way to ascertain the facts as they relate to criminal activity is to have the RCMP, the police force, do an intensive and extensive investigation of the allegations made as they relate to criminal activity, and that is on going, that has started, that is in process, and then we will find out whether in fact there is anything on the criminal side of things. At the same time, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, itself, is doing an internal investigation, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Fraser) is sitting down today with some of his people who work for him to try to get a handle on, number one - yes, there has been overfishing, we all know that - whether the department, itself, has been conducting itself in a responsible and honest manner, which might involve criminal activity as well.

So as much as can be done is being done. And as for our traditional position as a government and as a party, and mine personally on the

question of the fishery, we have not relinquished one bit of effort because the government has changed in Ottawa, none whatsoever!

Before the new Prime Minister's chair got warm, before the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans' chair got warm, the new minister being there, we had a document placed on the desk of the Prime Minister and every single minister in the federal Cabinet, as soon as the Cabinet was sworn in, a paper that we worked on once we realized that there was going to be a change in government, because we wanted to give that new government the benefit of the concerns that we had in Newfoundland, and it covered the fishery business, it covered all of the other aspects, transportation, communications, planning, you name it, and we made that document public to indicate to the Opposition and the people of Newfoundland that we are very, very, serious on these points and we will leave no stone unturned. We believe that it is in the best interests of Canada, as well as Newfoundland and Labrador, that that Nose and Tail be a part. We believe also that we should not be trading off fish for fish and that the federal government should phase out of that practice as soon as possible, they should phase out of it completely. Now the last time we did a deal it should be remembered, Mr. Chairman, it was with the former federal government when they did a very miserable deal with the EEC which we complained about at the time.

MR. FLIGHT:

A lot louder than you are complaining now.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No louder than we are complaining now. We are complaining now just

as loud as we did then as it related to fisheries matters and we will continue to do so. We will put forward those positions. The Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout), there now in the government has, since he has taken over the portfolio, made representations to the federal government. I have to the Prime Minister, I have to our federal member in the Cabinet of Canada and we will continue to do so. Our position has changed not one iota. And also, to go into the other part of it, very few members of the Opposition have addressed yet, I would like to know their position. Do they agree with the government on the whole question of concurrent jurisdiction and that we should have additional powers over the fishery? Is the position of the Opposition exactly the same as the governments or are there some areas where you would say we should not have jurisdiction and other areas where we should but we said we did not need it? Just where are the other parties in this legislature as it relates to our other proposal on this question of obtaining greater jurisdiction over the fishery?

So, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) can try as hard as he likes to now, suddenly, capture the ground which we have owned for a long period of time as it relates to a position on the fishery which is both logical and sensible and which at this point in time runs counter to federal policy. But the long and short of it is that everybody in Newfoundland knows what our position is on the fishery and that we seek and will continue to seek more jurisdiction over the fishery. We believe that there has got to be even stronger enforcement activity used with

regard to the overfishing. The whole question of the Spaniards, particularly the Spaniards, and now others, but it was the Spaniards on the Nose and Tail of the Bank, the whole South Coast inshore fishery - I forget how many million pounds it is now a year - but that whole South Coast fishery and part of the East Coast, into St. Mary's Bay, is highly dependent upon those stocks. And the overfishing that the Spaniards have carried on, completely oblivious to the agreements signed with the other countries and Canada on that issue, they just continue to do it. So our representation, both verbally and in writing, is there for anybody to see and we are very happy, Mr. Chairman, that finally, contrary to a few years ago, when I got in this House on many, many, occasions on the whole question of the Northern cod stock when, for the first time in the late seventies, other provinces started to fish it, and I was told by members opposite that I was being a Separatist, I was being a confrontationist, because from 1497, or whatever time thereafter, continuous fishing occurred each year off the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador, right up until 1977 or 1978, nobody else had caught that Northern cod stock only people who fished from Newfoundland. And contrary to what the federal Liberal leader said about fish swimming, we agreed heartedly that fish swim and, therefore, there is some kind of great constitutional principle involved here which involves all Canadians. The problem that the former Liberal leader and the former Prime Minister did not understand was that they swam from offshore Newfoundland to inshore Newfoundland which kept them within the jurisdiction, really,

for all intents and purposes, of Newfoundland and Labrador. Therefore the whole question of the cod swimming inshore and the scallop not moving all that much, I mean, outside of that business of the physiology or the physical activity that one species has over another in the way it moves does not deter the argument that if the Nova Scotians can come to Newfoundland and fish the Northern cod, there is no reason why the Newfoundlanders from Newfoundland, living in Newfoundland, cannot go to Nova Scotia and catch scallops, and so on it goes.

Now, there is another interesting thing coming up on that now. There is a court in New Brunswick - I do not know if the hon. members saw the news today - there is a zone that was zoned by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans for crab that was to be allocated to the fishermen of Prince Edward Island and the fishermen from New Brunswick were not allowed to fish it. They have protested and now they have gone to the court to ask the court to decide whether, in fact, this zone that had been dedicated and zoned by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and have a quota on it, for the fishermen of PEI. The court has just ruled, yesterday, I think, that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans cannot stop fishermen from New Brunswick from fishing that crab stock. Now what repercussions that will have down the road for the other quota zoning positions that the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans now have into place is a really good question. I have not read the ruling. I have just seen excerpts of the ruling on television, it said, in part, that all Canadians should have access to it - it was on the

grounds of that principle, that New Brunswickers are Canadians, and this being a Canadian resource, therefore, all Canadians should have equal access to the resource, or words to that intent. So, you know, that raises the whole question of the validity - and the legality, better said - of what the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has been doing on the question of zones and quotas, especially zones, and restricting those who can prosecute that particular resource.

The other point, Mr. Chairman - I do not know how much time I have left - on this whole question of the fishery. It has been a political football in Newfoundland for longer than I can remember and long before I was born, for various partisan political reasons. And I do not think there is any question, all members of the House would readily agree, from a general developmental philosophy point of view, perhaps, all of us in this House, of whatever political stripe, would adhere to the statement. It is just too bad that when we get down from that statement, we cannot sort of work out a strategy which is common to all of us, that the fishery is perhaps the most important resource for Newfoundland's successful development over the long-term, more important than any other single resource that we now possess in the Province. The question, after you agree with that basic premise, is how, then, can strategies be put in place to ensure that we optimize that single, most important resource for job creation and for wealth generation for the people of this Province.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):

Order, please!

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

MR. GILBERT:

It is interesting to hear the Premier admit that his government has no power to set up an independent study on the fisheries. I believe he said that he would become a paper tiger. I am sure that he will now admit, had he had the same power when he was negotiating the offshore agreement with the previous Liberal government, when he was negotiating with a sledge hammer instead of sitting down to negotiate, in other words, the people of Newfoundland have been misled by that government over the years when he was telling them he was going to set up his own committee, he was going to form his own agreement, he was going to manage the offshore oil. He has just admitted now that in the fisheries resource, he has no power to set up an independent study, and I am sure it must apply the same way with offshore oil.

However, be that as it may, I am standing to talk to the Estimates Committee and particularly on the budget for the Premier's Office. I have heard many questions being asked by my colleagues. I have not heard very much of a strong defence from members opposite or any answers to those questions. Some hon. members have used the time-worn, hackneyed defence of the budget using the Churchill Falls agreement. The fact that there is a Churchill Falls agreement seems to be the only thing that members opposite have to justify the misrule that they

have put this Province through for the last fifteen years. At least we had one. We did get an agreement signed, we did get some power out of Churchill Falls. We had an agreement. That is better than we can say for what they have done on the Lower Churchill.

I might also remind members opposite that, at the time it was signed - and again, I was not here and I am sure the Premier was not - that both parties supported this agreement and thought it was a pretty good deal.

I do not think that this is a good defence of the budget, any more than I think that the Atlantic Accord, which was just signed before the most recent election, will solve the problems that the current government has gotten Newfoundland involved in during the past fifteen years. Jobs was the mandate when the Premier went to the people in the most recent election, and where are the jobs? The only jobs we have heard of so far in this session is jobs for defeated politicians and Tory Party workers.

Now, I ask the question, in the SEED programme that the minister of manpower or development is talking about, we, in the Opposition, do not find out if any of those programmes are put out, unless we go through the federal government and Canada Manpower and ferret it out ourselves. It seems that members opposite get this information a lot quicker than we do. Is this another example of political - 'skullduggery' might be the word?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Chicanery.

MR. GILBERT:

Yes. We have that problem in opposition, and if there are jobs created, we would hate to think that maybe the same attitude was taken with the SEED programme that the minister is talking about so proudly, the one that is going to introduce 6,000 new jobs in Newfoundland. We would hate to think that the same attitude was being adopted by members opposite as the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) stated shortly before the election in his letting of highways agreements for paving, that it was only going to be done in government districts. I hope that is not the policy that is going to be followed in the employment of youth this Summer.

MR. DAWE:
(Inaudible).

MR. GILBERT:
I can bring papers to you, but I am not going to argue with you about that. You have to live with your conscience on that.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Withdraw that then.

AN HON. MEMBER:
You hit a nerve with the minister.

MR. GILBERT:
Yes. You know, the only thing that I can see, Mr. Chairman, is that really, members opposite, when they are defending this budget, cannot defend it. There is nothing to defend. There have been cuts. The municipal grants have been eroded over the last two or three provincial budgets, putting the onus to govern the municipalities on the towns in Newfoundland to the point that, right now, most of the towns can barely find the funds to be able to provide basic services for the citizens without having to put

crippling taxes on them. The provincial government has opted out of doing this, they passed it on to the the municipal governments. So you will find, this year, in November when municipal elections are held, it extremely difficult to get responsible people to run for those positions which is very, very important to Newfoundland.

Health care has been cut. I will give you an example - \$180,000 cut out of regional clinics, enough to have put a clinic in Ramea or Grey River or Francois.

Now, Mr. Premier, in the budget, for your office, \$100,000 has been budgeted for transportation. Last year the budget for transportation was \$67,500 and the revised budget was \$91,000. This year we have a figure of \$100,000. That is a good round figure. How was it made up? Is it for travel by automobile, by boat? How much is it for by boat? How much for automobile? How much for an airplane? In other words, how is that \$100,000 arrived at? Is the \$100,000 going to be for hovercraft or airplanes or helicopters? Does it include hotels and meals? If not, where does the hotel and meals budget show up? That is not shown in transportation so where does it show? Does this \$100,000 shown here include the Premier's aides when he travels, or are they covered somewhere else in this thing?

Let us take a typical situation: Since this House opened the Premier and his Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) went to Ottawa a couple of weeks ago. Maybe the Premier would like to tell the House how much a typical trip like this would cost the taxpayers in Newfoundland? Maybe

the Premier would like to tell the hon. House how he can justify this amount of \$100,000 for travel in a Province that has 30 per cent unemployment. In Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir, 75 per cent of the people are unemployed and living on an annual income of \$7,000 a year - that is made up of unemployment insurance and ten weeks on a make-work project.

Now how can this government justify a total figure for the running of the Premier's office of \$935,000 to operate your office for a year. How can you in a Province that has the problems we have? That is my question to the Premier.

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

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Chairman, I just find it astounding that the hon. member could say, on the business of hydro development, that - I mean, if the people of Newfoundland heard the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert) exclaim to justify this whole business of the Upper Churchill versus the Lower Churchill, at least, the hon. member's Party has a contract. In other words, is what the hon. member is saying is that he now supports the Government of Newfoundland signing a contract on the Lower Churchill like what happened on the Upper Churchill. Because if that is so the hon. member -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh.

MR. GILBERT:
Answer the questions.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
I mean, that is unbelievable to

think that we could go into another sixty-five year agreement and have it on prices that are now existing today, no reopeners, no escalation, that the price actually goes down after the first forty years. No, no, not of that, no, but this is what the hon. member said, at least we had a contract. You know, if the members only knew.

AN HON. MEMBER:
It is silly.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
It is silly, yes. An hon. member who is a businessman to take that approach to the development of our resources, ought to go back and look at his bottom line because, if he operates his business like he is saying for the Government of Newfoundland now to operate its business, then we would be bankrupt long ago. I mean it is just too silly to talk about and the hon. member surely cannot be serious about it.

MR. GILBERT:
Well, forget about it then and get on with something else.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
And the whole idea that we have some power, we have not got enough power to be able to use it on the Island. This is the whole point. The way the recall is is 300 megawatts, it is not enough power to use for all the citizens of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador because, if you had to bring the power, even at the cost at bust that it is right now of 3.5 mils, but only 300 megawatts, the price that you would have to pay for 300 megawatts would be a lot higher than people are paying now for hydro in the Province. So you cannot bring a line, it is not economic, you need somewhere

around 700 or 800 megawatts of power in order to make it economic, the line economic in the sense that the price would be the same as we are charging now.

So what the hon. member is talking about is just absolute balderdash, I mean it is crazy to try to -

MR. GILBERT:

Answer the question.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I am answering the question. The issue was the hon. member brought up the question of hydro and at least they got a contract, in other words as long as you get a contract, regardless of what its nature is and what its terms are, that justifies everything. I mean if we had taken that approach on the offshore we would not have the Atlantic Accord that we have now, Mr. Chairman. We could have gotten a contract, the Nova Scotia deal that Mr. LaLonde sent down in other words and we turned it down and rightly so and we got twice as good, ten times.

MR. FLIGHT:

Clause 54 is twice as big a giveaway as Churchill Falls.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Oh, the hon. member will live to eat his words on that.

It is like, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member's questions on jobs. You know, over the last year or two members of the Opposition were saying about the whole question of jobs, you will never get a concrete platform. Now, all of a sudden, in the last while there has not been so much talk now of the government not getting it. It is like us getting a deal on the offshore, that the majority of Newfoundlanders and the majority

of Canadians say is good, good for Newfoundland, that is an accepted fact now, that is history now, do not talk about a document, perhaps, which is the shining document that is going to stand for an awful long period of time in the future as being one of the best documents ever signed by the Government of Newfoundland on behalf of the people of Newfoundland, that is history now, do not talk about that.

In the same way now I suppose when the government, because it stuck to its guns on the mode of development against both the Opposition and many other people, that suddenly now when we get the concrete platforms, of course that will be recent history too, and the jobs that we are going to get accrued from there, then when we start on the top side -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Just one second. I am not finished yet. - then when we start on the top side of the platform and get the concrete and then we start to get some of the top side jobs here to add to the bottom side jobs, which will then get us into tens of thousands of jobs I guess that will be recent history too. But the time is going to come, Mr. Chairman, in the next year or so when those things are going to come about through the negotiations that this government is going to have with the oil industry and the federal government.

And then I do not know where the hon. member is going to be with all these kinds of comments that he is making now. Of course when we bring them up then, of course

it is history, it is all done, it is all done and over with. I can assure the hon. member that there will be significant jobs created in this Province, thousands and thousands, and tens of thousands of jobs over the next four or five years -

MR. GILBERT:

It is nice to know you are copying another Liberal line.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Yes. Yes. We will see those jobs come about. In the same way, contrary to what the member's party opposite wanted to do as it related to Gaultois and Harbour Breton and Ramea and close them all down, Michael Kirby told me he had the okay of the minister, that they were going to close down all these plants. We forced them into a restructuring agreement that they did not want to enter into to keep these plants open and Price Waterhouse, Michael Kirby, David Mahon, all the people who worked for the federal government, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and worked for Mr. Lumley and his people at the time, were completely opposed.

Mr. DeBane even had to get on the phone to get the okay from the Prime Minister, because it was opposed by everybody, to make a minor change from where they were during some of the negotiations that we had, and at the time the Prime Minister was over in Europe somewhere. And this was a minor thing. They were completely opposed. And now of course here we are, Burin was gone, I mean the federal government talk about Burin, I could talk about Burin all day. Burin was gone completely and we said it had to be a secondary processing facility. And now we find out

that it is a very, very successful, brand new products, no other products like it in the world, now on the tables of Americans and will soon be on the tables of Canadians and Newfoundlanders, some of the best products ever produced and that response comes from the marketplace and not from here. And there are more jobs there.

They have gone to a double shift now in Burin. A lot of the workers are gone to Marystown, those who have not were left - there were only thirty or forty left there, they took out the priming machines, left in the secondary machines, started with thirty, started to develop new products for the first time, because they were pushed to do it under the agreement, otherwise it would not have been done. I mean we should all hang our heads in shame, forget about politics, Newfoundlanders generally, that we are here since 1520 or whenever, prosecuting a fishery, and it is only now in 1985 that we are actually getting into processed groundfish. I mean, talk about unemployment rates and having a problem. No wonder we have a problem, if only in 1985 we have decided that we can market and produce a good product - groundfish secondary processed product - then we do have a problem. And the problem is symbolized if you will, in that incident in Burin.

And there will be more jobs, hundreds of more jobs in secondary processing on groundfish, I am not talking about pelagics, I am not talking about what has already been done in crab and so on, you still have a limited fishery there, but in groundfish we can create hundreds and hundreds of

more jobs in the secondary processing end of the fishery which we have never done, the old companies never did. They were satisfied to get the cod blocks to go down to Boston and then put them in the plant at Danvers and have them secondary processed down there. And even though there is a tariff on, Mr. Chairman, just let me say this, even though there is a tariff on for processed fish in the United States these products are of such a quality and are such an attraction now to the American public in the supermarkets in the United States that we are still able to make an extremely good dollar as it relates to it. So there are the jobs.

On to health, health has not been cut. We have increased our budget in the Department of Health over the years. The year that all the fuss came up, Mr. Chairman, about health cuts there two or three years ago, we increased it by 11 per cent and all the other departments by 7 per cent.

I ask the hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert) to read that Royal Commission on Hospital Costs and Nursing Home Costs. Do you know that the royal commission found that near the end of one budget year there were homes and hospitals that had some surplus in their budgets and what they intended to do was make transfers within their budgets to their own pet peeves just before the final March 31st date came, but the royal commission was smarter and found out.

Mr. Chairman, just to further that whole question of health, after the hearings of the royal commission were over, the hospital association asked to appear again

before the royal commission with some new information and the royal commission said, 'Fine, no problem, we will let you appear before us again.' They came in and presented some facts, there were three or four questions asked by the chairman and the commissioners of that royal commission that the hospital association could not answer, was completely shut down the point that they were going to make in this special presentation after all the public hearings were over, and it is very, very enlightening to read that royal commission report because it contains an awful lot of good information as it relates to the whole question of hospital costs. But the health budget has not been cut, it has been increased every year. The amount of the increase is where the debate comes in. It is like talking about the CAT Scanner over at the Health Sciences Complex, we need another couple now, we need them in the regional hospitals in the Province. We have increased the budget on equipment for example in the Department of Health. I think it is \$5 million or \$6 million a year just going for equipment in the health field for equipment. If you waited until you could afford it, or until the price of the piece of equipment went down you would waste ten years. Medical technological equipment is some of the most expensive per unit to make in the world. There is hardly any other component or piece of technology which has the expense attached to it as does medical technological equipment. It is very, very expensive and because it has just a small market within what everybody knows, obviously, it is causing all jurisdictions problems in trying to deal with a health delivery

system.

On the question of travel as it relates to my own estimates, last week was a good example that the hon. member mentioned. How much does the hon. member have to go back and forth to his district for a year? How much?

MR. GILBERT:

Three hundred and thirty-nine dollars a trip, twelve of them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No, no!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Just one second now. How much in total? I got \$100,000 in my vote and that is used for going to Ottawa or Halifax or to wherever it is I go as a Premier.

MR. GILBERT:

What is included in it?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

It is the transportation costs of going and coming. Like to Ottawa and back, I do not know you can call up Air Canada and get what the costs would have been for me last week. Now perhaps the hotel bill came out of that too I am not sure.

MR. GILBERT:

I would like to know.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I am getting about \$19,000.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

About \$19,000 district allowance and the hon. members are complaining about their amount of money over there. I can only say to the hon. gentlemen I do not travel as much as any other Premier in Canada, number one, number two, I do not travel as much as the former Premier

travelled. We did a study a couple of years ago. I did not travel as much even as Mr. Smallwood travelled. Now that is a fact. I do not trip all around the world like just about all the other Premier's have done in the last year and a half. Every one of them have been to China or Japan or whatever. This is travel to Ottawa and back or to New York when I have got to go down on a matter of finances or whatever.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am probably going to get the questions in but not the answers but we can always wait for those later.

I too, actually, want to go back over the travel one, but there is a couple of other comments that I would like to mention as well. The Churchill Falls power contract seems to be somehow the substance of this debate, or at least a lot of the substance for it. I know I should not do this but I have to agree somewhat with the tenure of the arguments that are coming from the Liberal side over the last little while.

When we had the Churchill Falls debate last week and the week before on the private members' motion, I went back through Hansard very carefully because the Premier has continuously insisted that it is the fault of Mr. Smallwood and his Liberal regime that that contract was signed that the legislation was put in place for it, yet, looking over Hansard

from 1961 to 1969, when the first legislation seemed to come through to enable that contract to be signed, to the time it was signed I could find very little from the then official Opposition that said that this was a bad contract to enter into. As a matter of fact most of the comments laudatory about it.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. FENWICK:
That is true, but the fact is that the Legislature in 1961 allowed CFLCo, or whatever the predecessor, to sign the contract and that was the point at which it should have been pointed out, but it was not. The other thing is that I look over here at the member for Stephenville (Mr. K. Aylward), he is not here right now, but he was not even born in 1961. The member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey) was probably about a year old at the time.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
(Inaudible) you better get on with then, if that is your argument.

MR. FENWICK:
I am not trying to apportion blame, but by continuously insisting that the Liberal party and Mr. Smallwood were responsible for that contract, without pointing out accurately that the Opposition never raised a protest about, is not being fair about the whole thing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Chairman, I would like some silence?

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):

Order, please!

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:
The fact of the matter is the contract at the time, even when it was signed, even when the terms were finally known was universally applauded by editorials in The Telegram to the members and so on. It was only in 1973 when the price of oil started to rise that it became apparent that an escalator clause was required. And I wish that people would be a little bit honest in this debate. The fact is it was not anticipated at that time that these things would occur.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
(Inaudible).

MR. FENWICK:
It was the escalator clause.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. FENWICK:
Right. But nobody foresaw that, so why do you continue to blame these guys?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
No other contract in the world (inaudible).

MR. FENWICK:
Okay, the fact of the matter was that none of the members on the other side were able to point that out. So I do not see where you get the sanctimonious position of saying it is their fault when the Opposition did not point it out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. FENWICK:
Oh, come on now! None of them

were in the House as well.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. FENWICK:
Well okay if we want it in parties, we should point out, Mr. Speaker, the Premier said in 1961 or 1969 when it was signed you were a member of that self same party, so why not take some of the blame for it?

AN HON. MEMBER:
Not you. What party?

MR. FENWICK:
The Premier. In 1969 what party were you a member of?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. FENWICK:
Come on! Well let us leave that for a while.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Chairman, give me some time will you?

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):
Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

The hon. member for Menihek.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order please! The hon. member for Menihek, carry on!

MR. FENWICK:
I am sorry, I did not hear you, Mr. Chairman. There are too many people talking.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to get back to another point that the Premier raised, and this is actually a very interesting point.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Could we have order please?

The hon. member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The next question I have for the Premier about the statements he just made, he was saying that there is a right to recall 300 megawatts of electricity. And the conclusion that he seemed to be coming to at the time was that the technology and the cost and so on make it uneconomical to bring that back.

What I would like to do is ask him, in terms of this debate, which is sort of curious, but, as I just finished reading the Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro report that was tabled yesterday, I noticed in there that they had spent, I think, a million and a half dollars, in looking at plough technology in terms of driving the cable underneath the ocean. And the impression was left in the report that as a result of this technology we are perhaps in a position where the cost of the tunnel had dropped dramatically, and I hope that they have.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
It is still too expensive. The cable (inaudible).

MR. FENWICK:

So you are saying that it is still too expensive in terms of -

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Because of the cable, yes.

MR. FENWICK:

Okay. That is one of the questions I wanted to ask you.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

(Inaudible).

MR. FENWICK:

The other thing I would like to get into is some of the comments about the concrete platform versus the floating platform that the Premier has brought up. Quite frankly he continued to recall the tens of thousands of jobs. And I have gone over that Environment Impact Study, the Hibernia one, and I admit there is only one oilfield, I am not saying that there is not a possibility of others being developed, but at this point there does not see looking at all of the studies any that are on the horizon at this point.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Terra Nova.

MR. FENWICK:

Well, at this point nobody is saying that it is that big enough to be commercially exploitable.

The question I have is that looking at the study it is obvious that the Mobil group of companies that are involved there prefer the floating platform system. It is not stated anywhere in the study, but it is the only conclusion that you can thumb through as you read through the study, you know, page after page, especially the five or six volumes that you do not actually get when all you get is

the summary. And nowhere do I see the tens of thousands of jobs. I see, on average, an average of the twenty years or the twenty-two or the twenty-three years -

PREMIER PECKFORD:

If we accepted that, you would be saying, why are you accepting it?

MR. FENWICK:

No, no, I am not asking whether you accept it or not, I am just saying that -

PREMIER PECKFORD:

You are being awfully naive to accept it. Now that we are not accepting it -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Now do not be picky.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Chairman, they are going to get their chance to answer afterwards.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):

Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

(Inaudible).

MR. FENWICK:

The dynamatic dual over there!

The question really comes around to, I do not see the tens of thousands of jobs even using the concrete platform option as is their point of view. As a matter of fact, the way it looks that the concrete platform option is the hewers of wood and drawer of water option. It is the one that requires the low technology trade. And when you look at the twenty-five year period or the twenty year period of the oilfield, it does not seem that there is any substantial difference in the amount of

employment for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in either of the options, or at least it does not seem that way when I read it. Now, whether they are lying to us or not, I do not know.

MR. DAWE:

Is the member saying that the technology needed is not there?

MR. FENWICK:

No, no, I am just saying the impression we have been given by the Premier is that we are capable of doing these, and the impression he has been giving is that the trades and skills we have now are adequate for it, whereas with the floating platforms we do not, we do not have the shipyards and so on and so forth to put it together. I am not saying that there is any less skill involved.

The point is, though, that the number of jobs involved is somewhere between the number of 1,300 and 1,600 on an average over that 20 year period of time, no matter which mode of production you take. At least that is what the study itself says. Now, if the government has information that says that these numbers are hogwash, that they are totally incorrect, I would like to hear them soon. Because so far that study has sat there, and although the government has argued that they do not accept the conclusions that they seem to be leaning towards, nowhere has the government really substantially said these numbers are all incorrect on a line by line basis. I have not seen that at this point, so the impression remains that that is the way it is done.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. FENWICK:

One last little question - \$100,000 for transportation for the Premier. I was looking back on the House of Assembly members, of which are about twenty-five or thirty of us as far as I can figure out, and we are looking at something like \$63,000 for transportation. One hundred thousand dollars for the Premier for transportation and \$63,000 for about twenty-five of us does not really seem very fair, actually, in terms of moving us around.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Chairman, before we rise the Committee, I would like just to make a couple of responses and then I can adjourn the debate.

Number one, I say honestly to the hon. member, I think that is a real cheap shot. I do not travel all that much. As a matter of fact, perhaps I should be travelling more. I only go when I am forced to go, really when I am forced to go, to Ottawa or Toronto or Montreal or New York. Last year I was down to New York with a group of people, had a meeting with Standard and Poor's and Moody's on our credit rating and so on, with our fiscal agents, and that kind of thing. I do not travel around the world and I travel less than just about any other Premier in Canada and less than the former Premier.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:

The argument was not that you

travel too much, the argument was that you have forced us to make twelve trips a year.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Well, I do not know about that.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The costs went up in 1984 actually.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

The reason why the costs went up in 1984 was because of some of the travelling I did relating to the offshore. Now, we have still fixed it at \$100,000 this year. But, as some of the members here know, there were years when I did not spend my travel vote. How many times in 1984 did I use a helicopter? You can count it on one hand - once or twice. And I will drive a car, take a taxi and drive just for that purpose.

MR. FLIGHT:

What about the jobs in Hibernia?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

The hon. member is taking a very narrow vision of the next twenty-five years. There is nothing only Hibernia on the horizon for the whole twenty-five years, and secondly, the whole business of the numbers in that, it is a negotiating document, and he should know that, and he should not be so naive as to accept everything that he gets from the companies.

I adjourn the debate.

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

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

The hon. the member for Terra Nova.

MR. GREENING:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred, have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

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

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, before moving the adjournment of the House, may I advise the House with respect to the Committee meetings. I would ask the Clerk of the House to follow me, because if there is any correction, I want to have it.

Tonight in the House at 7:30, the Social Services Committee will continue its review of the Education estimates, and my understanding is that tomorrow morning, as well, in the Colonial Building, Social Services will continue, if necessary, its review of Education, but if Education is finished -

MR. FLIGHT:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

On a point of order, the hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

The minister had an agreement with the Opposition that there would be no Estimates Committee meetings on Wednesday morning. His own caucus indicated their desire not to have them because it would interfere with their plans. We agreed, Mr.

Speaker, and that is the point of order.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

I had no such agreement with the hon. gentlemen there opposite, it is a figment of the hon. gentleman's imagination.

MR. TULK:

You asked for it last night.

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no point of order.

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Tonight at 7:30, the Social Services Committee, in the House here, will continue its review of the Education estimates.

Tomorrow, in the Colonial Building, Social Services will continue again, if it is necessary, Education, but if Education is finished, it will go into Justice.

MR. J. CARTER:

It will not be finished.

MR. MARSHALL:

Well, if it will not be finished, that is fine. There are so many hours. If hon. gentlemen want to filibuster, let them filibuster.

Tonight in the Colonial Building, Mr. Speaker, the Resource Committee will review the Fisheries estimates.

Tomorrow in the House, the

Government Services Committee will continue its review of the Transportation estimates.

I move, Mr. Speaker, that the House at its rising do adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3:00 P.M. and that this House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 5, 1985 at 3:00 P.M.

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Answers to Questions

tabled

June 4, 1985

Tabled 4 June
1985

REPLY TO MR. FENWICK'S QUESTION OF MAY 6, 1985

- Mr. Fenwick (M.H.A., District of Menihek) - To ask the Minister responsible for Petroleum Directorate to lay upon the Table of the House the following information:

What is the place of origin of the individuals working in the offshore oil industry?

- (1) Specifically, what is the total number of people working there?

The total number of people employed in the oil industry (offshore/onshore) as of March 31, 1985 is 2123.

- (2) How many are Newfoundlanders according to the offshore oil regulations?

The total number of Newfoundlanders included in the above is 1315.

- (3) What percent are Newfoundlanders?

62% are Newfoundlanders.

- (4) What is the change in that percentage over the last six years since 1979 on a year by year basis?

<u>Year</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Change in % over previous year</u>
As of March 31, 1985	62%	- 3
1984 (yearly average)	65%	0
1983 (yearly average)	65%	- 3
1982 (yearly average)	68%	+ 5
1981 (yearly average)	63%	
1980	N/A	
1979	N/A	