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Speaker: Honourable P.J. McNicholas

Wednesday

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have an invitation to the tenth anniversary of the Stephenville Festival, which is being celebrated this Summer, going around to all members of the hon. House. It is a gala tenth anniversary season, and I would hope as many hon. members as possible will make an attempt to attend the festival this Summer. They have a fine number of plays being put forward, and we are looking forward to having a very successful season out that way.

The festival runs from 1 July to 31 July, and the official opening will be 15 July. Brochures have been sent to all members of the House of Assembly, so I look forward to seeing as many members as possible. If you can make it, we would really appreciate seeing you. The plays being offered will be, again, I am sure, of great talent. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, for members on this side of the House may I say that many of us over here were attending the Stephenville Festival when the hon. member was in diapers, I dare say, many, many years ago, and have continued to be active participants in the Stephenville Festival. Indeed, this government has been an active supporter of the Stephenville Festival, financially and otherwise, and will continue to do so. We accept the hon. member's invitation, being the member from the district. I am not quite sure of the date of the hon. member's wedding.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
July 29.

MR. SIMMS:
July 29. So the hon. member will probably be on his honeymoon for a portion of the Stephenville Festival, and that, indeed, will be very sad.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Bonavista
North.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all hon. members, through your Your Honour, to join with me in expressing commendations and congratulations to two people from the district of Bonavista North who recently received significant awards for outstanding performances in their specific fields of endeavour.

In the first instance, I refer to Doctor Yong Kee Jeon, Superintendent of the Brookfield Hospital in the district of Bonavista North, who was recently

chosen as the Family Physician of the Year for all of Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:

When one considers the hundreds of doctors who serve from British Columbia to Newfoundland, one realizes the significance of this award, and in all its history, this is the first time this award has ever been received by a Newfoundland physician. Thus, the reward represents not only a time of pride and joy for Dr. Jeon and his family but for all Newfoundland.

The second outstanding achievement, Mr. Speaker, was that of Miss Diane Pritchett of Gambo. Miss Pritchett was the first prize winner at the April 30 contest for young opera singers held in Chicago.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

About 250 people, aged eighteen to thirty-five entered this contest. This particular contest is designed to provide a showcase for young singers. As a result, the proud winner will now be attending a six-week seminar in Italy sponsored by the Bel Canto Foundation. This Foundation was formed in 1976 to help young opera singers develop their careers, through providing the avenue to perform publicly - sponsoring of seminars and the provision of scholarships to selected candidates.

Previous award winners include Karen Hoffstodt, who has performed with Placido Domingo and with companies throughout Europe, and

Mark Doss who became the second American ever to win the Verdi International Competition in Italy and is now a performer at New York City Opera.

I am sure all hon. members would want to congratulate and commend both Dr. Jeon and Miss Pritchett on their outstanding achievements and prestigious awards and wish them continued success. They have earned honour and distinction for themselves and for our Province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of thing that I believe would be an innovative change to this House of Assembly, if we were to consider, perhaps, providing for some time to allow members to get up and make very important comments and statements, when otherwise they would not get the opportunity throughout the day.

May I again on behalf of government extend, in response to the hon. member's commendations to Dr. Jeon and to Diane Pritchett, government's best wishes and congratulations on two very outstanding achievements.

I noticed with great interest the member for Bonavista North's attempt to pronounce all the Italian names in his dissertation. I did not get a chance to jot them down, but I shall read Hansard with great interest to see how it comes out.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, it

certainly goes to show that when Newfoundlanders, or people who reside in Newfoundland put their minds to it, they can achieve some monumental things. In these cases, Dr. Jeon and Diana Pritchett have done exactly that and we commend them on their achievements. We are very proud of them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Before calling for Statements by Ministers, I would like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery Mr. John McLennon, a former member of this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

I would also like to welcome 102 Grade V students with their teachers, Mrs. Moores, Mrs. Coombs, Miss Symonds and Mrs. Godwin, from Macdonald Drive Elementary School, St. John's.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

MR. MATTHEWS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am very pleased today to announce the approval of another

185 projects under the government's Private Sector Employment Program. These projects involve a provincial contribution of \$395,912 employing 170 employees, and an additional \$176,340 employing 171 students, for a total contribution of \$572,252 creating an additional 341 jobs throughout our Province.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise that this program has once again this year been extremely well received and supported widely by the private sector. We have received more than 1,700 applications to date. Unfortunately, we will not be able to assist all of the applicants. The balance of program funds will be exhausted within a week or so, and final recommendations are being prepared now by the Interdepartmental Committee which is reviewing them.

Mr. Speaker, once again, another 341 jobs under the Private Sector Employment Program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, the key sentence in the minister's statement is 'unfortunately, we will not be able to assist all of the applicants'. Of course, he will not be able to assist all the applicants, because there are somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000 people in this Province who do not have a job today. That is why he cannot assist all the

applicants, nor should he be expected to assist all the applicants. His job, and the government's job, is to create an economy where free enterprise can do what it was designed to do, namely, employ our people, Mr. Speaker.

The problem is not with this program, this is simply a stop-gap measure, the problem is that the economy has been brought to its knees by this government, which does not know how to make free enterprise work, Mr. Speaker. The minister should not be boasting, the minister should try to sneak this in after the House is closed, like they do with other things, so that no one will hear about it. This is simply a band-aid to try to revive an economy which they have crucified, Mr. Speaker. It is a disgrace, that is what it is, and the minister should be ashamed to bring it in.

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour (Mr. Blanchard), who was in his seat a minute ago. I seem to have a problem getting ministers these days, but here he comes.

Yesterday, the minister will recall, in answer to a question he stated that: "Mr. Buffett" - referring to the chairman of the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal - has informed me that he has not acted in any case, either for employers, ERCO included, or employees. He has not taken any cases since he has been Chairman

of the Board. I have a letter from him..." I wonder would the minister table that letter?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Labour.

MR. BLANCHARD:

Mr. Speaker, I did in fact say I had a letter from Mr. Buffett to that effect. I told the hon. member that it was being examined. When I have the information in place - I have yet to speak with Mr. Buffett, Mr. Speaker; I hope to do it perhaps tomorrow morning - I will respond to the hon. member further then.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has the letter, so why does he not want to table it at this point? What has that got to do with any further investigation that he might be carrying on now? I would ask the hon. gentleman to reconsider and Table that letter that he has from Mr. Buffett? What is he trying to do with it?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Labour.

MR. BLANCHARD:

No, Mr. Speaker, I will not table that letter now. There is clarification needed in the letter, Mr. Speaker, and I have told the hon. member - this is about the third time - that I want to talk to Mr. Buffett, get some clarification of the letter, make sure of what he is saying in the letter, and I will table it then or give him information then.

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker, the minister yesterday stated that he had this letter. The letter is there. The words of Mr. Buffett are there. We pointed out to the minister yesterday what had gone on. Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, once again, why it is that he is refusing to table that letter from Mr. Buffett? Is there something in there that he wants hidden?

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

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

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

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I do not need to remind you, but obviously we need to remind the hon. the member for Fogo, this is his second supplementary question, all on the same matter, asking the very same thing. And it is clearly out of order, as Beauchesne says you cannot ask the same question over again. If you are dissatisfied with the answer, put it on the Order Paper for Thursday afternoon. You cannot multiply the question in any way, shape or form if it is the same. So, if he has other questions let him get on with it.

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

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. TULK:
The hon. gentleman is quite wrong on the first question, and Your Honour obviously knows he is quite wrong otherwise he would rule me out of order anyway. The hon. gentleman is quite wrong. The first question is, Will he table it? The next question is, Why will he not table it? And the third question is this, What is he trying to hide? Is there something in that letter that he wants to hide?

MR. BLANCHARD:
Absolutely nothing to be hidden, Mr. Speaker!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

To that point of order, the three questions that the hon. member asked are very similar, but I will allow that final question.

MR. TULK:
My supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Fogo has asked that final question.

MR. TULK:
Are you going to answer it?

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

MR. BLANCHARD:
Absolutely nothing to be hidden, Mr. Speaker. All I have said to the hon. member is the letter is somewhat unclear in some aspects. I am planning to sit down with the gentleman who wrote the letter to

get some further clarification. There is absolutely nothing to hide. I told him in the normal, standard manner, I will make the information available to him when it is clarified.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Environment (Mr. Russell) who yesterday came into the House with the answer to a question that I had asked weeks ago concerning PCBs storage in Stephenville and around the Province.

Now, with reference to that answer which he gave me yesterday, where the minister indicated that an area of PCB contaminated floor in Building 850 in Stephenville was removed, could he tell us what confusion still exists around the removal of this contaminated material? He indicates in his response to me that there is some confusion over whether or not the clean-up was completed as required, and he also indicates that the Department of Environment federally were to be responsible. Could he tell us what confusion there has been, or has it been resolved?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, I am not sure exactly what the confusion was on the clean-up, but I promise to get the information for the hon. member by

tomorrow, if at all possible.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Could the minister tell us if his department has assumed any of the responsibility for the clean-up or the monitoring of the clean-up, or to see that the clean-up was carried out to specifications to which it should have been carried out for the Province, and certainly for the people of the area? He indicates that there was confusion there and that the final decision was resting with the federal government. Could he tell us if his department's officials have checked that out?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, I do not know if they have checked it out recently. I understand that officials from the department did do some monitoring in co-operation with the Environment Canada people. I do not know when the most recent monitoring took place, but I will get all that information for the hon. member tomorrow.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Could the minister tell us if it is part of his responsibility to check into a matter such as this?

Do they just leave it with the Federal Department of Environment or do they also help monitor and check into these very important situations, especially the one that he gave me in his answer yesterday, which I assumed they had already done?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:
As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, this particular incident or case to which the hon. member refers was basically the responsibility of Environment Canada. Sometimes, on an occasion such as this, we co-operate with them even if it is their jurisdiction, and in some cases we do some monitoring after the fact.

Now, in this particular case I am not sure if we were required to follow up in an area that may have been in a federal jurisdiction.

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Environment and Lands, who was so nonchalant about those PCBs, as if it were candy he was talking about.

The minister is no doubt aware of the study that was done by the BAE group on the one radar site near St. Anthony where testing was done to determine the level of the PCBs, and that site was simply buried with gravel, with a recommendation that a few more loads of gravel be added in the

Spring.

Does the minister approve of this method of disposing of PCBs, simply covering them up with ground and walking away and leaving them?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, some time ago, I think the hon. member for Fortune -- Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) tried to scare half the people in the Province to death by saying there was a situation in that area that was going to cost \$1 million to clean up. Subsequently, Mr. Speaker, I made a statement about that. There was a report done and a study done, and the municipal council in St. Anthony has been briefed on it all, they have been given copies of the report, and we intend to spend something like \$2500 this year. The council is well informed on it and agrees with what we are doing there, and there is no problem.

MR. DECKER:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A supplementary, the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:
Is the minister aware that that study states that the study was inconclusive, because the ground was frozen when the study was done? Is the minister aware of this, and is he prepared to have another study done so that the people of Newfoundland can be assured as he is that there is no damage to the people of St. Anthony with PCBs?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, the study to which the hon. member refers is here, and I am prepared to table it. There is a copy of a letter to Mr. Parsons, the town manager of St. Anthony, from one of the officials in my department, which says:

"As you are aware, in late August 1987 this Department commissioned a PCB study of the disposal area at the abandoned radar site located near St. Anthony. It was suspected that this site could be contaminated on the premise that another similar site in Labrador turned up PCBs.

"An extensive survey was carried out throughout the entire area. The site was surveyed, photographed, and 77 soil samples were taken. These samples were then analyzed by an approved laboratory using the latest techniques.

"I am now pleased to inform you that the results of this survey have been submitted to this Department. Of the 77 samples taken, only one sample indicated a level greater than 50 ppm (parts per million), while the remaining samples all indicated levels of one ppm "...We can now state, with a high level of confidence, that the site does not pose any environmental problems. We do intend, however, to carry out the following steps to complete the job that was started in August (with respect to the restoration of the abandon radar site) provided funding is available...

"In the area that had a PCB level of 179 we intend to cap an area of

25 meters by 20 meters with imported fill."

MR. BAKER:
Table it.

MR. RUSSELL:
I will table it.

"Construct an open surface ditch in order to provide better drainage.

"construct a baracade across the entrance to the dump site in order to prevent vehicular traffic."

MR. BAKER:
Allow it to drain where?

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, I do not know if it is any business of the hon. the member for Gander (Mr. Baker), who keeps interrupting.

"With respect to these remedial measures, I would like to ask if this work could be carried out by your council. As you can see, the work is minimal and may only take as long as a week to complete.

"Finally, I request that the PCB sign be removed from the site at the earliest convenience and held until we can pick it up.

"I would like to take this time to thank you and your Council for the cooperation and hospitality you have shown me and my colleagues throughout this past summer. St. Anthony is not only a town with many interesting sites, it is a town that has character. I look forward to your comments in the near future." I will table this, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. DECKER:
The minister will know that the diagram accompanying that report shows that this site is draining into a pond. Is the minister prepared to simply bury this site and allow it to continue to drain into a pond, or is he going to take some action whereby this site is no longer draining into the water system in the area?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, if something else has happened in the interim since this report was done, and if there are other problems which have arisen, I am certainly prepared to have somebody from my department take another look at it. If things are different than what was contemplated or what is stated in this report, I will certainly be prepared to do something about it.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:
My question is for the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Simms), and it concerns the reclassification of the 2500 or 3000 management employees working for the provincial government in all its capacities - the Hay system, as I think it is called. My question is this: Of the 2500 evaluations done, would the President of Treasury Board confirm that close

to 900 of these evaluations are now being appealed, that the backlog is so long that it may take a year to clear, and that Vern Hollett, a former Deputy Minister of the Department of Public Works, has now been hired as a permanent Chairman of this Committee in order to hear all those appeals?

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

MR. SIMMS:
No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm any of it because most of it is totally inaccurate and misleading. I will tell you why, and the hon. member knows it. He called the office today and they gave him the information, so I do not know why he is bringing it up in the House. There are approximately 800 that are being appealed. There was originally roughly 860, some of them were withdrawn, so there are now approximately 800 out of the 2700 management on the Hay scale. Some of them were withdrawn. They have done 268 appeals out of those 860 since the early part of April. In approximately eight to ten weeks they have done 268. We do expect that it will take a bit longer than we had anticipated, perhaps until the end of the year. But the way the member phrased his question was as if Mr. Hollett was now, all of a sudden, becoming a permanent chairman. We had a permanent chairman there, Mr. Speaker, for the last two months. The Deputy Minister of Forestry was seconded, but we feel now that the Deputy Minister of Forestry should go back to this department, because originally we had anticipated it would only take two or three months. We have asked Mr. Hollett to serve as the

chairman for the next five or six months, until this is over, because of the fact he had experience in the system earlier and he has also been spending the last two weeks being trained for the position of chairman. In addition to that, there are five others seconded from various sectors, including the Public Service, the Auditor General's office, the Hospital Association, and the Department of Energy. Most of them on the committee have Director or ADM level positions. Two of them are female, and all the rest of it, Mr. Speaker. So the way the hon. member framed his question is not accurate at all and is totally misleading.

MR. FENWICK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

It is funny that most of what I said was confirmed by the minister so I do not see how it was particularly misleading. Mr. Hollett, of course, is a retired civil servant who is on pension from the provincial government. My question to the minister is this: Since he is in receipt of a pension of a considerable amount of money, would he confirm or not confirm that he is also in receipt of a second stipend in violation of the Public Service Pension Act for his duties as chairman of this board as well?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. STIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that question as notice. I feel quite certain he is not doing

anything that is in violation of legislation, but I will take the question as notice.

MR. KELLAND:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Naskaupia.

MR. KELLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Contrary to what the Minister of the Environment just suggested to one of my colleagues, what scares the people of this Province is not a responsible Opposition asking meaningful questions but a Minister of the Environment who does not know what he is doing, or does not appear to know what he is doing, when it comes to the disposal and storage of PCBs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. KELLAND:

Mr. Speaker, in laying the groundwork for my question, there is quite a quantity of PCBs stored in Happy Valley - Goose Bay. Some months ago a federal-provincial committee was struck, public meetings were held and a report produced. Now that report carried quite a number of recommendations on how to dispose of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). I ask the minister what is the hang-up in instituting some of these recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the report to which

the hon. member refers has not crossed my desk yet.

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker, I think that probably confirms my opening remarks.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. KELLAND:
One of the recommendations, of course, is that heat at a certain level is the only existing method, except for experimentation with chemical processes, to get rid of PCBs. Knowing that, is the minister absolutely certain that that method once we get a disposal unit, would be absolutely safe and would not cause environmental problems in itself?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, one of the problems, I suppose, with the destruction of stored PCBs is, as the hon. member indicated, the technological ability to dispose of them properly. And as I understand it, the only place in Canada right now that is set up to do this is somewhere in Alberta. There are two or three companies, as I understand it, who carried out experiments with a technology that has not been officially approved. One of them, I think, is in the State of Massachusetts, in the Boston area somewhere or maybe New York, but that has not been officially sanctioned by the U.S.

Federal Agency.

We are a bit concerned. We have had representation from companies here in the Province who wanted us to bring in that particular piece of equipment. We are not prepared to do that until we feel comfortable that it is safe to do so.

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KELLAND:
Now polychlorinated biphenyls are carcinogenic, are cancer causing. Any community that has them stored within their environment, Mr. Speaker, have to be worried about the storage. I ask the minister, when will he take some action to remove the PCBs from Happy Valley - Goose Bay and other sites in this Province?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, just as soon as we have the approved technology to do it.

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

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of the Environment: In his reply yesterday concerning recent reports of transformer oil dumped near Stephenville some time ago, he indicates that the cost of sampling, doing the water samples, is \$100 per sample. He says that the PCBs are not water soluble, and then he reaches the astounding

conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that the sampling would be considered to be 'more of a curiosity than a priority.'

In light of that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: Is he aware, first of all, PCBs are water soluble to the extent of .2 milligrams per litre? Is he aware that this concentration is actually increased in fetal animals to far beyond that? Is he aware that it is also soluble through the skin? In light of these facts, I would like to ask the minister if he still believes that the water sampling in that area is only a matter of curiosity?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is more of a matter of curiosity.

MR. BAKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

That is absolutely astounding, Mr. Speaker!

In light of these facts, first of all, will the minister investigate to determine that what I am saying is correct and, secondly, will the minister assure the House that the reported dumping will be fully investigated and that all the proper water sampling will be done?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to have the matter further investigated for the hon. member.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

I say to the Minister of Environment that the up to \$1 million is a figure from one of his officials that I merely repeated. Mr. Speaker, the minister wondered where the confusion came from. It is in a document he signed. He ought to read those documents before he signs them, the document that contains 'curiosity'. The word I want to introduce is the one my friend from Naskaupi just mentioned. The minister should realize that it is not a curiosity only.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

- but it has cancerous, in the literal sense, implications. He should realize that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member is making a speech.

MR. SIMMONS:

I thought, Sir, I was giving a good preamble.

Here is my question, the question for the Minister of Environment, who, Mr. Speaker, has been assuring this House for three years -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question, question!

MR. SIMMS:

He is the worst questioner over there.

MR. SIMMONS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask the minister of the Environment, Mr. Speaker, when is he going to get around to taking some action concerning the very serious problem of PCBs disposal? Will the minister inform the House how many approved PCB sites there are in the Province, and how many other PCB sites there are in existence, but not approved?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I think somewhere in the answer I tabled yesterday that question was answered, as to the number of PCB sites in the Province. Mr. Speaker, there is some concern, as the hon. member indicated, as to where PCBs are stored in this Province, and there are some concerns about it from a health viewpoint. As I mentioned, I would be very pleased to try to find a solution to disposal of these materials when the right technology is available in this Province, which it is not at the present time.

MR. SIMMONS:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe what we are hearing from the minister. He, unlike every other

responsible minister

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

The hon. member will please pose a question or sit down.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell the House why he is the only minister anywhere in Christendom to insist on waiting for technology, whereas everywhere else they are making sincere efforts to clean up this mess, to dispose properly of them? When will he come to this House with a plan of action to effectively address the problem?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of the Environment.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, to the best of my knowledge there is only one piece of technology and one site anywhere in this country, in Alberta somewhere, to dispose of PCBs. I am not about to come in with a plan to bring some technology that has not been approved for that purpose into this Province to dispose of PCBs at a cost that is astronomical.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage is again becoming somewhat of an alarmist. He indicated that the cost for the St. Anthony clean-up was maybe \$1 million, which was completely false. And I suspect the source of his information is not necessarily anybody in my department, but somebody else who may have a vested interest in that.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, the minister can spend his whole life attributing motives.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

If the hon. member wants a final supplementary that is fine.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, who delights in attributing motives to people not present in this House, to accept my word that it was an official of the department. Under the rules of the House he has no choice but accept my word until he can prove it false.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister will he get off his pedestal and stop attributing motives to people. Somebody has got to be an alarmist because we do not find the minister very alarmist over that particular problem.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

When is he going to do something to fulfill his responsibilities as the Minister for the Environment and get this PCB mess cleaned up and address the concerns that are around this Province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of the Environment.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, as a member of this House I have to accept what the hon. member says, but I do not necessarily have to believe it.

MR. CALLAN:

You should be concerned about PCs, not PCBs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout). One of the biggest problems facing the fishermen of this Province today is not only the scarcity of fish but the falling price of fish. Very simply I ask the minister what, if anything, is he or officials in the department doing about the price of fish and the sale of fish, not only in Newfoundland but in Canada today?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, through the functions of the Fishing Industry Advisory Board and the Marketing Division of the Department we are constantly monitoring the marketplace. We are talking to the people involved in the industry on a daily basis about conditions in the marketplace. And we have had discussions with

the representatives of the union about some initiatives that we might want to jointly take a little later. But I can assure the hon. gentleman and the House that we are fully aware of the market situation in North America and other parts of the world at the moment, and are fully on top of it.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EFFORD:
One of the greatest problems facing this Province today is that we always let the problem happen and then do something about it. Since they are now spending \$800,000 a year on marketing, did the minister or his department ever come up with the idea that possibly a provincial and national advertising campaign to make people more aware of fish products could curb the problem, get people into buying more fish, and in that way, with the demand there, the price would be there?

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, I wonder when the hon. gentleman came out from under the woodwork? Where has he been in this Province for the last three or four years? Where has he been since he got elected if he is not aware of the fact that this government, through the Department of Fisheries, through the Department of Development and Tourism, through the Fishing Industry Advisory Board, just a few months ago announced a major national campaign right across

Canada, over \$2 million, Mr. Speaker, on a generic campaign on fish? For, God sake, open your eyes and find out what is going on around you!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. EFFORD:
I can tell the Minister of Fisheries that I am like every other Newfoundlander and every other Canadian, wondering where our provincial Minister of Fisheries is and what he is doing!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:
I ask the Minister of Fisheries to table in this House what his department or the Department of Development has done this year, 1988, to advertise the availability of fish and fish products from this Province to the people of this country to try and increase consumption of that product?

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
I can tell the hon. gentleman that the Minister of Fisheries, only today, for example, was in Petty Harbour meeting with the Petty Harbour Fishermen's Co-operative. That is the kind of work that this Minister of Fisheries is doing. He has been in Fogo, he has been in St. Anthony, he has been on the Labrador Coast, on the West Coast, on the South Coast, all over the

Province of Newfoundland and Labrador working with fishermen, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Table it.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, I will go up and prostrate myself on the table of the House, Mr. Speaker. That is where I have been as Minister of Fisheries. Is the hon. gentleman not aware that we, in conjunction with the Department of Development and Tourism and with the federal government, are spending millions of dollars a year in promotion, in trade developments? Mr. Speaker, do you know there were 1000 people working in the Bay of Islands last year packing herring because this government took the initiative to go to the Soviet Union to look for markets? That is what this government is doing, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Minister of Justice (Ms Verge). In view of a very public debate that has been occurring over the last number of months, the last six months at least, and I have had representation on it, concerning the provision of fire services in the city of St. John's, the debate between the Firefighter's Union and the Fire Chief for the city, I would like

to ask the minister a specific question, and that is would she respond to the call for an inquiry into the recent fire on Springdale Street in which the life of an infant was lost?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, as is usual in the cases of sudden and tragic death in our Province, in this particularly unfortunate and tragic incident a judicial inquiry has been ordered. Specifically the judicial inquiry will deal with the sudden death of Lisa Power and the causes and circumstances of the fire at 120 Springdale Street. The judicial inquiry was ordered by the Director of Public Prosecutions immediately upon his receipt of the police report about the fire. That was done just about an hour ago. The police report was received this morning.

MR. LONG:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Justice a different question but on a similar matter, and it has to do with the concern that has been raised to me by a number of my constituents from the East End of St. John's, obviously a densely populated area of mostly wooden structures, about the comments being made in public about the morale situation of firefighters. Is the minister able to bring to the House any information with respect to the process that has

been underway to resolve the very public grievances and differences of opinion that have arisen between the Firefighter's Union and the Chief in which the whole question of morale amongst the firefighters has obviously been put at stake?

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

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker, since January we have had, under the leadership of the Deputy Minister of Labour, Mr. Howard Noseworthy, a committee involving representatives of the management of the St. John's Fire Department and the Firefighter's local, trying to identify areas of concern and to improve morale within the fire department. That committee, as I say, was established in January and has been operating since then. I should, quite shortly, be receiving a report from the Chair of the committee.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary, the hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:
The final supplementary I would like to put to the minister has to do with correspondence that I sent to her office some time ago and I have not received a response. I would still like the minister to undertake to find out for me whether the City of St. John's received any kind of remuneration from the federal government when the fire station was closed in Pleasantville? As a result, the whole protection and provision of fire services in the East End has been put at stake.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. LONG:
Would the minister respond?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. member asked an original question. The second question was not quite related to it, and certainly this final supplementary is in no way related to the first question he asked.

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
So I recognize the hon. the member for Twillingate, who is asking to be recognized.

MR. W. CARTER:
This question goes to the Minister of Fisheries. For some days now the people of St. Lawrence and Lawn have been waiting for a statement from the minister as to what his intentions are and what progress is being made with respect to reactivating their fish plant. Can the minister update the House now as to what is happening?

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

MR. RIJDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, yes, the hon. gentleman is correct. We have been in very intensive negotiations with Mrs. Ting, her legal representatives, and representatives of the government, over the last several days now, I guess a week yesterday, really. We reached an agreement yesterday between Mrs. Ting and her attorneys and representatives of the Province. It was our understanding and her commitment that the agreement, in principle,

the letter of intent, would be transmitted to the Province last night before the opening of business today. Unfortunately, for whatever reason, that has not happened, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the lady herself is presently en route to St. John's' and I might have more to say later today.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

Notices of Motion

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I ask leave of the House to introduce a resolution dealing with the sale of Terra Nova Tel and the impact this would have on the Province.

The reason I ask for leave of the House to do this is because I already have a resolution on the Order Paper and this cannot proceed unless there is leave granted by the House. It is the kind of resolution I would like to see dealt with immediately.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:

Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly, this side of the House is frequently in a co-operative mood and we are again today, as always. I have, in fact, had an opportunity to have a look at the resolution the hon. member proposes to put and have no great difficulty with it.

On the other hand, however, I am interested, as well, in seeking the co-operation of members opposite with a request to today, if we might - and this is not blackmail; I do not want anybody to get up and say this is political blackmail or anything.

Since I have the floor in responding to the request for leave, might I also ask the hon. member to use his influence, perhaps, to see if members of his party, on his side of the House, might be prepared today, when we get to the Private Members' motion portion, to make some kind of an agreement whereby we could shorten the remaining time for debate on the private members' resolution, which is, after all, one of our own resolutions. We are quite prepared to give up the time for it by allowing one more speaker from that side, perhaps, and the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) to conclude. It should take a short period of time.

That would then give us an hour and a half or so to perhaps get on with some of the people's business and some very important legislation. I would be interested in hearing a response to that kind of request before I indicate leave.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:

To the proposal, Mr. Speaker, we do not have any major objections to the resolution put forward by the member for Gander. We would be glad to put it through quickly, although we would like to put a few comments on the record of maybe five minutes or so with regard to this resolution.

With regard to the suggestion made by the Government House Leader, we have not had the opportunity to speak on the resolution put forward by the member for St. John's North and we both wish to make some comments on it; whether it be the full twenty minutes we are allowed, I do not know. But, of course, if we make our twenty minute comments and nobody else speaks from the Liberal side or the government side, that would then be disposed with. At that point, we have no objection to going on to government business, if that is indeed what transpires.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, on the matter of the proposal put by the gentleman from Grand Falls, we appreciate the co-operative spirit he talks about. The issue raised by the gentleman from Gander (Mr. Baker) is an important one and, I believe, deserves some co-operation. I am glad we are going to get it. It is an issue I do not have to elaborate on, relating to the sale of TNT. But I would hope that would be considered on its merits.

MR. SIMMS:

It will be.

MR. SIMMONS:

Okay. I am pleased to have confirmed that it will be considered on its merits because the other item should not be considered in tandem. The other item should be seen for what it is. It is not a matter of getting an extra hour or half hour, or whatever the case may be, to debate government legislation, it is an attempt to scurry away as quickly as possible from that despicable Sprung issue. Remember that the private members' resolution today, Mr. Speaker, has to do with Sprung, and this government wants to get away from that discussion.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:
We are going to see to it that it is rammed down their throats every chance they get.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:
In response, Mr. Speaker, and to try to conclude. I have already told the hon. the member for Gander I have no problem with the resolution. I thought while I had the floor I might put forth a reasonable request to members opposite in a spirit of co-operation. It is our resolution. We are not trying to run away from it. That is nonsense, absolute nonsense! We are proud of it! Members have

spoken on it in debate on the last day. We had one full day of debate on it already. We are just asking if members opposite might be prepared to call the resolution a little earlier today at, say, quarter to four or something so that we can get another hour or an hour and a quarter doing some government legislation. That is all, a simple request. If hon. members opposite do not want to co-operate, then we will keep that in mind the next time we get a request.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Do I have leave to introduce the resolution, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

Yes, the hon. member has leave.

MR. BAKER:

The resolution, Mr. Speaker, reads and I would like to table a copy.

MR. SIMMS:

First, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. SIMMS:

The agreement simply is the hon. member reads the resolution and we vote on it. There is no debate on the resolution. That is what we discussed.

MR. FENWICK:

To the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, we have agreed to allow the resolution to come in, but also I would like to have about five minutes worth of comments on it. So we do not agree with that particular deal being struck. Although we can support most of the resolution, we have some comments we would like to make on it. So, if it is all right with the Government House Leader (Mr. Simms), we can go with it until 3:00 o'clock and at 3:00 o'clock we can go to Private Members' Business. We do have some comments we would like to put on the record before we vote on it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

It appears to me there is just a qualified leave now. The hon. member for Menihek wants to insist that he speaks to the resolution or to the motion. That is not an unqualified leave of the House.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

If the hon. Government House Leader has no objection, we do not object to one member from each caucus having a five minute on the resolution. I think that is in order. If that is the only basis on which the hon. the member for Menihek will give leave, we do not object. One five minute speech from each caucus.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I have already said and made an agreement with the hon. member earlier and gave him my word we would have no problem dealing with the resolution as long it was a resolution for voting on and no debate.

Now, if you are going to throw in something else, additional debate, then I would like the hon. the Leader of the Opposition to consider a request I made earlier to his caucus, to give us a bit of time to do some government legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

We are prepared to withdraw our resolution or cut it short.

MR. WELLS:

We will sit this evening to some government legislation or sit tomorrow morning or sit some other time to do it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why not do it now?

AN HON. MEMBER:

No leave!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. WELLS:

With respect, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentlemen want to hear, just stop the gaggle of noise and they will hear what we have to say on the matter.

That resolution is on the Order Paper. We have had one hour's debate on it, not a full day, just a half day because the day was cut short to a two-hour day.

Now, Mr. Speaker, apparently an agreement was made between the hon. the Government House Leader (Mr. Simms) and the member for Gander (Mr. Baker). A monkey wrench has been thrown into it sort of by the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) who insists that he wants to speak on it. If he insists that, then he gets to speak on it. If the Government House Leader will not agree to a five minute speech from each caucus, then the agreement falls. I cannot help it.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, on the contrary, the hon. member can help it, if he wants to, if he wanted to co-operate. I have already said the hon. member's presentation has nothing to do with my proposal. Since I had the floor though and I am trying to extort, if you want, some -

AN HON. MEMBER:

A good word.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Extort. Yes, I am trying to extort co-operation from members opposite because, Mr. Speaker, that is the only way you will get it from them.

MR. WELLS:

That is not so.

MR. SIMMS:

If the hon. the Leader of the Opposition is not prepared to

co-operate in that regard, then, as I said, we will keep that in mind. With respect to his particular request, the hon. the member for Gander, we have no problem agreeing with one five-minute speaker from each party. I have already indicated that. But I really wish the Leader of the Opposition would give a bit more consideration to my request.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

I would like to point out to hon. members that there is no time today for five minutes from each side. It is now three o'clock and I will have to call Private Members' Day unless all hon. members agree.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By leave!

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

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker, the resolution reads:

WHEREAS the sale of Terra Nova Tel by Canadian National has reached its final stages; and

WHEREAS CN is now accepting final bids from only those companies that will provide adequate financial return to CN; and

WHEREAS some of these bids may result in a great loss of jobs in this Province and less competition in the communications industry; and

WHEREAS it is desirable to provide opportunities for local entrepreneurs to invest in this Province;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this hon. House request that CN give most consideration to those bids that do not involve significant job loss in the Province, that provide for local ownership of Terra Nova Tel, and that maintain adequate competition in the communications industry of our Province.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is very carefully thought out. The House is aware that at the time the decision was made to sell Terra Nova Tel, CN decided it would try to cut its debts by selling off some of its more profitable operations, and Terra Nova Tel was a profitable operation. At that time great concern was expressed, and I took it upon myself to attempt to slow down the sale or stop the sale. My reasons were precisely these outlined in the resolution, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I could see the possibility of a tremendous job loss because of this sale. That is one thing we cannot stand, a loss of jobs. Now, granted the job loss, Mr. Speaker, would primarily be in the town of Gander. I would like to point out that these are jobs that would be lost to the Province of Newfoundland.

There would also be job losses in other areas of the Province, besides Gander. I am thinking in particular of Corner Brook and St. John's. So, the job loss was a very great concern.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I was concerned

about what would happen to that company if, in fact, it were taken over by individuals who had no great concern for this Province or no feel for the Province.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Like who?

MR. BAKER:
The Minister of Career Development wants to know, 'like who?' The problem with this whole process, Mr. Speaker, is that we do not know who the bidders are. I have tried to find out who the bidders are. I know some of them, but I do not know them all, and, therefore, it would be unfair to name the two or three I do know about. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that one of them is Newfoundland Telephone for certain.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Is Harry Steele one?

MR. BAKER:
Now, Mr. Speaker, another concern I had at the time, aside from the job loss, and aside from the input of Newfoundland entrepreneurs, is a concern for the lack of competition in the Province. I feel the possibility exists competition will be lessened and I firmly believe the way things should operate is that it should be competitive. If, in fact, these are going to be private companies operating a service in the Province, there should be some kind of competition.

The whole process, Mr. Speaker, was a difficult one. A company was hired to supposedly handle the sale at arms length. We cannot find out, and I say we in terms of the individuals who have been working on this problem, we cannot find out who the bidders are.

They have gone through a process where they have eliminated bidders who do not provide enough money for CN and obviously this has to be CN's first consideration. They have to get value for that company. They have to get enough value to more than compensate themselves for the company. I understand there are a number of bids, I do not know how many, where the money involved is more than the company was worth, in a sense, more than the face value that they set on the company, a fair amount more.

The problem is not that the CN is not going to get enough money. They have gone through the second stage now. They have eliminated the bids that do not provide enough money, enough return, and they are now considering only the bids that give them enough money.

Now I think at this point, Mr. Speaker, it is very appropriate to say to CN, 'Of all of these bids you are now considering, you are going to get paid adequate returns from any one of them, but in considering which bid you are going to accept, if either one, we want you to take these things into consideration. We want you to take into consideration the competition in the Province. We want you to take into consideration the fact that this government, through some programs they are now bringing in, is trying to encourage the Newfoundland investment in Newfoundland and trying to encourage Newfoundland entrepreneurs to put their money where their mouth is and put it into the development of this Province,' and we believe that.

We believe the opportunity should be there for the Newfoundland

entrepreneur to now have some investment in the Province and investment in this company. So, 'Give more consideration to this local input certainly,' but perhaps the most important thing, Mr. Speaker, 'Give extra consideration to the bids, and there may be several, that offer some job level protection.'

I am not suggesting this House say that because there are 400 jobs there now, you have to maintain 400 jobs. That is not what it says. Because any company, even Terra Nova Tel, might, from time to time, increase or decrease staff. We cannot limit that. But we have to say, 'Give extra weight CN and federal government,' because really that is what we are saying, 'to the bids that guarantee a certain level of jobs that do not involve a big job loss.'

So, Mr. Speaker, very simply, that is the reason for presenting this resolution. I thank hon. members for giving leave to allow this motion to be presented and I also thank them for their support.

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.

It is unfortunate this is as good a resolution as we can put together considering that, I think, the first position of this government and of the Opposition parties and of the whole Province should have been the status quo.

The status quo, in my opinion, would provide the best degree of service, since it is a long established operator. It would also have given the greatest job security, since it is unlikely in any of the scenarios chosen the number of jobs which are currently there will remain.

One of the problems we have, Mr. Speaker, with this is, let us think of the two possible competitors which would conform to this. One would be Newfoundland Telephone, and Newfoundland Telephone, obviously, if it does pick up this particular operation will be very much interested in integrating it with its grid that it already has and that will mean, Mr. Speaker, we can probably look at the annihilation of a lot of the headquarter staff in Gander, because there is a different administration there. There is a personnel office, a purchasing office, there is a labour relations, there is a whole bunch of people there that clearly any corporation rationale about the way it would do things would try to eliminate them.

At the same time, I think anybody who has looked at the number of Newfoundland Telephone trucks going around the Province, and the Terra Nova Tel trucks, they will see very often they cross. They are going in different directions, and obviously there will be an elimination of jobs in that areas as well.

On this basis, if Newfoundland Tel takes it over, I am afraid we will see a considerable number of job losses. We do know they are bidding on it, we do know they are an interested bidder because, quite frankly, they told me that several years ago, that they were

interested in picking up these assets.

The other possible entrepreneur I understand would probably qualify as well would be that of our friend who owns Newfoundland Capital Corporation, which is Harry Steele. Even though he may have a different approach and may qualify as an local entrepreneur, although it is questionable now considering he lives in Nova Scotia most of the time, let us think about it from his perspective.

If he is going to pay the top dollar for it, and obviously CN is going to want to get top dollar for it, then all the money he injects into the company to purchase it must also be handled, must be financed. He must borrow for it, he must pay the interest on it, and he must get some sort of return of the money there.

Mr. Speaker, there is only two ways to do it, as far as I am see. One is to increase your revenue and the other is to decrease your costs. When you decrease costs you usually lay off people and when you increase revenue, that means higher telephone rates for the subscribers, neither of which are particularly attractive alternatives, but seem to be the things we have.

The final reason I wanted to mention is, since I do support the idea to minimize the job loss as much as possible, and I would like to see all other things being equal, that it be owned within the Province itself, the fact of the matter is the reason we are in this fix is because of an ideological straightjacket that the Mulroney government is in,

which has told CN to divest itself of its non-transportation, or its non-railway assets and that is the reason we end up with a situation which will do one of two things, either cost these subscribers more money or cost a lot of the long-term employees their jobs, either of which are not alternatives that I push for and are a result of the kind of Tory thinking we get in Ottawa. It is only reflected to a small degree here, luckily, and fortunately, let us hope it does not predominate.

Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BARRETT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BARRETT:
Mr. Speaker, we on this side are very pleased to support the resolution that has been moved by the member for Gander. In reading the content of the resolution, I really cannot see anything with which we would object. I would, I think, and I should, probably make some comments as to some of the observations the member for Gander, and more subsequently the member for Menihek, made as it related to the sensitivities and the issues surrounding this particular sale.

I think, first of all, we have to assume, have to be aware, and have to accept, the right of a corporation to divest itself of its holdings in any jurisdiction. I do not think, we, as a government, can force anybody to do anything they do not want in terms of a commercial operation.

I do share the concerns of the member opposite as it relates to who takes over this project. It was not too many years ago when this government became embroiled in a rather delicate situation involving the member's own community, and that was with respect to the removal of Eastern Provincial Airways from Newfoundland and from Gander, a move which this government, and the people who were a part of this government at the time, expressed views of total discontent over, but yet an inability to respond in any kind of an effective way.

To allow a company which was germinated in this Province, that received continuous financial support from this Province, to be taken over and then totally removed from the scene, with the exception of landings in this Province - and that is only because it is good business to do it. It is certainly not because there is any great desire to employ Newfoundlanders or to provide some return on the investment that was made by this Province into that particular project. I agree, on this particular issue, we have to be sensitive to that same thing happening here.

If the same people are involved, then we have to be concerned. Just because it is another name identification does not mean to say the same philosophy does not necessarily exist, that there could indeed be the erosion from this Province and from that community of some highly technical and highly qualified people, to move them to some other center under the pretext that it will, in fact, provide a more equitable operation or a more cost-effective operation. We are very concerned

about that happening.

I hope the man opposite, and the gentlemen opposite, recognize that not only are the players there that might effect the elimination of some competition in the Province, but there is also that element which has to be addressed as to the guarantees which can be given to this community and to this Province so that what is there, remains there. Again, I agree with him wholeheartedly, it does not mean every single, specific position.

As to this garbage the hon. member for Menihek gets on with, what else would you expect from him? He does not want any entrepreneurship in the Province anyway! So, what else would you expect?

To suggest a corporation in this day and age has not sensitivity about human resources is absolutely garbage! And for him to be able to stand up and say that in this House, unchallenged, is unthinkable, absolutely unthinkable!

I could cite far more corporations in this Province that address that issue than he can suggest to me quasi operations of a socialist nature which do the same thing, in an honourable fashion, and it is done for the benefit of the workers, of the people who work in those jobs, and for those companies.

You cannot slight, in one remark, all of the private sector in this Province by saying they do not care about human resources because the success of every company is based on the human resources they have within their corporations. Absolute garbage!

I certainly do agree we do have to be conscientious, and, if at all possible, we have to interject some review or be a part of the disposition of this resource. It is most important, the retention of the new technology that exists within that corporation; the retention of the management capability and supervisory capability; the positions of the workers; the positions of those people who are involved in computer analysis; and other high tech jobs that could very well be lost to that community.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. BARRETT:
Mr. Speaker, in summation, we on this side totally support the resolution.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Is the House ready for the question?

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour please say, "aye".

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Aye.

MR. SPEAKER:
Those against, "nay".

Carried unanimously.

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TULK:
I wonder if the hon. gentleman would consent to have the journal show that indeed it was a unanimous decision.

AN HON. MEMBER:
It was unanimous.

MR. TULK:
But it will not show unless we have a Division.

MR. SIMMS:
I wonder how the hon. member for Menihek voted.

MR. SIMMONS:
Both ways.

MR. TULK:
Both ways, as usual.

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER:
This is Private Members' Day. The debate was adjourned by the hon. the Minister of Development who has four minutes left.

MR. BARRETT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think, in my summation as a result of the motion on the Order Paper from my hon. colleague, the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter), as it relates to science and technology and the importance that has to this Province, I would again like to highlight that the principle of what we are debating here is not Sprung, the principle of what we are debating here is the attitude of members opposite as it relates to the advancement of science and technology in this Province. That is the issue. There is no doubt in my mind but that is the issue.

To follow through on the perceptions that are certainly being formulated as a result of the comments from that side of the House on this particular subject, I have received quite a number of comments from outside this House about the concerns of the academic community, about the concerns of the teachers in our institutions, in our high schools, about the concerns for the future of the children of those who are presently in high school wanting to undertake, or giving thoughts to careers in the general sciences program; careers in medical research, or careers in marine biology, or in fisheries technologies, or in computer assisted design or computer assisted engineering, or in satellite imagery analysis, or any of the high tech stuff. According to those opposite, Mr. Speaker, they should forget about it in Newfoundland. They should forget about it and live in Newfoundland, it is not an issue.

Fortunately, they are not the governing body in this Province. Fortunately, this government is committed to new initiatives, to new ideologies, to new technology, committed to ensuring that every opportunity exists for the young people of this Province to investigate, to become part of, to enlist in, to enroll in, to subscribe to science and engineering, because it is on that basis that this Province will grow, on that basis is the strength of this Province.

We know we have accommodated and accumulated in this Province a great deal of academic capability, a great deal of engineering capability, and they have proven themselves in producing technologies.

I suppose the Leader of the Opposition and some of his colleagues will now write the President of the University and suggest to him that it is a whole bunch of garbage to be considering the continuation of the Seabright Corporation. That it is a whole bunch of garbage, that they should be advancing the Ocean's 2000 Concept for the advancement of technology and research in this Province, because they do not like the shape or the colour of a cucumber, a technology which, contrary to their belief or that they do not want to admit to, is high technology, high technology!

And what can happen and evolve around that technology into other product development, all for the benefit of the people of this Province? Why does this particular project have to, in their view, prove itself economically before it even gets started? Every day they support initiatives by this government to invest millions of dollars into other projects which cannot prove themselves economically in the first year of operation, but for some reason cucumbers have to. Colormet systems do not have to, hydroballs do not have to, gang bangers do not have to, CAD Systems do not have to, but cucumbers have to. Why is there a difference? Because it is in a highly visible location, it glows in the night. They do not understand it, but because it is out there they can point their finger to it and they can get the media all uptight and all excited about it, and I am not sure why. Yet, it is something that is highly visible. So even the small minds, I suppose, have to have something with which to germinate a thought to keep them amused for a period of time.

AN HON. MEMBER:

We need hydroponics, right?

MR. BARRETT:

We need hydroponics, we need everything we can get our hands on that is new technology and provides a basis of interest for the highly technical capability which exists, and which we are trying to develop in this Province. And it is not at what cost. If we can see significant private sector investment to a company, an idea, then I think it is incumbent upon us to support it in this Province. We do not have to be, as I said last week, within fifty miles of the city of Toronto, or Ottawa, in order to participate and be a part of the high tech community. We can do that in Newfoundland. It is unfortunate, indeed, that we cannot penetrate the minds of members opposite to recognize that this, along with other projects, do, in fact, contribute significantly to this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I have great difficulty believing that I heard come from that hon. member what he said the last day he spoke and today, but I will deal with that a little later.

First, a few comments about the resolution itself. Based on the past performance of the hon. member for St. John's North, who frequently stands in this House, tongue-in-cheek, no doubt, and makes all sorts of outlandish comments and statements, partly to

provoke interest, partly to have a bit of fun, and partly for God knows what reason, but, nevertheless, that is his normal approach and I think all hon. members understand it. But I have no doubt he is greatly ruining the day he put on the Order Paper a resolution to commend the government for Sprung and allow this debate to take place.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:

The hon. member is one of those true contrarians who likes to provoke a little controversy. He does it very effectively and most of us understand it and do not attribute any ill-will to him as a result. Nevertheless, I am grateful to him for providing us with this opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I do not know what the explanation for the resolution is.

The MHA concerned is obviously too knowledgeable to put it forward seriously, but the resolution does invite comment on the government's performance and involvement in the Sprung project; it invites the House to go on record as commending the government for entering into this project. Now that gives us the opportunity to express sincerely our opinion of the government's involvement in this project. We have described it as a madcap scheme, and perhaps that is a very significant understatement. There are probably other descriptions that might be more accurate, but having described it as that, I think we had to be prepared to justify that description - not to the people of this Province, Mr. Speaker, because they already think that. Everywhere you go this project is a joke. It is the joke not of the

year, it is perhaps the joke of the century. Everybody is laughing at it. Everybody has a smile on their face big enough to take a cucumber sideways, they are laughing so hard at it. So is the rest of Canada, and that is unfortunate. If they are not laughing at us, the people in Nova Scotia are mad at us.

MR. PATTERSON:

They are laughing at your big salary when the federal party is broke and has to go begging in the streets (inaudible).

MR. WELLS:

Right.

It is difficult to understand, Mr. Speaker, how a government with any level of intelligence within it would get involved in this kind of mad scheme. Why they got involved: People across the Province are asking constantly--

Mr. Speaker, would you stop the dull roar, the unintelligent noise in the House?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

If the hon. member wishes to speak, if he would sit in his own seat or stand on a point of order, I would be more than pleased to recognize him.

MR. PATTERSON:

Tell us about the hockey sticks, the battery plant, the rubber plant (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Name him!

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I search for a logical explanation for this proposal, this madcap scheme we are dealing with at the moment, and the only thing I can think of is that last year, this time, when the Canada/France dispute was on, the government was all ready and charged up to go into an election. They thought they had a cause that would enable them to wrap a flag around themselves and charge forth and save Newfoundland, and they needed something else to go with it. Along came Sprung, and they jumped at it. The comments of the hon. Minister of Rural, Agriculture and Northern Development (Mr. Power) last February, when he said specifically, "Government did not have time to get into a feasibility study that would be all encompassing, which would take into account every aspect of the business itself, like how much production and where it would be sold." Why did they not have time? Were they rushing into an election? Is that what prompted them to rush at it? There is no other sensible explanation; everything seems to point in that general direction. That is why they went at it when they did, when you take into account, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the day before he made the announcement the Premier wrote the Federal Minister of Agriculture (John Wise) asking him for information on hydroponics, for the information they have available. He did not have the knowledge to judge it, yet the very next day, without the information, he rushes into an announcement. Why?

Why did the minister say they did not have time to do a proper study and a proper assessment? They committed millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars to it, and the

announcement was made, obviously, for political purposes. They got themselves into it and then they could not extricate themselves in any kind of a sensible way, and they have been carrying out a massive cover-up ever since. That is essentially what has been going on, a massive cover-up, pretending that this is a sound venture when everybody in this Province knows the difference, everybody, including most of the members sitting on the government side, I suspect.

MR. PATTERSON:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

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

MR. PATTERSON:

The Opposition Leader is misleading this House. He should tell us about the battery plant, the magnesium plant, the rubber plant, the chocolate plant, all these things they had while he was in the Smallwood government. And you sold out the Argentia railway, I have it here on my desk. You sold it out for the government, you gave your consent. They would not oppose it, and you would not oppose the abandonment of the Argentia branch line. Tell us about your salary, boy. Come on!

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You always know when you are making a point they cannot refute,

they have to go and try to find something to divert attention. In their desperation to divert attention, the hon. the Government the House Leader wanted us to give Private Members' Day today. We offered to co-operate; we will sit tonight, or sit any morning to accommodate the government side. You know when you are making a point, they get upset and they try to divert attention. And the hon. member has done it again. He does it all the time, but he does not succeed.

MR. PATTERSON:

Boy, level with Newfoundlanders. Your party is broke while you are taking \$100,000 (inaudible).

MR. WELLS:

They have been pretending that this has been a sound venture to cover up the massive mistake they made at the time. I sat and listened to the hon. the Minister of Development, the last speaker on this matter, talk about the leading edge of technology, and what we on this side of the House are against is bringing technology to Newfoundland. He spent the last two days trying to divert attention. What technology? All you have to do is read Aristotle or Pericles and you will find it described; the Greeks had it 3,000 years ago. What is he talking about?

The leading edge of technology that nobody else in the world knows anything about! They used the process in the last World War, Mr. Speaker, to provide fresh vegetables for soldiers, because they could not operate farms in the areas where they were serving. Is is a simple technology, but it ends up being more costly than soil vegetable production. Soilless vegetable

production ends up being more costly. Look at the Greek words. Hydroponics comes from the word hydro meaning water, and ponos meaning labour. It is a combination of labour and water. And that is one of the things that is wrong with the thing in terms of competing with normal technology, it needs labour and attention, and that makes it more costly. It is only competitive in a very brief season, when soil produced vegetables are not available. Everybody knows that. Anybody who stops to read anything about it knows that. The Federal Department of Agriculture knows that. They have warned people about it. The government was warned about it. The government is continuing on in this madcap scheme. Everybody in the Province knows about it. Everybody in the Province knows what is wrong with this proposal. It has turned out to be a monstrous sham, what the government is going through with respect to Sprung.

They are maintaining that political sham, Mr. Speaker, because they know the project cannot succeed as it is at the moment. If the government had brought in a proposal to develop a facility based on hydroponic growing of vegetables at a level of production that would meet Newfoundland's needs, I am confident the government would have found widespread support not only from the Liberal side of the House but, Mr. Speaker, from many people in the Province who would have gotten behind the government and tried their best to encourage the project and do what we could to supply our own needs.

The madness of it has been apparent in the last few weeks, when government has been trying to

sell this product in Nova Scotia and in New England, where they had to dump it for twenty-nine cents, having paid twelve or thirteen cents to get it there. They come out of it with a net of fifteen to twenty cents per cucumber. Those are the facts. Everybody knows that.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The numbers are wrong.

MR. WELLS:

It is no good the hon. member saying the numbers are wrong. Those numbers are right and they are available for everybody to see. If, Mr. Speaker, they had kept it in proper proportion, as they were advised, of a size that would meet the needs of this Province, they would have had widespread support. Even though there may have been some risk involved, people would understand that kind of effort and endeavour. It is the madness of having our people subsidize the cost of delivering cucumbers to Boston and Halifax that is offensive, Mr. Speaker. Our taxpayers are going to end up paying for that, and that is offensive, Mr. Speaker. To call it madness is being unduly kind. It is madness to think in terms that we could compete with a similar facility of this size in Ontario or Quebec, where, to begin with, they need less power because they have a higher level of natural light. The power they use will cost less, and they do not have to pay the cost of transporting it from the production area to the distribution point in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, that is clear madness and everybody in this Province understands it.

MR. WARREN:

Tell us about the Upper Churchill.

MR. WELLS:

There are other factors, Mr. Speaker, to which attention should be drawn. I will tell the hon. member about the Upper Churchill and the approval of the hon. Mr. Ottenheimer, the approval of the hon. Mr. Crosbie and all those other Tories, including all the people who sit on this side of the House at the moment. It is the silent dog who is the first to bite!

MR. WARREN:

You and Joey gave it away! You were part of it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. WELLS:

You know when you are scoring a point, Mr. Speaker. There they are. They will run off to Churchill Falls now! Well, we will deal with Churchill Falls when the time comes. We will run them over the Falls when the time comes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us deal with the Sprung issue and the question of whether or not the government should be commended, as the hon. the member for St. John's North is asking. The announced costs were originally proposed to be \$18.4 million. They have now gone up to at least \$22.5 million.

MR. J. CARTER:

You know why.

MR. WELLS:

I know why. I know why they have gone up to \$22.5 million - because the government has put the entire funds in it. The Sprung organization has nothing in it.

MR. PATTERSON:

You do not like St. John's. You said St. John's was a bullseye shop (inaudible).

MR. WELLS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, you can only say that it has gone up to \$22.5 million if you credit Sprung with the \$3.5 to \$4 million they were supposed to put in it by way of equity, and a half million dollars in guarantee. Only then do you get up to \$22.5 million. If not, the total actual cost has been \$18 million. I have seen no evidence other than the half million dollar guarantee to be given to the bank that there has been any real equity invested from Sprung, it is entirely a paper equity. So the real cost has probably been about \$19 million to date, and all of it the government is ultimately, I believe, going to be at risk for. They are absolutely at risk for over \$15 million, and the balance of the costs are derived from the amounts payable to Sylvania for the lighting fixtures; and that will drive it up to \$19 million.

MR. PATTERSON:

How much was the Linerboard mill?

MR. MITCHELL:

How much was the Linerboard mill?

MR. TULK:

It is working well.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) the federal Liberal government.

MR. WELLS:

Oh, I think the Tory Government spent about \$200 million or \$300 million on the Linerboard mill. The commitment prior to the Tories taking over was, I believe, \$81 million. When the Tories got hold of it, they expanded it to

\$300 million. Those are the numbers, Mr. Speaker, and they are there for everybody to see. When Mr. Crosbie got hold of it, that is what it went up to.

MR. TULK:
Any more questions?

MR. WELLS:
Now, Mr. Speaker, the direct government involvement as it was originally proposed, got out of whack and out of control. The Premier had originally indicated it would be \$2.5 million in cash and \$1 million worth of land. What they did, in fact, Mr. Speaker, was put in the full \$3.5 million in cash and contributed \$1 million worth of land for \$150,000, meaning another \$850,000 they tried to hide.

Then there is the extra guarantee for \$2 million, and the guarantee to the Sprung Companies for \$825,000, which they tried to cover up and explain as monies necessary to enable the company to pay the Sprung Companies the amount held back under The Mechanics Lien Act. Why did they guarantee a loan for the Sprung Companies? Why was not Newfoundland Enviroponics guaranteed? None of this has ever been answered, Mr. Speaker. They lost the horticultural expertise they did have, and they are left with a couple of tent makers who are probably very, very good tent makers, no doubt, they put up eight pretty good tents out there. But they have no expertise in horticultural matters, none at all. And they have limited, if any, security, because, Mr. Speaker, the real value of those buildings is probably \$4 million or \$5 million, not the \$15 million the government has into it. In Calgary it was assessed on the

basis of replacement cost in 1985 dollars at \$3.5 million. There has been a massive snow job done. No wonder the thing is white.

MR. PATTERSON:
We know who is paying your salary, boy. We know, but we will not tell.

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, we have asked the questions, we have asked the government to provide us answers to the questions we have raised on behalf of the taxpayers of this Province. We have asked them to explain why the \$825,000 guarantee to the Sprung Companies and they have come back with a sham story about a holdback under the construction contract. In fact, it was loaned to the Sprung Companies.

The \$2 million was said to be working capital. Just stop and think, Mr. Speaker. The original proposal required the facility to be constructed with the first crop in progress, with the first crop in place for the construction contract, no working capital necessary. But that was not done.

Mr. Speaker, that the document that secures the \$2 million specifically provides that it is to be spent for construction, not working capital. That is specifically what it says. As well, Mr. Speaker, the maximum reasonable working capital that might be required could be a half million dollars, in any event.

The latest fiasco, Mr. Speaker, was the marketing scheme. I do not need to remind hon. members of that. We saw the effects of it in the House in the last couple of weeks. The efforts of selling them in Newfoundland for \$1.69

and, at the same time, taking them to Nova Scotia and selling them there for 59 cents. That is absolute truth. That is what they were doing.

MR. TULK:
Right on.

MR. WELLS:
The ads are there, the information is clear, and the hon. the Minister of Finance (Mr. Windsor) -

MR. J. CARTER:
On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):
Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. WELLS:
I would like my two minutes after the member is finished.

MR. J. CARTER:
By leave I will grant him all the time he wants, because he is digging a great hole for himself.

I was in Nova Scotia and I saw some Sprung cucumbers selling for \$1.47 each, in Nova Scotia, quite recently.

AN HON. MEMBER:
That is a difference of opinion, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
There is no point of order.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The marketing fiasco recently was demonstrated clearly by the comments in this House in the last

two or three weeks, and the absolutely incredible statement of the hon. the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development, that this was all part of a well-thought-out scheme to destroy the producers in Nova Scotia, move in and take over the markets, and then jack up the prices.

MR. TULK:
He went to Florida.

MR. WELLS:
An offence under The Competition Act.

MR. TULK:
The only thing he got out of it was a trip to Florida.

MR. WELLS:
And the week after we find they are selling them in Boston for 29 cents, and our people are paying the highest kind of price for them. And then we find they are feeding them to the animals here for nothing. They are dumped on the farms in Newfoundland; taken, complete with packages and everything, and dumped, Mr. Speaker, and our taxpayers are paying for it. And the hon. member has the gall to ask us to commend the government for that!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:
He should resign.

MR. WELLS:
It is like asking us, with all the knowledge we have now, to commend the government for the Come By Chance oil refinery proposal. That is exactly what he is doing. It is worse than that!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will conclude simply, Mr. Speaker, by saying there is no way in the world we can ever commend the building of a white octopus like that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to have just a few words on this proposal presented by the hon. member for St. John's North, Mr. Speaker.

I was probably the first member of government involved in this proposal, this enviroponics center established here in our Province now, in Kilbride actually, not in Mount Pearl, as most people seem to think. It is in Kilbride, probably one of the oldest agricultural areas in the Province. I am very delighted it is in my district actually. It was not planned to go that way, but I am fortunate it did come to my district.

Mr. Speaker, the 200 people who are working there now, in my last visit in there at least, seemed to be very happy, the ones I talked to. They really appreciated the opportunity to go to work in this center, or go to work, period,

that is what they were most interested in. During the construction stage, Mr. Speaker, at times there were up as high as 300 people working, I believe.

I know quite a few of them, because my former profession is as land surveyor and I worked around construction sites quite a bit, and I knew a lot of the people who were working on this proposal.

Not one of them, Mr. Speaker, ever said to me, while I was in there, that the NDP crowd here in the corner, or the Liberals, or **The Sunday Express** or the **CBC** were right in opposing this project. They were delighted to be able to work on the project at the time. People who are there now are delighted to be working at the enviroponics center, and they were very supportive of government's efforts to import this technology and develop it in our Province. A lot of them hoped, after their training, that these enviroponic centers would be sold as a franchise, I guess, which would be one method, so that Newfoundlanders would have the first opportunity to be trained in these centers and they would go about other places, maybe in Newfoundland, maybe other parts of North America, and train people in those areas to work this enviroponics center.

Mr. Speaker, that, in itself, has to be a complete and utter turn around from what we are used to here in this Province. Usually if we get something in this Province, and history will prove this, even with Churchill Falls, Come By Chance, when it was being built, the majority of the good jobs in those areas were always people who came in from outside the Province, not Newfoundlanders going out to

train other people.

Mr. Speaker, we did get a lot of the labour jobs in those facilities and structures when they were being built, but we never got the initial training to be the foremen or to be the top engineers or the superintendents or the good planning jobs involved in these major construction sites. This project could turn that around, certainly in this area, along with other projects that are going on throughout our Province, Mr. Speaker, with NORDCO and other companies.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, and **The Sunday Express** again had another shot at it this week, that the Premier wrote a federal Minister of DRIE two days before the announcement looking for information on the studies which were done by the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, what actually happened in that case was, during our negotiations, we approached DRIE, as did P.E.I. actually, and asked them if they would come in on this project with us to try to develop this technology in Canada, but particularly in Newfoundland.

They got a letter before us suggesting that ACOA, or the Atlantic Opportunities, I believe it was at that time, or Atlantic Enterprise, whatever it was called, and DRIE, would not participate because of studies the federal government had which showed this technology was not proven, or was not as stated by the Sprungs.

So, when the Premier heard of these studies, which was late, we got the letter just before we were

finalizing our negotiations, the Premier said, 'Well, if they have studies, where are they?' He telexed them immediately and asked for the studies.

The letter he got back said, 'No, we did not participate in it, not because we had studies to show it was not proven, we have no studies to show this will work or will not work. We will just not participate in the project.'

Mr. Speaker, if they had to have studies done on this proposal and they showed the project was not viable, we would have gladly looked at them. But we knew enough, because we were dealing through an eight-month period with Agriculture Canada and anyone else involved in it, to know they knew nothing about it. They had never studied it. They looked at it preliminarily at one time.

For the most part, P.E.I. lost theirs because of political pressure brought to bear by the Nova Scotia Greenhouse Growers Association. That was the bottom line. P.E.I. wanted this before we did and they had the deal almost signed, but they would not go with it because the federal government would not put money into it. They did not have enough, or they did not want to put all their own money into it, but they would have had one.

The Greenhouse Growers in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, went to Ottawa and lobbied all of the federal members for the Atlantic area and convinced them, obviously, that the federal government should not participate in this. It was not because the technology was not good, bad, or indifferent, and not because there were studies to show that it would

not work. The only reason was it would probably have an effect on the greenhouse growers who are producing now.

Mr. Speaker, those greenhouse growers have shown a lot of concern. While I was Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development, the last thing I would do, Mr. Speaker, is to interfere, or try to put out of business, a small business person in this Province, or in the Atlantic area. I did not have any intention of putting the Nova Scotia greenhouse growers out of business, and no more did this government, Mr. Speaker, even though the new Minister of Rural Development got misquoted and misconstrued on what he was trying to say.

Mr. Speaker, what we were looking for with this project - I think the figures showed us at the time we could get about seven million pounds of produce coming out of this facility, in cucumbers and tomatoes. To date, Mr. Speaker, the average is going to be about ten million pounds which is working better than we ever expected it to in the first place. The main reason is because we put the lights in it, Mr. Speaker.

What we wanted, and after I saw a report prepared by a former Deputy Minister of Agriculture in Nova Scotia which explained the cucumber market in the Atlantic area, it made me even more determined to produce this technology in the Atlantic area. That Nova Scotian report says that the greenhouse growers in Nova Scotia produce, at peak periods, that is the best top production that they have, and this is the Atlantic production, at peak

periods they produce 15 per cent of their own market. Mr. Speaker, that leaves 85 per cent of that market for a new project, for a proposal.

That market can be filled by either California, Mexico, Spain, as it is being done now, or it was done before this project, or it can be filled in the Summertime by Ontario, or Quebec.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is outlandish, according to the people on the opposite side of the House, that Newfoundland would even dream that we would be fulfilling this market! We should not even conceive of the possibility Newfoundland might be able to do something which would replace product coming in from Ontario or Quebec, but, in particular, we cannot possibly compete with California, Spain or Mexico. That is unheard of, Mr. Speaker.

The facts from Statistics Canada I believe are called the import trade statistics on commodities. I believe that is the heading of the figures I saw. These are not the Government of Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker, not the Government of Canada, not anyone with a vested interest, Sprung or anyone else, these figures showed that in cucumbers and tomatoes the Atlantic area in 1985, I believe, were importing 30 million pounds of this type of product. Now, we expected to produce 7 million. We got it up to around 10 million now.

There is still 20 million not being produced in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, or P.E.I., not being produced in Quebec, and not being produced in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, it is being produced and sent in

here from California, Mexico, Spain, some of the Carribbean Islands and other places.

Now, why can we not, as Canadians, at least, replace the cucumber and tomato market in Atlantic Canada by a technology which can be developed in this Province? I mean, I do not see or I do not understand why anyone would say we cannot do it.

MR. MITCHELL:

It is politics for the Liberals.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker, if they looked at the statistics not produced by Newfoundland or not produced by Sprung, they will see there is a great market for cucumbers and tomatoes in the Atlantic area, a market for cucumbers and tomatoes which would substantiate the existence of three Sprung structures at 10 million pounds a structure. The produce we are replacing in the markets is not coming from anywhere in Canada. It is coming from outside of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it makes good sense to try to be a least self-sufficient, and if can be better than self-sufficient, Mr. Speaker, where you can export to other markets, it certainly would help.

I do not have the figures for the New England States, Mr. Speaker, the Northern part of the United States. Their climate is not a great lot better than Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. They do not have a great greenhouse industry. They do not produce a great amount of cucumbers and tomatoes or greenhouse products.

I believe the head of the Maine

Greenhouse Association, when contacted by one of our local media when the controversy was on, said he would welcome cucumbers produced in Newfoundland in his marketplace. It will not affect them. It will not do them much damage.

The majority of greenhouse operations in Eastern Canada, and particularly the Atlantic area, concentrate most of their effort, because it is a good cash crop and it can be phased in and out fairly quickly, on a cut flower market, particularly in the Newfoundland greenhouse business.

The Newfoundland Greenhouse Growers Association was not an opponent of this project. As a matter of fact, when I met with them and when I spoke with them, they were very interested in having a technology such as this brought into our Province.

There are many other things which can be grown in such a facility, Mr. Speaker, and the research and development part of this project, which is completely overlooked by anyone who is opposing the structure and the experiment, the proven technology we have is in cucumbers and tomatoes.

Mr. Speaker, there is a research and development aspect to this and I have no doubt the Minister of Development (Mr. Barrett) has referred to it already. Mr. Speaker, the research and development part of this could make Newfoundland the leaders in becoming self-sufficient in producing other eatable products, and not only eatable products, but other products that can be produced in greenhouses and are being produced around the world in certain types of greenhouses.

Mr. Speaker, one that really interested me when I was looking at the figures was Holland. Holland has \$300 million export business in cut flowers, that is tulips, roses, carnations or whatever type of flowers you would call a cut flower, a \$300 million export business.

Mr. Speaker, experiments in this enviropenics centre when it was in Calgary produced cut, long stemmed roses in their plant. The experiments were not finished. But would not most of these roses I know of, and I am not exactly sure, and I might be misquoting, but it is a fantastic amount. I do not know if it was 12 million dozen a month or 12 million dozen every couple of weeks. I am not sure what the numbers were. That was how many cut, long stemmed roses which were going into the New York market, 8 million dozen a month or a week, or something like that, a fantastic amount. The best kind of money and now most of them are being flown in, particularly from Holland.

That, Mr. Speaker, is another opportunity for structures which could be built here in Newfoundland and a market which presently exists that we could be competitive with because if you are going to put it on a plane, it is just as easy to put it on a plane in Goose Bay or in Gander, or in Stephenville, and all Liberal districts by the way, and each of these areas would be delighted to have a Sprung structure.

I talked to the mayor in Happy Valley - Goose Bay and they would be delighted to have one up there. I know Windsor for sure would like to have one and it probably would be a help to the

financial situation in the Windsor area. It would create some employment in there and would bring some business to the Windsor area, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition cannot think that far ahead. I think one of his own member's said he is, when talking about Meech Lake, stuck in time or something.

Mr. Speaker, if you consider the research and development aspect of this project and if you consider what is proven now and what is being produced in this facility now, Mr. Speaker, it makes sense that such a project should be developed in Newfoundland, because it is going to be developed somewhere.

What people seem to forget, and they do not want to refer to it, the expert in P.E.I., the member of the Science Council of Canada, Dr. McCurdy, I believe was his name, he did the studies for the P.E.I. government. Science Council of Canada, good qualifications, a very respected man, recommended that P.E.I. would have this facility in P.E.I. He recommended it to their government, Mr. Speaker. The only reason they did not get it is because the federal government would not come across with some money.

Mr. Speaker, there is another gentleman who visited the Province and his name is Dr. Merle Jensen. Anyone who saw his credentials or his resumé could not help but be impressed on the qualifications of this gentleman. He is a world recognized leader in the development of hydroponic operations, actually working on some kind of space centre the

American's are trying to develop down at the University of Arizona now. He was here. He viewed it. He viewed it in Calgary and he suggested, and he still has every confidence this technology can work and should be developed. Mr. Speaker, he had no hesitation whatsoever in suggesting this technology will work in Newfoundland and should be developed somewhere, particularly in Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, if people wanted to check out what other groups are working on this type of technology, I think you would find the John Labatt Company has done experiments in this, very reputable people doing work on it. I think Laval University are doing experiments on it and they have reached almost the same production levels as the Sprung group, but not quite. Domtex a research arm of Domtar, I believe, are also doing these types of experiments with this type of project. They have not reached the production levels the Sprungs have reached to date.

Mr. Speaker, I believe if people wanted to get rid of the politics of this thing, and certainly it probably makes sense from the political side that the Opposition, particularly the Liberals, would scoff at this project.

As I said before, if we are growing cabbage in this thing, they said if we came down here with this technology to grow cabbage or turnips or potatoes, nobody would even think about it. Yes, it is a good project. Let us try it to see if we can be self-sufficient because Newfoundlanders historically eat cabbage, potatoes, turnips,

carrots and that stuff. Because we grow cucumbers, it is being scoffed at and it was scoffed at because historically we are not noted for being great cucumber eaters.

Mr. Speaker, I think statistics will show and if people want to contact the Sobey's Stores in this Province, you will see we have increased the consumption of cucumbers in this Province more in a month by month ratio than any other new product ever brought to the Sobey's chain in their history, Mr. Speaker.

So Newfoundlanders are supporting this project, whether they be Liberals, NDP or other people who are opposing it believe it or not, Newfoundlanders are supporting it. They are buying the cucumbers. They will be able to buy the tomatoes in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to re-state, and I do not think it will be any great surprise to anyone, my support for the motion presented by the member for St. John's, Mr. Speaker, and my support for the technology brought to this Province by the Sprungs to develop Newfoundland Enviroponics.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) should wait to see what I have to say about his resolution before he assumes it will not be in support of his resolution, as soon as I can find it. I hope they put it on the Order Paper. The government tried earlier today, the member will be aware, to bury the discussion or to abbreviate it, but they did not get away with that. I hope to goodness they have not omitted to put it on the Order Paper.

MR. WELLS:

Yes, it is on today's Order Paper.

MR. SIMMONS:

Oh, yes, here we are. I guess, we are getting close now. Mr. Carter St. John's North to move, a number of WHEREASES and then "BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this hon. House go on record as commending the government for entering into this project." He wants the House to commend the government for entering into this project.

Mr. Speaker, I recall another time in this House. It was the last day on which the former Premier, Mr. Smallwood, sat as a member, his very last day in this Chamber. Mr. Speaker, the question was, of course, whether there would be unanimity, whether there would be agreement, to allow the cameras in the House to record that very historic moment. There was near unanimity that day. There was one member, the member for St. John's North, to his continuing shame, who prevented the cameras in the House. He denied the agreement. He was the only person on any side to do that.

MR. FULK:

Who?

MR. SIMMONS:

The gentleman from St. John's North.

MR. TULK:

The big galoot!

MR. SIMMONS:

I recall that occasion, Mr. Speaker, because again today he stands nearly alone, but he is a little smarter on this resolution than he was that day. He came up, he searched around, he scratched his head, and he said, 'How can I somehow put down on the Order Paper something that somebody will have to agree with?' He said, 'I have got the phrase, commend the government.' That is where Paulou took over. He was home free from there, once he said he would commend the government. For what? For entering into this project. A brilliant choice of verb, for entering into this project.

If ever, Mr. Speaker, a government entered, got completely surrounded by, got completely and thoroughly enveloped in something - another term would be, 'got sucked in to a project' - if even a government, Mr. Speaker, since it came to power, really entered into something, this government has really entered in. There is no question about that.

Mr. Speaker, while my good friend from Kilbride, the erstwhile Minister of Agriculture, in some respect, I believe, still effectively the Minister of Agriculture, but the now Minister of Forestry - before I get away from his speech to which I listened with interest, I want to commend him for his courage today.

When the present Minister of

Agriculture scurried out of this House just as this debate began - he was in his seat earlier and he scurried out of this House, despite the fact one of his colleagues, the member of St. John's North, put the resolution down. He has not had the courtesy, the Minister of Agriculture - here he comes, bless his heart!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. J. CARTER:

You have not said anything yet! We are waiting.

MR. SIMMONS:

Bless his heart and his fading tan! It will soon be time, I say to the minister, to go out and devastate some more economies, as he was threatening to do with the Nova Scotia economy. It will soon be time to go back -

MR. POWER:

Why do you not defend Newfoundland for a change or go up to Nova Scotia?

MR. SIMMONS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister reminds me of something. I remember another time when the Premier of this Province railed against what can be characterized in brief as the C.F.A. approach. If it was from outside the Province, it was, by definition, evil, to be shunned. He had the conspiracy theory, which he milked to its limit, that all people outside Newfoundland wanted to con Newfoundlanders, wanted to trip us into sour deals. Remember those times, remember all the great speeches he has made on Churchill Falls, for example, and sitting at his back were men like Mr. Hickman, Mr. Crosbie, Mr. Hickey,

Mr. Marshall, and Mr. Murphy in those days.

MR. WELLS:

Ottenheimer and Collins.

MR. SIMMONS:

Yes, all men who were in the House and some of them in the Cabinet of the day, but notwithstanding, he would stand there and rail with great fervor against the C.F.A. approach and how it was automatically bad, wrong.

I believe in this Sprung issue we have before us is a very inciteful look at the Premier and how he ticks and why he does, certainly how he does. He will be known in time, among other things, as the about-face Premier, the man who was able to go in both directions successively and justify each equally.

First he condemned the C.F.A. approach. It was automatically wrong. Then on Sprung, of course, he has basically said, after you hear all the rhetoric and you go through it and you hear the bit of logic there and so on, the only thing that stands out, the only thing that differentiates this Sprung outfit from the others that have been growing cucumbers here for years, is that they are from away. That is all. Well, two things. One, they are from away, and, two, because they are from away, they got a lot more money than the locals did.

I know a fellow down on Water Street by the name of Chris Snellen who is growing cucumbers as large and pretty well as quickly as Sprung, and he has been doing it for two or three years. But there was no handout from the government for that particular enterprise. You see, Mr. Speaker,

it is all -

MR. BARRETT:

Why did you not ask him?

MR. SIMMONS:

Well, I am talking about the period prior to the time we raised it in the House, about three or four months ago, oh, yes! The government is in there now. Oh, sure! That is a different matter altogether. I talked about the years -

MR. POWER:

He put in a request.

MR. SIMMONS:

The Minister of Agriculture says he put in a request. He had put in other requests. He could not even get ministers to answer his phone calls at that particular time, so I got up here in the House and raised the issue. Now, if you are going to tell the truth, let us have the whole truth.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the about-face approach of this Premier, the one that said to Newfoundlanders in McMurray, 'Come home.' And then, by his actions, said, 'You better stay away a little while longer, because we cannot handle you yet.' The one, by his approach, that said, 'FFT's, never!', and then allowed his kissing cousins politically in Ottawa to make decisions.

MR. J. CARTER:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:

This is a serious point of order. I realize there is great latitude allowed in debate, and I would be

the first to defend great latitude, even, to some extent, some longitude, but the hon. member is nowhere near the resolution. He is not even addressing it.

My pencil is poised waiting to make some notes of something he said, and so far he has said nothing. He is not addressing the issue.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, it is a difference of opinion between two hon. gentlemen.

The hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

I believe the gentleman from St. John's North makes a point, if I could get his attention. If I could get the attention of the gentleman from St. John's North, or better still, I have lost his attention, now I can proceed with my speech.

Mr. Speaker, on FFT's, they were on both sides of the issue successively.

Remember the issue of the offshore, how they would never give away the shop? Remember those speeches and remember how they gave away the whole refining capacity in the Atlantic Charter to Ontario and Quebec?

MR. TULK:

The Atlantic Accord.

MR. SIMMONS:

The Atlantic Accord - forgive me Churchill and Roosevelt. In that they not only specified or, in effect, specified it to be Eastern Canada, Ontario, and Quebec, but they just about wiped out any

opportunity for Come By Chance until, again, we in this House raised the issue of Clause 54 and they scurried out to get an amendment to that particular clause. These were the guys, Mr. Speaker, who are on both sides of the offshore, and I could go on, Mr. Speaker.

We heard the latest one today on the environment, the great protectors of the environment, read the last few Throne Speeches, in terms of the environment and how they were going to save it for future generations. And what was the message today from the gentleman for Lewisporte? Take PCB to lunch.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Ha, ha!

MR. RUSSELL:

Make sure you pay your taxes on it.

MR. DECKER:

That is low.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I understand the member does not like what I say, but I think I accurately summed up what he said in the House today. He said things like it was a curiosity. I believe I quote him correctly. I said he did not know where the confusion was, although a day before he signed a document in which he said there is some confusion, etc. I believe I quote the minister accurately or summarize him accurately.

There is another one right here. The minister said this report had not crossed his desk. But within five minutes after having made that statement, we obtained this report from an official in his office.

MR. RUSSELL:

No.

MR. SIMMONS:

Yes.

So the minister is either deceiving the House or he is not reading his mail.

MR. SPEAKER (Parsons):

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. RUSSELL:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the Minister of Environment.

MR. RUSSELL:

I do not have to take from that hon. member the fact that I am deceiving this House.

MR. TULK:

He never said you were.

MR. RUSSELL:

That is very unparliamentary and I ask the hon. member to withdraw that comment.

MR. KELLAND:

To the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order?

MR. KELLAND:

Yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Naskaupi.

MR. KELLAND:

The only phrase my colleague used was in reference to a report that the minister said earlier in Question Period that had not crossed his desk. This report was produced in and released in September, 1987, granted the

minister was not in that portfolio at the time, but he has been for the last five months, and it strikes me a little odd it has not crossed his desk in that I did get it this afternoon from his own department.

MR. RUSSELL:

That has nothing to do with deceiving the House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

I would ask the member for Fortune - Hermitage, if he did say that, to withdraw that statement.

MR. SIMMONS:

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I did not say it. I said deceive or - but if it makes the minister happy, if he can hurl all kinds of cowardly statements around the House, but if I have to be parliamentarily precise, I will be parliamentarily precise. No problem. I have no difficulty with that at all. The minister is the guy who has the difficulty.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Look, I would like to ask the hon. gentleman, I think he is swaying a little bit now because he is talking about environment. I just read the resolution and I believe he is going a little bit off track. I ask him to speak to the resolution as much as he can.

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I am glad, Sir, you brought the two together because one of the many things we found in investigating this project is that this is the only project ever in Newfoundland's history to be allowed to go forward without

environmental assessment. Now, I believe you will find there, Sir, a direct connection between Sprung and environment.

The government wanted to divorce any connection, wanted to separate any connection there might be, but there is a very direct connection. Indeed, there was a direct contravention of the law by the then minister. Because, Mr. Speaker, the law says Section (6) of The Environmental Assessment Act says very specifically, Mr. Speaker, 'Shall - that there shall be a pre-review'. That was pointed out. I wrote the minister on it and so on.

MR. RUSSELL:

Tell it all now.

MR. SIMMONS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell as much as I can and then the minister can get up and tell us how in that particular case he was able to get around that clause in the law which says, 'The minister shall provide for the assessment'. The answer we got is it was not needed.

We had a farm road down the Argentia Highway, where a poor fellow wanted to put a road in to get his pick-up up to his farm, and he had to have an environmental assessment. We put this orange or this white -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Octopus.

MR. SIMMONS:

If my leader says it is white, it is white. I thought it was orange, but I know what he means, as in elephant. We put this white octopus in the centre of what is to be our third city very soon, and there is no environmental

impact. There is no need for an assessment.

Mr. Speaker, this is a case of where it was predetermined what the conclusion would be and then they scurried out to get the facts to support that particular conclusion, to support it financially, to support it environmentally and to support it in marketing terms.

By the way, while we are talking about the Minister of Forestry (Mr. Aylward), yes, I agree with him on something else, too. The consumption, Mr. Speaker, of cucumbers has not only gone up this Province, I say to him, but I also say to him, not only has it gone up dramatically, but, I think he will agree that some of the consumption is because people are eating those cucumbers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, how can you, in the name of all that is sensible, deal with this thing except with, either complete derision or complete outrage. Outrage, because of \$14.5 million that could have been used in so many other places, on some roads in my district, on creating some jobs in various parts of this Province.

MR. EFFORD:
Caring for the sick.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, on opening some of the beds that this government has so shamefully closed up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMONS:

The member for LaPoile has entered the debate. Your constituents said if I saw you, could I get a phone number? They are trying to reach you.

MR. MITCHELL:
(Inaudible) if you are that popular.

MR. SIMMS:
They have your picture put on those cards.

MR. SIMMS:
And on the other end is your picture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:
Either, Mr. Speaker, complete derision, or complete outrage, are the only two ways to approach this particular project. I fluctuate between the two because there is outrage in me when I see the way this money is being spent. When I see the hospital beds that are being closed, when I see the jobs that could be created, when I see the small, sensible projects that could be created.

If I could only see this money dumped into this private sector employment program which we said in the beginning was a good program. Now, it is being balkanized, it is being politicized by this government and that is what my friend for the Strait of Belle Isle keeps saying. He believes in the program, but he does not believe, nor do I believe, that it ought to be dispensed along political lines, as is the case largely. So, there is outrage, but, Mr. Speaker, there has to be a certain measure of derision to when you hear this kind of nonsense coming

out. On the cost of cucumbers -

MR. J. CARTER:

(Inaudible) a mispronunciation.

MR. SIMMONS:

I had the good fortune not to be raised in the same general area as my good friend for St. John's North (Mr. Carter) so my accent is somewhat different, something that I take great pride in so I will insist on cucumbers. I am sure he knows what I mean.

Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the cost of cucumbers. We have taken the information provided to us by the government, we have taken the information which is publicly available to us and in a moment, to save my friend for St John's North all this writing, because he was looking for some information on cucumbers, I am now going to address the subject of the cost of cucumbers. Now, if he would take his pencil, he could write, 'cost of cucumbers.' There could be several items, several components, salaries, electricity, interest, cost of the lights, seed plants, the nutrients, the miscellaneous production and packaging expenses, administration, et cetera, et cetera. Heat cost, ah! Now there, Mr. Speaker, there is an issue I could spend some time on, if I had any time left to spend on it.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is this: That if you assume the Premier's statement that there is 200 jobs here, which itself is something to be doubted, then the cost of production works out to \$1.27 a cucumber. If you are even a little more realistic than the Premier, the job generation here is not 200, it is 150, then assuming 150 employees are there on a daily basis, the cost works out then to \$1.14.

I say to the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) we may quibble about whether it is fifty-seven or ninety-seven or whatever it is, but we have not, in the exchange between the Leader of the Opposition and him a moment ago, all the figures quoted are well below a \$1.14, and you cannot produce at a \$1.14 and sell it less than \$1.14 and make a profit.

That of course, Mr. Speaker, is not quite the bottom line because underneath that are heat costs. If you include that in, you are talking at the minimum with a 150 employees you are talking about \$1.65 per cucumber. Every time that cow eats one of those cucumbers, Mr. Speaker, down goes another \$1.65 of your tax money.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WOODFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The member for Humber Valley.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WOODFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have been associated, going back to what the Minister of Forestry said, for sometime with this Sprung project, in the sense that I had the opportunity to view the facility when it was in Calgary.

What I have been listening to and what I have been hearing over the past about a year now, I guess, when this project first came to light, has been utter, utter

nonsense! The facts concerning agriculture in this Province and pertaining to the Sprung greenhouse, I have not heard one member opposite, not one, including the socialists, the NDP, state any facts that I have on record that could really equate with what is happening in Sprung. It is utterly ridiculous!

Firstly, I will go on record as saying and I have never been on record for the past year for saying that this is a carte blanche. This is absolutely going to work, no doubt, regardless of how much money you put into it, for it is an absolute good project. I never once did say it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WOODFORD:
But I will say, based on past experience, not with hydroponics, but with other fields of agriculture and business - it is the business one that I want to concentrate on. I have not hear that either.

In Question Period, 'We need a \$1.09 per pound to survive, or they need a \$1.09 per pound, or a \$1.27 or \$2 or \$3' or whatever it is, regardless of what it is. Anybody in business today, and I challenge anybody on the other side, there is a gentleman over there who has been in business for sometime.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Yes, Sir.

MR. WOODFORD:
You have been in business for a long time. What is your cost?

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. WOODFORD:

Sure, you made a lot of money on it. You are going to lose a lot too if you keep up to the ideas that I have listened to for the last six months.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Lose your seat too.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. PATTERSON:
Dr. Banting.

When did you do heart surgery last?

MR. WOODFORD:

I just listened to the Leader of the Opposition speak this evening, he dwelled on the total cost of the Sprung project. Never once did he say that it was not going to work. I suppose when you read between the lines that was exactly what he was saying, but he never once came out and said, 'It is definitely not going to work. It is a bad project.'

The hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage just got up and he spoke on the Minister of Environment, on PCB's. He mentioned Premier Smallwood's last day in the House, referred to the member for St. John's North, and what happened there and, then, Premier Peckford and some of his history. So I got a lesson in the history of politics in the Province since 1971. It is supposed to be a very important resolution, whereby members opposite figure they can get up and tear strips off government because of the Sprung project.

Now, Mr. Speaker, go back through the history. Never in the history of this Province, never - I said it one time before in the House,

and I say it again - when we entered Confederation in 1949 we were self-sufficient in agriculture and pretty well everything in this Province.

Ever since then, agriculture has been on the bottom rung of the ladder in Newfoundland, and for obvious reasons. Namely, because nobody could ever understand how you could produce it here, in the Province.

Always, ever since it came up about the Sprung thing, all I have seen on that was, pertaining to Nova Scotia, pertaining to other provinces in Canada, and pertaining to even parts of the United States.

We can do it here in this Province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WOODFORD:

We can do it here, not only in the regular agricultural field with regards to any other form of agriculture, we can do it in hydroponics as well. We can do it.

But the trick is, why jump on this project, and never even give it a chance?

I could understand the gentleman coming back in six months time or a year or two years down the road and saying, 'Look, I told you so.' But they hinged everything on it. That is all you hear with regards to Sprung. I have not heard anything, nothing whatsoever - I said it before in a speech - about the Federal Agricultural Agreement, for four and a half years. Where is that? Where are the questions on it?

MR. FUREY:

I asked about it in the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. CALLAN:

Control your caucus. Have you lost control?

MR. WOODFORD:

Where are the questions on the dumping of vegetables from Nova Scotia, P.E.I., and New Brunswick in this Province for the last number of years? Where are the stats on that? Where are they? Is anybody saying that that is not being done? Why is it?

One of the reasons why agriculture in this Province did not take off was because of the actual dumping of vegetables in this Province by other provinces. That is one of the reasons. We were always led to believe that you could not do it here, and that is why the farmers and the people who were interested in it were always given the cold shoulder when they would go to look for land or money to get into that type of business.

When I came to the West Coast in 1971 - 1972, I was not exception. I was told the same thing, identical. 'You cannot do it here. You cannot produce milk right here. We have a few fellows into it now, but that is about it, because they are selling it locally. So, we will bring it in from Nova Scotia and P.E.I. because they can do it easier and cheaper.'

So what has happened over the last fifteen or sixteen years? In the last two weeks we shipped milk out of the Province for the first time in our history.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WOODFORD:

Two weeks in a row milk has gone to the cheese and yogurt plants in Truro. For the first time in our history, we are self-sufficient, as of now, and granted that is due to the fact, I suppose, of the time of the year and everything is out on grass.

I do not like either, Mr. Speaker - I do not know if I am taking something the wrong way or not, I do not think I am - some of the so-called slurs towards agriculture in this Province. Some of it just happened this evening when we were talking about the heat and the lights at the Sprung Enterprise. We all know about heat, and then the reference to the cows.

Well, I take a back seat to not one member in this House on either side when it comes to standing for the agriculture industry in this Province -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WOODFORD:

- or admitting that I am a farmer and not a doctor or a lawyer or a teacher or something else.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WOODFORD:

Bar none!

Let us take the subsidy on Sprung, and look at other provinces and the States. Did Kruger submit a marketing plan when they got their money from the provincial and federal government to buy out Bowater? Did anybody demand

that? Did anybody demand that on the St. Lawrence situation? Did anybody demand the marketing plans for that on where they were going to sell their product? Did anybody demand the Baie Verte Mines say where they were going to sell their asbestos?

AN HON. MEMBER:

No, no!

MR. WOODFORD:

Was that put up front and put on the table?

Where were all of those marketing studies for those other projects? I am not saying that the marketing study should not have been done. No doubt, that is good business.

But on the other hand, when you look at the production from the Sprung Enterprise, as with anything else, you look at 7.5 million pounds was suppose to come out of the project for one year.

Now, all estimates show that there is a possibility there could be -

MR. SIMMONS:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage, on a point of order.

MR. SIMMONS:

The hon. member for Humber Valley (Mr. Woodford) is making one of the better speeches I have heard from that side on this subject and I do not want to interrupt the train of thought, but he said a minute ago, and I just reflect on it, about the milk going out of the Province. I find that with some interest, if he would just take a minute to elaborate. What provincial government subsidy was provided to allow that milk to be

exported from the Province? Would he mind responding to that?

MR. SIMMS:

To the point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

To use the hon. the Leader of the Opposition's own words, it is not hard to tell when you are making a point because the members opposite get all upset.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Before I rule on that point of order, I am sure the hon. member for Humber Valley would not mind if I recognize and welcome to the Legislature the Mayor of St. Anthony, Mr. Squires, Councillor Johnson, and the Town Manager, Mr. Parsons.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order. There is no point of order. I said before while I was in the Chair, it was a point of clarification and if there ever was one, it was one.

The hon. the member for Humber Valley.

MR. WOODFORD:

Mr. Speaker, going back to some of the comments made when this project was announced, the NDP said it should not go ahead because who is going to subsidize the greenhouse growers in the Province of Newfoundland for not being able to sell their product?

All you have to do is look at the

stats. I think it is anywhere between 85 per cent and 91 per cent of our produce coming out of the greenhouses of this Province is either bedding plants or transplants or flowers. You go across the waterways to Nova Scotia, P.E.I., and New Brunswick and right on through Quebec and Ontario, and anywhere from 68 per cent to 76 per cent of the production coming out of their greenhouses, hydroponic units and what have you, are vegetables.

In the first instance, there is nothing to compensate in this Province because it is just not coming out of it. The few vegetables we do grow in the greenhouses are consumed on probably in a four to six week time period in the Summertime, or early Fall. So that is consumed right here in the Province in any case, still leaving the void of approximately 3.2 or 3.4 million pounds of this vegetable that has to come into the Province.

You go across the waterways to Nova Scotia, and P.E.I. and New Brunswick and they are, based on these stats, for obvious reasons, Mr. Speaker, neither province, not one of the other nine provinces in Canada today, it would be political suicide to put a Sprung or anything of its nature in any other province because of the high concentration and the high production of vegetables out of their existing greenhouses. Although, the need is -

MR. WELLS:

Could you elaborate on that for us?

MR. WOODFORD:

Where most of there greenhouse production in any other provinces is in vegetables, vegetables coming out of their greenhouses,

namely, not only cucumbers and tomatoes, but other things as well, in this Province it is mainly flowers and transplants. So, to put it in another province would be political suicide. The need will be there. The need is there for the cucumbers and the tomatoes, for instance, to use that as an argument, but for the government of Nova Scotia, for instance, to say that we are going to back a greenhouse facility in Nova Scotia, I mean, there is no way it would stand. It is obvious from the reaction of those people because there is one in Newfoundland which is next door. So it is a legitimate one on their part. There is no doubt about it. I would do the same thing if it was jeopardizing my business.

The other thing I wanted to touch on there is one of the reasons why the federal government did not put any more in under DRIE or DREE or any of those programs, because it would be the same thing. They would be running into opposition from the other provinces.

All this stuff, with regards to reaction and inaction, I suppose, with regard to looking for some statistics on it by some members, some of the things were not even worth talking about when you consider that part of it.

The actual guaranteeing of loans to the facility, there is no doubt about it, there is a lot of money gone into it, but it is in the form of a guaranteed loan of which we got approximately \$100 million out in the Province right now.

Mr. Sprung, if he had come into the Province of Newfoundland and put up the facility, \$20 million or \$25 million out of his own pocket, like some other people

have done with regards to fish plants, namely, Mrs. Ting - she came in here, she bought the fish plant, and she was going to do wonderful things, something that nobody else did before. If Mr. Sprung came in and he put up his facility and operated it for two or three years, with 200 employees, and then, all of the sudden, something happened, something happened in the facility or he had a loss in some way, shape or form, where would the cry come from if this government did not put up a loan guarantee then to salvage the project? Where would it come from?

When this gentleman came from Alberta, or anyone else - I concentrate on Mr. Sprung right now - he was not on the tarmac, was not landed - I mean, what crime did those people commit, except for the one of creating jobs in this Province, albeit it with government help? I am not saying -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. WOODFORD:

Okay, but references are made throughout the last year or so. Now, to me, it seemed like the jury was out on Mr. Sprung and Newfoundland Enviroponics and is still out. There is nothing wrong with that. Let the jury be out. You can live with that. Hopefully - there is nothing guaranteed in this life, only death and taxes - a year down the road we will see the results of his work and the work put in by the Department of Agriculture or the Newfoundland Government, in this case.

Now, I mention the subsidy part of it again, because that is what is looked at by other provinces and

some of the members have mentioned it over the last six or seven months. Just trace it right back to Ontario and Quebec again, with regard to the amount of subsidy put in by the federal and provincial governments to attract a Honda in Ontario or a Hyundai or something like that. What is this? Is this not subsidies? Is this not money put in place to create jobs? What is the difference? There is no difference as far as I am concerned. The project is there.

Just looking back on the history of it for the last seven or eight months, it is a wonder the people are still in there, the structure is still there, or there is anything being sold.

Let us face it, all that has been in the media, all that has been in this House for the last three months, all that has been going on in the Province, and the questions being asked, concerns Sprung. If it was never going to work, it should not work now, by rights. I mean, there has been every bit of negativity you could ever find. There is no doubt about it, they are working against all odds.

God knows anybody in business today, in this Province or any other, has their hands full trying to make a living, trying to make a profit, because profit is always perceived to be a dirty word. If there is no profit there is no business, and if there is no business there is no industry, there is no employment. We are our own worst enemy, there is no doubt about that. We see it in communities, we see it regionally, we see it provincially and we see it nationally. As soon as we see someone trying to do something, instead of giving them a pat on

the back we give them a kick in the butt, and the Sprung enterprise is no different.

Some of the comments made by the Opposition, as of late, both parties, put me in mind of the American novelist and critic, Gore Vidal, or whatever, who said, "It is not enough that I succeed, but others must fail," and he would not be satisfied unless his gains were matched by some one else's losses. Now, that is the thing that torments me as an individual and a citizen of this Province. It seems that that is what is permeating the political will in this Province today. There are other concerns in this Province: There is unemployment, there is the fish plants now in Rose Blanche and St. Lawrence. We have all kinds of problems in this Province which could be addressed at length by all members of the House, but more so by the Opposition, which is primarily what they are there for, to keep us on our toes and address some of the more important issues in this Province, but all I have heard in the last three or four weeks is Sprung.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, come on!

MR. WOODFORD:

We have had questions on unemployment, we have had questions on the fishery, but, let us face it, if you go back through Hansard and find Question Period, you will find out that it was.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. WOODFORD:

I suppose the Opposition, in trying to gain power and form the government of this Province, have to do the natural thing, which is lambaste, create a crisis and be alarmists, or whatever. But it seems that that is primarily what this is when you zero in on this project. It seems that they have picked up on something they figured everybody else in the Province was going to go for. But, believe you me, by picking up on this, the Opposition, namely the Liberal Opposition, are banking on something, Mr. Speaker, that could take them down the tube, as well. This time, all their marbles are in the one place.

There are a lot of good things happening in this Province, Mr. Speaker, that could be elaborated on, and in the agricultural industry itself. There is no doubt about it. I just mentioned the fact that we sent milk out of the Province for the first time, and I could go on and on about other things. Last year, agriculture in this Province tipped, I think, around \$50 million. That is not a small industry any more. People are employed. We are first generation farmers in this Province. We are not second, third and fourth generation farmers like they have in other provinces. We are given a piece of land, fifty or one hundred acres, and it is said, Okay, we are giving them a farm. They are not giving them a farm, they are giving them a piece of wilderness out of which they have to extract a farm. The people who are in the industry, and the people who survive in the industry, should be given high marks.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WOODFORD:

There is just one thing I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, before I finish. The Humber Valley Agricultural Association, which is the stronger association in this Province, I suppose primarily because of the concentration of agriculture in that area, came out and backed the Sprung project, categorically backed the Sprung project.

AN HON. MEMBER:

No, they did not.

MR. WOODFORD:

Yes, they did. It is printed. It is in the media and everything else. They backed the Sprung project. And that was with no federal-provincial agreement, only the dollars we are putting in provincially.

MR. TULK:

I say it was political (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. WOODFORD:

Political or not, Mr. Speaker, it was done. It is on record. I never said it categorically just backed it, they gave their reasons for supporting the Sprung project. I mean, they gave their reasons for it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave.

MR. WOODFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

It is now twenty minutes to five.

and I call on the hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I think I can more than fill my twenty minutes, but I will try and be quick.

Now the Leader of the Opposition is a well educated man, he is a very well educated man, and I am sure that in the process of his education he has had some exposure to mathematics. In mathematics there are such things as whole numbers, there are fractions, there are decimals, there are positive numbers, there are negative numbers, there are irrational numbers, like repeating decimals, and there are imaginary numbers, like the square root of minus one.

Well, now, today and last Wednesday, we heard an awful lot of irrational numbers, we heard a lot of imaginary numbers, and practically all the numbers we heard from the other side were negative numbers and they were put together in the most uncharitable way possible to try and blacken the reputation of a sincere entrepreneur who has come into this Province.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Did you get the true numbers?

MR. J. CARTER:

No, you are playing with numbers.

All the hon. gentlemen want to do is take numbers and throw them together, and they do not care how. They are like adders. There are at least two adders over there.

I made a list of the things the Leader of the Opposition said. I am sorry he is not here, but I am sure he is within earshot. He

opened by saying it is a madcap scheme. Now, it is his right to say that. But it was just an assertion and nothing else. A madcap scheme is what he said. He did not bring up any technical, logical reasons why there should be such a madcap scheme, he merely said that was what it was. Now, I say it is not. It is my impression, and it is a very good impression, and a well-instructed impression, because I have been through the facility several times, that it is not a madcap scheme, it is a sincere attempt at a high tech facility.

He said that hydroponics is well known and it is quite successful. Well, it maybe successful in the sense that hydroponics generally can produce produce, but I have tasted the mainland hydroponic tomatoes especially, and other products as well, but especially the tomatoes, and even the produce managers who offered them to me to taste agree they are tasteless. Now they look nice, they are a nice shape, they are a nice colour, they look nice on the plate, and people buy them, I guess, out of habit, but they have no taste. They do not!

MR. BAIRD:

They are like the Opposition, there is nothing to them.

MR. J. CARTER:

They are tasteless, like the Opposition. No taste at all. The Sprung tomatoes were probably one of the best tomatoes I have had.

He said Nova Scotians were angry. Well, I brought back, and I am sorry I do not have it here with me, a newspaper which I purchased in Truro, in which they did interviews with the man in the street and they asked these

various people, who identified themselves -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why did you not bring it down?

MR. J. CARTER:

It is probably there. I just purchased the paper in Truro. Of the various interviews a couple were negative, but many of them were positive. The Leader of the Opposition said it was a massive mistake.

Now, even if you were to grant him a very, very doubtful imaginary proposition that it is a mistake, it certainly is not massive. It is not massive in terms of the Linerboard mill. The Linerboard mill and the subsequent newsprint mill that it had to be turned into, combined with the subsidy that it required while it was an unsuccessful Linerboard mill, is in excess of \$500 million.

Even though it is now taking in more money than it is paying out, I am told, and is technically a success, it will never, never, never be able to pay the interest on the interest of \$500-plus million. And that is obvious. The Kruger operation in Corner Brook was something of the order of \$100 million. You know, these are massive and they were not mistakes. I think the West Coast would be in sad shape without it. I participated in the help that we gave the linerboard mill, and I certainly supported the help we gave the Corner Brook mill. I am glad we gave them that help. It was timely, it was necessary, and it was worthwhile, but still it was massive, massive in the sense that the Sprung investment is not massive. It may be a lot of things, but it is not massive. Our exposure, even though it is

not great in absolute numbers, is covered many times by the value of the facility. So it is not massive.

The Leader of the Opposition says Ontario has more light. Now, all he has to do is take a map with Mercator's projection, so that the parallel lines are straight, and notice that Ontario, even that golden horseshoe of Toronto and Hamilton, is not much further South than St. John's - not much. A great deal of Ontario is much further North of St. John's, so the light intensities are not much greater, if at all, in Ontario or any part of Canada. Because our weather is so cold, we think of ourselves as being very far North. But we are South of Paris.

MR. SIMMONS:

Why do you not give us the fog warning now for Hamilton?

MR. J. CARTER:

No.

He said it was a simple technology. I have dealt with that. Fifteen million dollars at risk: Maybe there is \$20 million at risk, but it covered many times. Now, I blame the Opposition for some of the cucumbers that are being fed to cattle. I put the blame squarely at their door, and I will tell you why. Mr. Sprung will not sell a cucumber unless it is absolutely perfect. If there is the least scratch or blemish, however small, he has it broken in half, put in a bin, and then it is either given or sold at a nominal cost to any farmer who wants to take it to feed his animals. Now, because of the excessive, foolish, unnecessary criticism that has been levelled at him by the Opposition and by certain

irresponsible elements in the press, he has said, 'Well, I will let nothing out of here that is not absolutely perfect.' Now, as far as I am concerned, the perfect is the enemy of the good. An awful lot of good cucumbers have been thrown out because of this irresponsible criticism, and I lay the blame right at the door of the Opposition.

Now, the member for Fortune - Hermitage addressed the proposition, and there was not much that he said. It was mostly a stream of poison. Now, I enjoy his streams of poison from time to time. I like a hassle in the House. I think it is enjoyable. But I think it is irresponsible when there is something serious to be discussed, I really do.

The points the member for Humber Valley made, I think are excellent, because he pointed how high tech farmers have to be. We farmers need to be the best informed of all. We feed you fellows, and God knows why we do it. We should save some of our effort. But when you sit down to your table, it is the farmers of the world you have to thank.

AN HON. MEMBER:

And the fishermen.

MR. J. CARTER:

And the fishermen. I call them farmers, too; they are farming the sea. We cannot know too much. And to irresponsibly criticize a high tech facility without knowing an awful lot about it, I think is extremely irresponsible. I really do.

I will just mention a few things we are in danger of losing. We are in danger of losing an awful of species. For instance, there

were hundreds and hundreds of varieties of apples and now there are only about six or seven commercial varieties, and there is a grave danger that these other varieties may disappear. Now, you say, what difference if they are going to disappear? Let them go. But you need genetic variation in order to give resistance to disease. The thing a lot of geneticists talk about is hybrid vigor, so you do need to mix species that are closely related in order to get the hybrid vigor.

The green revolution is something that we are going to have to live with. The oxygen in the atmosphere and the destruction of the forests in South America - it is a global village, let us face it. We have some big, big problems looming; the greenhouse effect; the loss of ozone in the atmosphere, the loss of forests, as I have mentioned.

We need to know an awful lot about the chemicals for weed control, mildew control, insect control, we need to know more about the analysis of light, we need to know more about computers, we need to know more about satellite analysis. So that there is no limit to the amount we need to know.

I would like to end my few remarks with a very, very serious warning. I have here an article in the latest **National Geographic**, and I do not need to table it because all I am saying is the title of the article is **What is killing the palm trees?** Now, you say, palm trees. So what? But all the palm trees in the Caribbean are dying and they are dying from a particular virus or bacteria that is spread by a small mite. You might say, well,

so all the palm trees are dying. Lots of other trees will go there. It is true other palm trees will grow there, and they are replacing them gradually. I am not up on palm trees, but until I read the article I did not realize just how much stuff came out of a palm tree; coconuts and all the related oils and products.

Now the thing about the Sprung facility is that it is hermetically sealed from outside agencies, that there are no chemicals needed, no pesticides needed, no mildews can get in. If you are going to handle anything in there, you have to wash your hands, you have to change your shoes, you have to put on a white suit, sort of like a skidoo suit.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Out of taxpayers' money?

MR. J. CARTER:

Out of taxpayers' money.

So they are able to control the variables, and it is the way we are going to get a lot of our food in the next century.

I have a nephew who is a specialist in plant pathology and he tells me that you would not think there would be a problem with the world's wheat. Even though they are developing new strains, there are new strains of pests which keep attacking it, and it is a continuous rate. If we relax for a minute, then the pests would overcome the wheat and we would not have any wheat to eat. So the only way we can respond to this is to keep developing new strains, and this is done, but it is a race against time and it is quite a serious situation. People do not realize how near we are coming to a total failure of the

world's wheat crop. You know, it is not going to happen next year, it probably will not happen within five years, but if efforts to develop new strains of wheat were not kept up at an intense rate, then within ten or fifteen years down the road -

MR. BAKER:

Would the hon. member permit a question?

MR. J. CARTER:

Yes, certainly.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, it is a very interesting line that the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) is taking. Is the member suggesting that one of the advantages of the greenhouse project is that sometime in the future, when all the pests and the pollution and everything else destroy the natural ability of the land, then the greenhouse will come into its own? Is this the argument the member is using?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:

No, my argument, Mr. Speaker, is that we should have more than one string to our bow. This business about the palm trees, nobody suspected it, so all of a sudden they woke up and palm trees were dying. I recommend this article to members if they are interested, and I think members opposite are, to some extent, interested; they would like to find as many facts as they can to pick holes in the Sprung operation. But I say this, that without high tech research,

and without high tech facilities like the Sprung operation, maybe not run by Mr. Sprung necessarily, but run by somebody, without high tech facilities like that in the next century, when the population pressures are going to be a lot greater than they are today, we may be facing severe shortages and real crises. And it is no laughing matter. You know, even if all the money we have guaranteed Sprung were to go down the plughole, I am satisfied that he is doing high tech research that is valuable enough to justify that expenditure of money. I really do. Now I do not think for a minute that is going to happen, but even taking the worst case scenario, that although an excellent technician and a fine agriculturist he is no businessman - I think he is a good businessman, but just for the sake of argument, just to take the worst case, I think even in that situation, we would be justified in giving the kind of support we are giving to that operation, and I am quite serious about this. I have been exposed to agriculture all my life and I know the risks, and the risks are there and the risks are great.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. J. CARTER:
Another question? Yes, if you want.

MR. BAKER:
This is an interesting line. I was wondering if the member is saying that it would take this international catastrophe? Is that the point at which the Sprung greenhouse would become profitable? Could he address that question?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:
Well, it is like Benjamin Franklin: Benjamin Franklin was present when one of the first hot air balloons were raised and somebody said to him, Of what use is this balloon? He said, Of what use is a newborn baby? I think that is perhaps a good note to end on, not the hot air, but the baby. It is a young facility. I think it holds great promise, and I think it is well worth investing money in. I am disappointed when hon. gentlemen opposite do not take a more serious look at it. Sure, criticize all you want, but have a good, long, hard look at what they are trying to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Is the House ready for the Question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Question.

MR. SPEAKER:
Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? All those in favour 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Aye.

MR. SPEAKER:
Those against 'nay'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Nay.

MR. SIMMS:
Division, Mr. Speaker.

Division

MR. SPEAKER:

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout), the hon. the Minister of Public Works and Services (Dr. Twomey), the hon. the Minister of Justice (Ms. Verge), the hon. the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn), the hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Brett), the hon. the Minister of Forest Resources (Mr. R. Aylward), the hon. the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. Power), the hon. the President of Treasury and President of the Council (Mr. Simms), the hon. the Minister of Mines (Mr. Dinn), the hon. the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Matthews), the hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands (Mr. Russell), the hon. the Minister of Labour (Mr. Blanchard), the hon. the Minister of Development and Tourism (Mr. Barrett), Mr. Parsons, Mr. Greening, Mr. Reid, Mr. J. Carter, Mr. Baird, Mr. Hodder, Mr. Woodford, Mr. Callan, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Patterson.

MR. SPEAKER:

Those against the motion please rise.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Wells), Mr. Eppard, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Tulk, Mr. Baker, Mr. W. Carter, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Aylward, Mr. Hiscock, Mr. Furey, Mr. Lush, Mr. Gullage, and Mr. Long.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I declare the motion carried, twenty-three for and thirteen against.

MR. SPEAKER:

It is now five o'clock. The House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 2:00 p.m.

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