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Speaker: Honourable P.J. McNicholas

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The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. the member for Fogo. To reiterate the definition often quoted in the House, 'Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively and by members individually, without which they could not discharge their functions. They are rights which are absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers. A genuine question of privilege is a most serious matter, and ought rarely to come up in Parliament.' Beauchesne, Fifth Edition, page 11.

I have read the transcript of the interview during which the words to which the hon. the member for Fogo takes exception were uttered. As I understand it, the hon. the member maintains that in accusing the hon. the Premier of lying Mr. Craig Dobbin is disparaging the institution of Parliament and thereby violating the privileges of all hon. members. It seems to me that we are dealing here with a difference of opinion between the Premier and Mr. Dobbin, and I accept the word of the hon. the Premier.

I think one must keep the context in mind in asking whether this is a sufficiently grave or serious matter to support a charge of breach of privilege. I do not believe there is sufficient causal connection between the comments of Mr. Dobbin and the privileges of members of this House for me to find there has been a prima facie breach of them. While the accusation of Mr. Dobbin may be

intemperate, even distasteful, I do not find under the circumstances that a prima facie case of breach of privilege has been established.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

Before calling for statements by Ministers, I would like to welcome to the gallery Mr. Graham Flight, former member for Windsor - Buchans.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
I would also like welcome twenty-one level II students with their teacher Ted Winter, from Stella Marris High School, Trepassey.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

The hon. the Minister of Mines.

MR. DINN:
Mr. Speaker, I welcome yesterday's announcement by the federal government of a new programme for the mining and oil and gas industries.

The programme, to be known as the Canadian Exploration Incentive Programme, will provide incentives of up to \$3 million per year to qualified companies who use flow-through shares to finance grassroots mineral exploration and oil and gas exploration. The purpose of the programme is to

ensure that an appropriate level of support is maintained for exploration activity as tax reform changes take effect.

The federal government estimates that the programme will deliver more than \$200 million a year to junior mining exploration companies and support more than \$12,000 person-years of employment. Specific benefits to the Province are currently being assessed.

The programme will come into effect January 1, 1989 for mineral exploration. As a transitional measure, the federal government will extend the current 33 1/3 per cent mining exploration depletion allowance to the end of this year. This will enable exploration companies to continue using the flow-through mechanism in its present form and will give the Province ample time to assess the new programme.

Energy, Mines and Resources Canada will open 5 regional offices to administer the Canadian Exploration Incentive Programme. I am pleased to see that St. John's has been chosen as one of these locations.

As a Province, we have seen a doubling of exploration activity over the past year, largely due to flow-through shares. It has been our concern that tax reform, through its implications on flow-through financing, would hamper exploration activity and restrict the growth of a junior mining sector in Newfoundland. We therefore welcome this initiative as a means of correcting any imbalance that may otherwise be created by tax reform. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker,

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

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, first of all I thank the minister for letting me have an advance copy of his statement. Secondly, we on this side welcome any initiative of either order of government, whether provincial or federal, which has the effect of increasing economic activity, in this case mining exploration.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it needs to be said, thirdly, that the minister has had a fair change of heart, and hopefully of head, since 13 April, when, on that date, he informed the Estimates Committee "There is nothing actually happening with respect to flow-through itself." On that particular date the minister was not even aware that the Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, last June had made some fairly devastating changes, or had given notice of some fairly detrimental changes to the industry. But I understand that certain events, including the gathering of the explorationists at the Holiday Inn on April 14 or 15, helped focus the minister's mind, and that is always very useful.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this new programme, the Canadian Exploration Incentive Programme, I believe will be welcomed by the industry. But what could have been done and what would have been a lot more helpful, is if the Minister of Finance had not stopped tampering in the first

place. Or more to the point, now that it is May 1988, could I ask the Minister of Mines (Mr. Dinn) here in this Chamber to use his considerable influence with his federal counterparts, and in particular the Minister of Finance, federally, and prevail upon those people to extend the current 33 1/3 mining exploration depletion allowance for Newfoundland not only to the end of the present calendar year, but to extend it indefinitely? It is having a dramatic positive effect on exploration levels in this Province, and if the federal government really wants to put its money where its mouth is, wants to demonstrate its support of the Newfoundland mining industry, it can do so by preserving untampered the MEDA, the Mining Exploration Depletion Allowance. I appeal to the minister to see if he can use his good offices to ensure that is the case.

The federal government has realized that it had some egg on its face with this proposed change which would have had a detrimental effect on exploration activity, or its level, in this Province in particular. It now has the egg partly wiped off its face. It has its mind concentrated, as has the minister, and perhaps now we can appeal as a House, and certainly, I say to the minister, ask him to appeal, to the federal government to extend MEDA indefinitely to the good of the Newfoundland industry. I have for that the support of my friend, colleague, and cousin from Grand Falls (Mr. Simms), so I am sure I will have no difficulty convincing the minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker, we are actually quite pleased to see the announcement. The flow-through share in the 33 1/3 per cent depletion allowance is normally the kind of thing that, both federally and provincially, we as a party are not particularly enamoured with, especially when they are used to build condominiums in Toronto, or for financing takeovers, which is generally where the tax breaks have gone in the past.

The flow-through share, though, was one the few tax breaks that actually diverted money from the center of the country out to the regions. By definition, you cannot explore for gold in downtown Toronto, although maybe people do. I do not know. But this did bring a lot of exploration money to Northern Ontario, to places like Northern Saskatchewan, and to our Province, obviously, and on that basis we were strong supporters of this particular initiative.

However, as a general principle I believe that the grant system is a better one. I believe in the words of Allan Blakeney, who is the former Premier of Saskatchewan and the former Leader of the official Opposition, who said, "Never give away your tax base. If you are going to give a break to a company, give it to them as a grant so they know which hand is feeding them, and they know when it can be brought back." So, on this basis, going from a tax break into a grant system, on general principle I think that is the best

way to do it, because then the companies will know where the money is coming from.

So, on this basis, Mr. Speaker, we are quite pleased to see this initiative and we hope something can be worked out which will achieve the same thing as the flow-through share, but in a manner that it is very clear where the benefit is coming from, from the government itself and from the people of the provinces.

MR. BUTT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BUTT:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to make just a brief statement to clarify a misunderstanding yesterday between me and a reporter, Mr. Murphy. When I was coming to the Legislature yesterday, I was asked for an update on rabies on the Northern Peninsula. It was done rather hurriedly. One official told me that, in fact, yes, three more tests had come in. I, quite innocently, took that to mean that three more cases had come in that were positive, in other words, that the foxes were rabid.

In fact, that was not the case at all, Mr. Speaker. Subsequent to that, I have talked to the reporter, Mr. Murphy, apologized to him, and now wish to put the record straight for the public here in the Legislature.

While I am on my feet, for just thirty seconds, I want to give all hon. members just a brief update as to what has happened with rabies on the Northern Peninsula. We have collected to date

eighty-one foxes, two cats, a dog and a rat, all of which have been sent away and tested. Only the initial three, in the Roddickton area, tested positive: the one that broke into the dog shed, that tested positive, the one which was found on the dump tested positive, and the one that was in Bide Arm tested positive. They are the only three cases to date. We have the results of forty back so, in other words, thirty-seven have come back negative. We just have the original three. The other tests will come back; we will get three or four more tomorrow, and five or six more the next day, and so on. But to date it is just the initial three. We have had arctic foxes and coloured foxes tested. The arctic foxes all tested negatively - thirteen taken, thirteen tested, thirteen negative.

I hope that sets the record straight on that. Since I have done it privately to Mr. Murphy, who reported the story accurately, I now apologize to the gentleman here in the Legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HISCOCK:
We thank the Minister of Agriculture for his clarifying statement, for his apology and for his honesty. It only goes to show that he should not make any statements unless his press secretary checks them.

I would say to the minister, though, that when he is bringing matters of clarification into the House it would be good to have it

in print to give to members of the House. But he did do two things. We do thank the minister and we hope to have a further update which will show that rabies in this Province has been eradicated once and for all. Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Mr. Speaker, if I might, just further.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Conception Bay South.

MR. BUTT:

Just a matter of fifteen or twenty minutes ago it came to my attention, when I was coming to the House. I did inform hon. members, particularly the member who represents the area of the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker). I also informed the Leader of the Opposition. Unfortunately, my critic on the other side, the member for Eagle River, was not in the House at the time. Only for that, I obviously would have told him what I was about to do. And my hon. socialist friends were not here, as well.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

I am just trying to figure out what I am more upset with, being called a Socialist or a friend of the minister's.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a red letter day. If I recall correctly, the minister has said that he was wrong and he has given an apology to the CBC. I have been in this House three and a

half years and this is the first time I have ever heard it. I think we should frame it and send it over to the Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to provide hon. members with a report on the activities of the Farm Development Loan Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1988.

The past fiscal year has been one of rapid increase in lending activity by the Board as reflected in the value of loans increasing by 42 per cent over fiscal year 1986/87 or from \$1.9 million to \$2.8 million.

Mr. Speaker, the most significant increase during the past year was evident in the demand for operating capital and for the purchase of farm equipment. There was also a marked increase in the demand for loans to purchase dairy cows. The increase of activity in these areas is obviously a direct result of the implementation of the Canada/Newfoundland subsidiary agreement on a livestock feed initiative program.

Total disbursement for the year totalled \$2.6 million and outstanding loan commitments at March 31, 1988 was \$400,000. The total capital operating budget of the Board for the year was \$3 million.

Mr. Speaker, revenue collected for fiscal year 1987/88 has also increased over 1986/87. Revenue collected from farm clients during the year amounted to \$1.5 million, compared with \$900,000 collected during the previous year. The loan portfolio of the Farm Development Loan Board as of March 31, 1988 was approximately \$6.3 million.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture in Newfoundland and Labrador is still in the developmental stages with a tremendous amount of potential for future development and expansion. The recent provincial budget allocated \$3 million for the Farm Development Loan Board, in addition to the \$750,000 made available for the special Drought Assistance Programme.

Mr. Speaker, it is most encouraging to see such an increase in lending activity by the Farm Development Loan Board and this government will continue to encourage and assist further development in this very important sector of our economy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KELLAND:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for a copy of his statement. Just looking through it, he talks about the value of loans having increased some 42 per cent over the previous fiscal year. I would have liked to have seen something which would have indicated some numbers of

loans that were approved. It is another statistic, and it might give an indication of the level of increasing interest. Nevertheless, the figures presented seem to indicate an increase in the level of interest in the agricultural sector of our economy. I think it is important that those involved in the industry are striving to bring the Province closer towards self-sufficiency in the supply of agricultural products. I think that is a good thing.

I also believe that the government may have missed an ideal opportunity. If their objective is to increase production in agricultural areas, I would have thought that they had at least another \$15 to \$20 million available to them, which they put into Newfoundland Enviroponics which is not a proven project by any means, it is still very experimental. They may have done better and served the Province a lot better, had they directed the extra millions of dollars into worthwhile and proven agricultural projects, such as indicated here; the acquisition of better farm equipment and the acquisition of more dairy animals and things of that nature.

To me, when you spend public money and your objective is to increase our level of self-sufficiency, you should consider doing that in proven, worthwhile projects as opposed to something such as Newfoundland Enviroponics, which has no proven viability in the marketplace.

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

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker, just a couple of

comments. Since we are talking in this Ministerial Statement about providing assistance to our agricultural industry by way of guaranteed loans and by way of helping to finance the operation, I think the one comment that is appropriate at this time is to ask the minister what has happened to our agricultural agreement. As the Premier mentioned several days ago - or was it yesterday? - we are the only province in Canada that does not have an agricultural agreement. And, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, given the dimensions of the one that is being negotiated, which I understand is in the nature of \$8 million over five years, I think the comments of the people in the agricultural industry should be heard, who have claimed that this is much too little an amount to be putting into it, and that they would hope for an agricultural agreement with much more generous funding.

As I think the minister has said, as the Premier has said, as everybody has said, we are interested in developing an agricultural industry in this Province; and clearly a project that spends \$8 million over five years in an agricultural agreement which becomes, quite frankly, less than we put in one shot into one project here in St. John's, the greenhouse project, indicates, I think, that we have our priorities somewhat askew and, quite frankly, we should be interested in putting a lot more money into programmes like this. I am curious to hear, when the minister does get the agricultural agreement going, because any agreement is certainly going to be better than what we have had for the last four or five years, which has been none.

Oral Questions

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of days there have been a number of stories in various news media about what is happening with the Hibernia project. That is a matter, as everybody will be aware, of great concern to most people in the Province. While I realize that we cannot ask the Premier or anybody else to negotiate in public, nevertheless there are certain matters that are of fundamental concern, matters that have been addressed before. So I ask the Premier if he would now confirm for the House that the principles that have been agreed upon by the parties concerned contemplate the construction within Newfoundland of both the gravity based system and the module support system, and as many of the modules as can be be constructed within the Province?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Well, Mr. Speaker, whilst the Leader of the Opposition says in his preamble that you cannot negotiate in public. What he goes on to ask means that is what I would be doing. Because the Leader of the Opposition knows that we already have an agreement with the companies and federal government to build the gravity

based structure for the Hibernia project. That has been agreed on and therefore it is not part of the negotiations. All additional industrial benefits form part of the negotiating process that we are now involved in. So, therefore, to say anything beyond that would not be appropriate at this time.

Obviously from our point of view we are trying to maximize beyond the gravity based structure as much as we can, and as many industrial benefits to the Province as we can. That, of course, at this point in time is still a matter under negotiation with the federal government and with the companies. I was really astounded in the last month, as I travelled around the Province, at the number of people who came up to me and, hearing the rumours about Hibernia and so on, said, 'Are we going to get the gravity based structure if Hibernia goes ahead?' And, of course, I guess there has been some time go by and some frustration go by as well on behalf of everybody, but I would just like to clearly state that we won that battle a number of years ago.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

If Hibernia goes ahead it will be a gravity based structure and it will be built at Come By Chance. The Come By Chance site has been chosen for that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

To just answer the Leader of the Opposition again, as succinctly and as detailed as I can, there

are a whole range, as the Leader of the Opposition well knows and understands, of other industrial benefits. He has mentioned one, the main support frame, or the module support frame, the modules themselves, the structures themselves and the engineering, but there is a whole range of other spin-off activities that could take place anywhere in the Province from Port aux Basques to Marystown or wherever. All of those are under negotiation between the two governments and the companies at this point in time, and have not been finalized.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, in the Estimates Committee yesterday, I believe the hon. the Premier mentioned 75,000 man-years of work involved in the project. Is that the total man-years that will be involved in the whole of Canada in the construction and operation, or is that the man-years that is contemplated for the Newfoundland component of it?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

That was 75,000 person years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

And he is twenty years behind the time.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

And every person in his lifetime -

MR. SIMMONS:

His or her?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
- plays many parts.

MR. TULK:
His or her lifetime. Not his lifetime.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
That is what we predict, 75,000 person-years for what we now know we have as it relates to a gravity base structure. We are now trying to increase that amount in negotiations for additional industrial benefits of the Province.

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. WELLS:
What I asked the Premier to make clear was: Was that for Newfoundland alone or for the whole of Canada?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
When I say 75,000 person-years, I am so parochial that it always implies just Newfoundland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:
My question is to the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland Hydro, the Finance Minister (Mr. Windsor). It has to do with a statement in the annual report of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. The statement is on page 18, and it reads, 'These favourable changes resulted in Hydro earning

in excess of its approved rate of return on its sales to retail customers.' And then it goes on to explain that there will be a rebate in the first couple of months in 1988.

My question to the Minister is: Does this mean that the rates that have been established for Hydro are now so high that it is actually breaking the law when it receives the level of revenue that it is getting?

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

MR. WINDSOR:
I thank the hon. gentleman for asking me that question. He may recall about two weeks ago I informed the House that in fact Hydro had earned more money than they were entitled to under the Public Utilities Board regulations, which regulate the rates that they must charge and the amount of return that they can on their investment.

I have to say that I was wrong in what I said to the House, because I informed the House that Hydro has earned some \$1.3 million in excess and that amount would be returned to consumers through Newfoundland Light and Power. I was wrong in that statement. It is actually \$1.6 million, Mr. Speaker, not \$1.3 million. Here it says \$1.7 which will be returned. We are not breaking the law. These are through variances and various things such as interest rates, the same things that reflected very positively on the Province's budget for last year and gave us some very positive variances and decreased the projected deficit from that which was predicted last year. So it is not a matter of breaking the

law but simply a matter of earning more than had been anticipated and, quite properly, it shall be returned to the consumers of the Province.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:
As the minister indicates, there are a number of factors causing that, one of which is lower interest rates, exchange rates changing with the Canadian dollar getting stronger, and also with the price of oil going down. My question to the minister is this: Given that the circumstances last year were the most extreme we have ever had in terms of oil fired generation - in other words, 43 per cent of our electricity comes from that - and that that is not likely to continue, would not the minister acknowledge that it is quite likely that the excess profits for Hydro this year, if we get any decent rainfall, are likely to be considerably higher than that as we decrease the amount of oil that we use and rely on our hydro generation? In other words, would the minister agree that we are likely to see even greater excess earnings this year by Hydro than we had last year, given that the same factors that did it last year are getting even more favourable to us this year?

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

MR. WINDSOR:
Not necessarily, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. gentleman would also recall the statement that I made to the House, informed the House

that because of some positive variances we have not sought a rate increase this year, even though, obviously costs to Hydro are increasing, salaries and other items are increasing to Hydro, but because of positive variances we had not applied for a rate increase and we do not intend to apply for one this year either, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. FENWICK:
Given that Hydro's operations, not CFLCo's but Hydro's, are at a record level, that profits are double what they were two years ago, would not the minister ask Hydro to look at its projections now and see if a rate decrease can be put into effect now, which obviously will be transmitted through Newfoundland Light and Power to the average consumer? Will not the minister commit himself to seeing if the consumers of this Province can get a reasonable break, given that in all probability they are going to have to return the money a year from now anyway?

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

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Speaker, I have already done that. As I have indicated, we earned some \$1.7 million surplus last year that will be returned to consumers, and I have already indicated to the House that that should be reflected in power bills in the month of July, I think, through the retailer, which is Newfoundland Light and Power, and that these factors are considered

in the rates that we are applying for next year, which is the same rate. We may well have a small surplus, we may not. We may have a small deficit. Because of our equalization programme announced three years ago, whereby we can spread any variances over a three-year period, thereby eliminating the need for the cost of fuel adjustment, which was a very positive move, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this government, we can make those kinds of adjustments over a three-year period and, therefore, any surplus will indeed be returned.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

I have a question for the Minister of Forestry. It relates to the report which he made public a couple of days ago. It is curious that the House was not apprised first of that particular report. I am sure you will agree, Mr. Speaker, we have seen lesser issues dealt with by Ministerial Statements. But that aside, I want to ask the minister: In view of the findings, which indicate that just about one-fifth of the birds involved would be adversely affected with potentially life threatening implications, of the 1987 monitoring programme on fenitrothion, would the minister indicate whether the results of this report in any way alter the composition of the department's 1988 spray programme?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. gentleman for his question. It is certainly a very important question for the Department of Forestry. I guess the bottom line of the whole report that was released shows that the findings of the two studies we have done in the past two years on the affect on songbirds from fenitrothion spray programmes are inconclusive. The report finds there were potentially life threatening circumstances in 17 per cent of the songbirds collected after the spray programme, Mr. Speaker.

The actual facts of the matter are there were no actual dead songbirds found in the spray areas that were looked at. I guess the most important thing, Mr. Speaker, is that the only birds they could find to do laboratory experiments on were birds that were shot with 410 shotguns, and in these birds they did find there were some stress factors, Mr. Speaker. And I would imagine that if I were shot at with a 410 shotgun they would find some stress factors in my brain also, Mr. Speaker.

Not to diminish the effects on songbirds, Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the department this year has increased by a little more than 100 per cent its plans to use Bt spray in the control of hemlock looper in this Province. We have gone from less than 11 per cent up to 25 per cent with the Bt spray programme this year. We had an experimental programme last year using different formulations of Bt spray. And we found good results with Diapel 176, which is a very potent Bt formula not registered in Canada to date, Mr. Speaker, and that was a well-controlled,

scientific, experimental programme. What we intend to do this year, Mr. Speaker, is use these findings under a well-controlled programme and try to translate them into a regular commercial spray programme. We have committed ourselves to using Bt for up to 25 per cent of our spray programme this year, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMONS:
If the minister were a medical practitioner he would diagnose the patient's problem by way of an autopsy, it seems.

The report is quite conclusive in one respect, I say to the minister, that where there was double swathing or a second spraying the birds did not recover. Now, what do you have to have, dead birds before he is convinced? While his studies may be conclusive the twenty years of research in New Brunswick are very conclusive on this particular point.

MR. SIMMS:
They do not have a hemlock looper in New Brunswick. Did you know that?

MR. SIMMONS:
Nor the minister.

Mr. Speaker, in light of those findings, I ask the minister why does he and his department not elect to go completely with Bt? They are going somewhat in that direction, but why do they not go with a Bt spray, which is found to

be much more effective without the kinds of side effects we are talking about in this report?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see that the official Opposition has aligned themselves with the Socialists in this House of Assembly to play Russian roulette, Mr. Speaker, with the lives of thousands of people involved in the forest industry of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker, one quote from the study reads, 'Blocks that had the highest amount of fenitrothion deposit on foliage samples did not yield songbirds with the highest CHE depressants, Mr. Speaker, which shows that the studies done are not conclusive. That is all we are saying, Mr. Speaker. There are 17 per cent of the songbirds collected that showed a potential life-threatening situation. None of them died, but there was a potential life-threatening situation. That is what the study shows, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that from the birds they studied the second spray showed a less effect on songbirds than did one spray. Again, Mr. Speaker, this shows that the studies are inconclusive.

Our department has allotted monies

this year again to continue with the studies with our fenitrothion spray programme. We have also increased by over 100 percent our use of Bt in this Province, Mr. Speaker, but we are not willing to play Russian roulette with the lives of thousands of Newfoundlanders who depend upon the forests. Mr. Speaker, the budworm infestation we had a couple of years ago has had very serious consequences, and we have five to seven years to salvage budworm infested wood. But with the hemlock looper infestation we have two years to salvage the wood. We cannot play Russian roulette with the lives of the thousands of Newfoundlanders who depend upon the forests of this Province for a livelihood.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. GILBERT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Premier. I am sure that the Premier is aware that in the estimates for this year there is the figure of \$10 million being spent to operate the intra-island ferries, the intra-Province ferries, I suppose.

I am sure the Premier is also aware that in 1977 the British Columbia government negotiated a deal with the federal government whereby B.C. would assume responsibility for the operation of like ferries in British Columbia but there was a provision in that agreement that the federal

government would pay an annual rent, an annual fee to British Columbia for the operation of these ferries forever.

Now why, two years later, did his government negotiate a five year deal with the federal government for the operation of the ferries?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I would have get the details of the agreement between the federal government and the British Columbia government to see whether in fact the allegation that we are looking at 'apples and apples' is really valid.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

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

MR. GILBERT:
The figures that I got show that we are looking at 'apples and apples', Mr. Premier, and I wish you would, get the details on British Columbia. Your government negotiated in 1985 for a one year agreement, and then in 1986 another one year agreement to operate the ferries, at a time when the federal Minister of Transportation was our representative in the Cabinet, (Mr. Crosbie). Why, then, did we not negotiate a deal similar to the one that they have in British Columbia?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, as I said, I will get the information and let the hon.

member know later how I feel about the two different agreements.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier should, because it seems right now from what we hear that they are cutting back the ferry service in Newfoundland, so there must be reasons for it. You are going to do it, are you?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Oh, yes. I am going to do it. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am going to do it.

Yesterday the hon. member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick), asked me a question about free trade, where he went through a little list here showing only 400 or 500 new jobs going to be created. Today in Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given, I am going to tell the hon. member that he left out 2,517 service jobs that are going to be created within the free trade. I got the information for the hon. member today because I promised him so yesterday.

MR. GILBERT:
I am surprised you do not know about the B.C. agreement. The federal civil servants are laughing at us.

MR. SIMMS:
You should not be yelling across the House.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I tabled some information yesterday as a result of questions the day before.

And I am not going to discriminate against any hon. member opposite, Mr. Speaker. I think just as much of the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir as I do for the member for Port de Grave, just as much. You both can sit at the same table and have the same amount of porridge.

MR. SIMMS:
In other words, the answer is yes.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do like porridge, too, so I tell the hon. Premier. I do like it. I have it every morning for breakfast, but I am very particular about the company I keep when eating that porridge.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health (Dr. Collins). For the last number of years we have been quite concerned about the proposed clinic at Come By Chance. We had expected, Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks to get some announcement on the clinic and where the matter presently stands.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health what are his intentions or the intentions of his department on the clinic at Come By Chance? Is it going to be a twenty-four hour a day clinic? Are there going to be any additional services put in that

particular clinic?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure I got all the words the hon. member said, so if I do not answer precisely perhaps he can ask a supplementary on the matter. My understanding is that he just asked what do we visualize for the future -

MR. SIMMS:

When are you going to announce it.

DR. COLLINS:

When! Oh! The Come By Chance clinic, like many of the health institutions in the Province, is under review. We review these clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, services and so on on a periodic basis, especially if a particular factor has come up that directs our attention to them.

Now, one of the factors in that area - the hon. the Premier referred to it - is that it looks at though it is going to be an important industrial base for the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. COLLINS:

It already is to a very great degree in terms of the refinery, but there are many other things that are very likely to happen in that area. So, clearly is our responsibility to try to foretell what services will be needed so we can anticipate demands. One of the things that we have been doing, and I have been doing with the help of the member for Bellevue, (Mr. Callan).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. COLLINS:

who is extremely knowledgeable about the area, and has taken a great interest in the thing. I must say he has taken an interest in the health services in that area for many, many years. Even when he was on the other side we used to have little chats back and forth, I think quite amicable chats, about the services out there. So the member has been very helpful to me in trying to define what changes we should make out there.

Now, the hon. member asked when that process will be concluded. I can say it is ongoing. I am not in a position yet to say exactly what and exactly when, but he can be assured that this is a very active, ongoing process.

MR. EFFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that it is only recently the Minister of Health started to listen to the hon. member for Bellevue, because the former Minister of Health (Dr. Twomey) certainly did not listen last year of the year before. I suspect it is just in recent weeks. I am very glad to hear that Come By Chance is now going to have a 24-hour clinic, although the minister did not come out and say so directly. Seeing that we have some money to put into a the clinic for Come By Chance, I want to tie that into my next question, a very important question concerning the present horrendous

situation at the Health Sciences Complex. I want to give the minister a quick example, if you will allow me, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:

You have only one minute left.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Would the minister explain to this House how conditions at the Health Sciences can continue as they have been for the last number of months, without enough beds in the intensive care unit without enough operating room space? Last Friday night a gentleman had an accident where he broke a hip, was prepped for the operation for three successive days, and never got to the operating room until Monday night, and then only because the doctor had to kick up a racket to get him into the operating room. These are continuous examples. When is the minister going to provide money enough so this situation can be straightened out at the Health Sciences Complex?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, the money we have given to the Health Sciences institution this year is more than last year. There was a sizable increase. As a matter of fact, we put money in the budget this year particularly for special services, for expansion of their special high technology services up there. I cannot respond to the particular incident that the member brought up but I certainly will take it under notice and I will look into the circumstances. Let me say this, the hospital there is under the day by day

control and management of a board of trustees, a very dedicated board of trustees, who are private citizens, who work without remuneration, who put in innumerable hours in managing the institution there. Associated with the Board of Trustees is a very, very expert management group, and I think that one can be assured that the institution up there is being managed in the best way possible. There are always times when a hospital is faced with excessive demands, demands over and above the average, and you really cannot gear up any institution always to be ready for maximum demands. It might be theoretically desirable but it is just not practical to be geared up to handle the maximum demands all the time. The hospital is geared up to handle what it feels are reasonable and average demands, and every once in awhile when excessive demands face them, they make the best arrangements they can, and they are very expert in doing this.

MR. EFFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. EFFORD:

Let me assure the Minister of Health there is nobody in this Province complaining about the administrative staff or the board at the Health Sciences, or any other hospital in this Province. There is nobody complaining about that. What they are complaining about, and what we are complaining about is there is not enough money. I ask the minister very clearly, is going to take the loss of somebody's life at a hospital in this Province to awaken the minister? Two weeks ago fourteen

people waited for six to ten days for bypass surgery, and it was done then only because the doctors made some arrangements among themselves to get those people operated on. The case I just referred to is not an isolated case. I used it only as an example. I ask the minister what it is going to take to wake him up to his responsibility to ensure that the necessary funds are available so that those people, the board and the administration of these hospitals, can do the job necessary to give proper health care to the people of this Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, the board and management and the hospital are giving proper care there. They are giving the highest level of care in the Province. The Health Sciences has some services that no other hospital in the Province can give. It is a very, very high technology, very advanced type of medicine in practice at the Health Sciences Complex, by very, very competent, dedicated people.

The hon. member says when are we going to give them enough money. We give as much money as we possibly can, and we are giving more this year than last year. I do not know how much more the hon. member feels we should give, perhaps he can name a figure I can comment on it.

MR. EFFORD:

You had \$22 million for cucumbers.

DR. COLLINS:

Is he talking about a couple of thousand dollars more, about a couple of million dollars more?

If he is talking about a couple of million dollars more, does he think I should take it from the Carbonear Hospital to give it to the Health Sciences Complex?

MR. EFFORD:

Cucumbers.

DR. COLLINS:

Anyway, the particular problem that the hon. member referred to, about the cardiac surgical cases, I commented on that more than a week ago. There was a period of difficulty at that time which has since been resolved. It may well come back again, but the management there know that these things are cyclical and they deal with them as they come along.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

They got \$40 million more this year.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Butt). In 1985 this legislature passed a bill which gave municipalities the power to regulate the advertisement of the display of, and the sale of pornographic materials. Three years later, Mr. Speaker, nothing has changed. All types, kinds and varieties of pornographic materials are freely, indiscriminately and openly available to all segments of our society, particularly the youth of this Province, the young children. And I ask the minister why has nothing changed?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, after the legislation was passed here in this House, proper regulations were drafted, modelled after regulations in the Province of Ontario. Subsequent to that, these regulations were challenged in the Province in Ontario, and it was ruled that they were against the constitution. In view of that, it was obvious that we also had to change our regulations, since they were after the Ontario model.

So we have been working with the Department of Justice along these lines, with the intent of bringing in new regulations. Unfortunately, the solicitor who was working in conjunction with our officials became ill, so a new solicitor is now working on them. I guess for that reason, more so than anything else, there has been some delay, but I would hope that in the not too distant future we will have a new set of regulations which can be made available to the councils around the Province and subsequently used.

MR. LUSH:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

This will have to be the final supplementary.

The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the minister has admitted that the bill passed in this Legislature was not the correct procedure. We on this side at the time said it was the wrong process. Now I ask the minister: What time can the

people of this Province expect unified, laws enacted by this Province, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to 300 municipalities enacting all kinds and different laws, respecting the control of pornographic materials for the sake of the youth of this Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does not understand. It is not the legislation that gave us the problem, it was the regulations. It was the regulations that had to be changed.

I should advise the hon. member that this particular legislation is really the responsibility of the federal government, and it is my understanding that there is a bill in second reading before the House of Commons at the moment, I think it is C-54 - my hon. colleague, the Minister of Justice (Ms. Verge), would be able to handle this much better than I can - and if it is eventually passed in the House of Commons then that legislation will take care of the problem that the hon. member is talking about.

MR. SPEAKER:

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

MR. WOODFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Humber Valley.

MR. WOODFORD:

Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Government Services Committee I would like to report that the Committee has considered the matters to it referred and has passed, without amendment, items of expenditure under the following headings: The Department of Municipal Affairs; the Department of Public Works and Services; the Department of Labour; the Department of Finance; the Department of Transportation; the Department of Consumer Affairs and Communications; and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

To add to that, Mr. Speaker, for a minute or so I would like to, first of all, thank the members of the committee, namely: The Vice-Chairman, Mr. Gilbert, Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir; the hon. the member for Waterford - Kenmount, Mr. Gullage; the hon. the member for Stephenville, Mr. K. Aylward; the hon. the member for Trinity - Bay de Verde, Mr. Reid; the hon. the member for Terra Nova, Mr. Greening; and the hon. the member for Placentia, Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Speaker, it was a very gratifying experience to sit on such a Committee. We had seven up and seven down, no problems whatsoever. I want to congratulate the members of the Committee, especially the members of the Opposition, I must say, on the way they conducted themselves at all the hearings. It was a constructive process. There were pertinent questions and forthright answers, Mr. Speaker. Although some of the questions were somewhat controversial, they handled them in an excellent manner and the result was, Mr. Speaker, as I said, we had seven meetings in a row with no problems whatsoever, and it was all

passed. So, I want to thank the Committee. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Answers to Questions
for which Notice has been Given

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Speaker, just very briefly. During the consideration of the Consolidated Fund Services yesterday there was a question from the member for Menihek dealing with the statements of the pooled pension fund for 1986. He had those for 1985, and I undertook to see how quickly I could table the reports for 1986. I am pleased to advise the hon. member that I tabled them some time ago, together with the Public Accounts. So they are available.

MR. FENWICK:

I have them.

MR. WINDSOR:

The hon. gentleman already has them. That is speed, Mr. Speaker!

I also undertake that within the next month I will table the report for 1987.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I just want to answer a question to me from the hon. the

member for Menihek in his statement, yesterday, where I said I would get more information. I am reading from the same material that he was reading from, and I find that the hon. the member for Menihek really was not giving the whole picture yesterday, because the free trade agreement, as signed, will cause over 4,000 jobs to be created in the Province over the ten-year period, and over 2,500 of them are in the service sector. So the hon. member for Menihek did not give the full picture, it is over 4,000 jobs.

To further enlighten the hon. member for Menihek, I thought I would pass along, and ask the Page to deliver to him personally, a speech that I have given on the economy of Newfoundland to demonstrate to him that even before free trade triggers in, we are seeing record levels of employment, record levels of investment, record levels of opportunity. I am sure he would want to read this speech, this excellent right-wing, Conservative speech which, 'While the light holds out to burn, / The vilest sinner may return.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

He might even cross the floor.

MR. GILBERT:

Oh, no, he will not.

MR. SIMMS:

Why does he not cross over today?

Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

It is now 4:00 o'clock and it is Private Member's Day. The debate was adjourned by the hon. the Minister of Northern Development.

I will call on the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today and support this private member's motion which has been put by my colleague for Naskaupi (Mr. Kelland). I believe, Mr. Speaker, it would be in order for me at this time, before the Premier leaves his seat, to compliment the Premier, to draw the attention of this House to the good intentions of the Premier. I refer to the action which the hon. the Premier took in 1981 when he brought in this Freedom Of Information Act. I think I would be remiss if I were not to give the Premier all the praise that he deserves, because he had every good intention. Albeit it was seven or eight years ago, but at least he did, at one time, have every good intention.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that when the hon. the Premier brought in this Freedom of Information Act he was reacting to Newfoundlanders who were crying out for wide-open government, he was reacting to Newfoundlanders who were not satisfied to have government behind closed doors. I recall that when this Freedom Of Information Act was hitting the press some years ago, words were being used about this young, optimistic Premier who was going to revolutionize government, who was going to have a model of government which could be upheld to the whole British Commonwealth, to the whole world.

MR. LUSH:

Open. Democratic.

MR. DECKER:

He was going to have wide-open government. There would be no more government in the closets, where premiers were in the pockets of people and they were doing what they were told. No more of this.

MR. LUSH:

They were going to take government to the people.

MR. DECKER:

There was going to be no more secret society. Now, I do not know what the Premier was talking about when he talked about government behind closed doors and secret societies. Probably he built up a straw man; the Leader of the Opposition always accuses him of building up this straw man. If so, he did a good job of it. Because he had me convinced - I was living in White Bay at the time - that we had the dirtiest, filtiest kind of government that you would ever wish to see. He was the hero, he was the Don Quixote on a white horse, he was the shining white knight, and he was going to do away with all government behind closed doors, all closet government, all secret society government, and he was going to stand by the position that the public had a right to know, and that, by goodness, no matter what happened to this Province in years to come, the public would always and forever have the right to know what is going on in government.

I have the Act here before me, Mr. Speaker. I made it my business to go and get it. Item 3, on page 65 of the Freedom of Information Act says, "The purpose of this Act is to provide a right of access by the public to information in

records of departments and to subject that right only to specific and limited exceptions necessary for the operation of the departments and for the protection of personal privacy." This was meant to be a right, Mr. Speaker, not some curious person who could be told something if it happened to suit the ends of some particular department. This act clearly states that it is to provide a right of access by the public to information, and the only exceptions would be a few specific and limited exceptions necessary for the operation of the departments. No argument with that.

Mr. Speaker, what we had seven years ago was a squeaky-clean Premier with every good intention, and I am not going to be the last to praise him for his good intentions seven or eight years ago. Look how open this information was. Had I not seen the Act, I would have thought it might have been just for a few Newfoundlanders, where something personal was being discussed. But, no, this right of information is available to every Canadian citizen domiciled in the Province, as long as he is living in the Province. A permanent resident of Canada was the meaning in the Immigration Act of 1986, or, Mr. Speaker, a corporation incorporated by or under a law of Canada or a Province, and who is carrying on business in the Province.

If some archeologist 2,000 or 3,000 years from now were to dig up that piece of paper and he were not to know what happened consequently, if he were not to know what happened a few short years after this piece of paper was written, this Act was

proclaimed, he would have to say, 'What a tremendous Premier that must have been, in 1981!' But he would be talking about A.D. and he would be talking about B.C., the year 1981. He would have gone to this.

But there are two other ways to designate time that I would also want to refer to the people of Newfoundland and to any future archaeologists who might be digging around and trying to gain some insights from their past which is our present. I would take these archaeologists and I would take the people of Newfoundland seven years down the road, seven years from the day that this particular bill was proclaimed, and I would tell them about BDD.

Now BDD, Mr. Speaker, is before the demise of democracy in Newfoundland. This, Mr. Speaker, was the act, The Freedom of Information Act. This was wide-open government. This was the kind of government that Newfoundlanders felt we would be committed to and guaranteed forever and a day. This was before the demise of democracy.

Between 1981 and 1988 we had the demise of democracy, so we have to talk about ADD - after the demise of democracy.

Now, when did this happen? When did democracy disappear in Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker?

BDD is before the demise of democracy, when I believe The Freedom of Information Act had some credibility, had some backbone; it was something we could depend on.

After the demise of democracy:

Mr. Speaker, I believe I can pinpoint to the day when democracy disappeared in this Province; it was the very day when the combined Cabinet and the executive assistants, and all the people we normally call government, when the total of the Cabinet and the executive assistants and the people who are part of government, when that group became bigger than the combined House of Assembly. That is the day that democracy died in Newfoundland.

I am glad the House Leader came in, because he can certainly learn something from this in the event that he should succeed the Premier as Leader. I will cut it out of Hansard and send it over to him so that he can read it. After the demise of democracy: The very day that happened was when the combined Cabinet and the government became bigger than the House of Assembly. That is when it happened.

BDD, there was no problem. Any interested person before the death of democracy, and concerned citizen, any Canadian based corporation, as long as they were based in Newfoundland, could write a letter to any department of government and except for a few special exceptions, he, she or it could receive free of cost the information he, she or it was looking for. This was before.

And it is so often that we have seen corruption sneak in. Every person starts off with every good intention, every good intention in the world, and I believe that the hon. the Premier had every good intention before BDD. But after the years pass, corruption sets in, and after corruption creeps in around the edges, rot sets in, and I suppose it is only a normal part

of the world as we know it.

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources was talking today about spraying and all this sort of thing, and he was talking about the hemlock looper and the spruce budworm. These are symptoms of old age, that is nature's way of harvesting timber that we did not harvest. That is the cause of it. Nature has her way of tearing down overmature timber. Old men, and I will soon be one, as we age, nature has a way of corrupting the physical body and tearing it down. The back of my head, I think, makes it obvious that I am getting older; nature takes the hair, and nature takes the limbs and so on and so forth, corruption of the physical body. Likewise, with the body we refer to as government, it is only a matter of time and corruption sets in.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. the Premier had convinced every single living Newfoundlander, including me - a good sermon, too, I might add - that because of this Freedom of Information Act, the day would never, ever come again when a corrupt government could keep the truth away from Newfoundlanders.

Now, he had convinced everyone of that, but, Mr. Speaker, as willing as the Premier might have been, considering all the good intentions that he might have had, the fact of the matter is, he could not live up to his good intentions. He learned after he was in here for seven or eight years that it was a lot more fun to rule by decree, a lot more sensible, in his opinion, to rule by decree, to rule behind closed doors, to rule in the closet. And as soon as he learned this he said, 'The devil take The Freedom

of Information Act,' and he threw it out. Now, he could not throw it out, obviously. How could the minister who, in 1981, brought in this Freedom of Information Act get up in the House and have it repealed? I mean, that would be a bit silly. I think anyone would have to agree it would be silly and it would not be very political astute. And the Premier, let us face it, is politically astute. That is his problem. He is probably one of the best politicians this Province has ever had.

MR. BUTT:
You are right on!

MR. DECKER:
The member agrees, of course. I think I would agree with that. He is probably one of the best politicians Newfoundland and Labrador has ever had.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:
He is probably one of the best politicians that the Dominion of Canada has ever had.

MR. BUTT:
You are right on that, as well.

MR. DECKER:
I would even go that far, and I am sure members will agree with me. But with my next statement I do not expect any applause from the other side. He is probably the worst governor that the Province of Newfoundland, or the Dominion of Newfoundland, or the Dominion of Canada has ever had.

MR. SIMMS:
How come you guys are over there and not over here?

MR. DECKER:

I will answer the hon. minister's question, a good question. He asks, "How come you guys are over there and we are over here?" You see, the hon. member was not listening. I said the Premier was probably the best politician, and there is a distinction between a politician and being capable of governing. I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that we are the governors. We will govern this Province, but it is going to take us another election to get over there. When that election comes, they will find out why we are over here.

Mr. Speaker, I still have a few minutes left and I want to dispel another myth. Someone threw something across about leaders. This is a myth they are trying to perpetrate on Newfoundlanders about our leaders. Since 1949, Mr. Speaker, the PC Party of Newfoundland has had Harry Mews, Malcolm Hollett, John Higgins, James Greene, Gerry Ottenheimer, Noel Murphy, Ank Murphy, Peter Cashin, Frank Moores, and Brian Peckford. If anyone is counting, that is ten leaders since 1949. The Liberal Party since 1949 has had Joey Smallwood, Ed Roberts, Bill Rowe, Don Jamieson, Len Stirling, Steve Neary, who was appointed for just a few days, Leo Barry and Clyde Wells, eight leaders. Now, what is the racket about leaders? We have had eight leaders since 1949, and the Tory Party has had ten leaders since 1949. So do not, for goodness sake, give me any of that foolishness.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

Do not ever let me hear that

nonsense being said again in this House. We have had eight leaders and the Tories have had ten. It is just as simple as that.

I would predict, Mr. Speaker, that as soon as this election is over and this leader goes, you will see them coming every thirty days, just like the moon.

Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes I have left I want to give the reason why the hon. the Premier wanted to abolish The Freedom of Information Act. It was abolished sometime last year when a few things that were happening in this Province became too hot for the Premier. Let me call the House's attention to some of that.

The first one was the Round Pond Road. Remember Round Pond Road? I am sure hon. member will remember Round Pond Road which was a closet deal, which was a behind-closed-doors deal, which was an Order in Council deal, which was done behind the scenes and, as far as the then minister was concerned and as far as the Premier was concerned, it was none of the public's business. When some of the press and when members on this side began to get too hot on the heels of government, they clamped a fee on for Freedom of Information. That was one thing that was happening behind closed doors, setting up roads to ministers' private cottages, up to their families, and all this sort of thing. Had that not been stopped, Mr. Speaker, the Lord only knows what would have happened in this Province.

The other thing that happened, Mr. Speaker, was what I like to refer to as the Sprung syndrome; the Sprung syndrome took over in this Province. Now, what is the Sprung

syndrome? The Sprung syndrome, I would tell hon. members, and I am not talking about the almost \$23 million which has gone into the project, I am talking about the Sprung syndrome which, I suppose, is almost like a Valdmanis syndrome. I do not know. That is not quite the word I am looking for. But the Sprung syndrome is where the government is sucked in by fast talkers, where the government is sucked in and made to do things that they would normally not do in a time of sanity. I would like to have half an hour to really develop the Sprung syndrome concept, Mr. Speaker. If I could have leave, I would be glad to do it. But the problem is, I believe I only have a minute left.

I had some other notes, but I will just conclude by saying, Mr. Speaker, -

MR. J. CARTER:
A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A point of order.

MR. J. CARTER:
The hon. member's time is up.

MR. DECKER:
It is not up yet.

MR. SPEAKER:
When the member's time is up, I will let him know.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. DECKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In conclusion, this Freedom of Information bill was probably one of the best bills that ever went through this House, and I say that unequivocally. DDD: The day democracy demised was probably, Mr. Speaker, one of the saddest days in the history of this Province. Now only did the act go, but with the act went every good intention, with the act went every good desire.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. DECKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. CALLAN:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to have a few words on this resolution. First of all I want to comment on the remarks of my former colleague in the Liberal Opposition, a man who is still my colleague in the Legislature and, of course, still a friend, a good friend.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN:
He talked about archaeologists, and he talked about EGI, every good intention, and so on. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that it is my every good intention this afternoon to stick to this resolution. Not being an archaeologist and not being like Randy Travis who digs up bones and exhumes things that are better

left alone, I want to stick with the bill. Let me read the resolution we have before us, Mr. Speaker, as submitted by the member for Naskaupi. It says:

'WHEREAS the access to information relating to Government operation is an essential element for the performance of duties of Members of the House of Assembly, particularly the Official Opposition.' I do not know why they should be particular. I mean, I think the second opposition group should have just as much access to it, and there should not be anything particular about the Official Opposition in their use of information that they can gather.

'AND WHEREAS this information should be readily available to Members of the House of Assembly, on reasonable notice, whether the House is in session or not;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the regulations be amended to provide that any charges, which might normally apply to agents or agencies outside the House of Assembly, be waived for members of the House.'

Now, there is what the resolution is all about, Mr. Speaker. In speaking to the resolution, one has to ask oneself several questions: Why is it necessary to gather information? For what purpose does the official Opposition need this information? Most people who gather information, students who go to school and gather information, they use it. Or if somebody is attending a particular trade at trade school or university, or whatever, they gather information and they gather knowledge so that they can use it in a positive way

in a future job opportunity, career and so on.

But what is the purpose? Why is the official Opposition so interested in obtaining information about government's activities? We know, Mr. Speaker, the kind of information that was asked for last Summer and last Fall; we know the kinds of letters that went to various ministers and the kind of information that was sought, and, of course, we saw on the Order Paper, on the day the House opened, about 120 questions - the same six or seven questions really - directed to about twenty different ministers. So even though they said it was 120 questions, it was actually six of the same questions directed to twenty different ministers, or so.

Mr. Speaker, why is the official Opposition so interested in getting information? Is it because the official Opposition want to learn how government is run? Do they want to get information so that they can formulate policies for the Liberal Opposition, policies that they would hopefully use if they ever came to power? No, Mr. Speaker. That is not the reason.

MR. J. CARTER:

For mischief, that is all.

MR. CALLAN:

The member for St. John's North uses a good word. Mr. Speaker, when I was over there, there were two or three people who were so intent on gathering that sort of information that they let their district work go by the wayside, and for that reason they will lose their districts. Everybody in the Liberal caucus knows who I am talking about. These two or three individuals neglected their

districts, they poked their noses into other shadow portfolios, all, of course, to impress the leader - 'Look how hard I am working, Mr. Leader. Look at all the information I have gathered. I am going to give this to **The Sunday Express**, I am going to give it to Reg Sherren of the **CBC** who is a close friend of mine, and I will give it to Lynn Burry of **NTV** who is also a close friend of mine.

MR. PATTERSON:
Or Barbara Yaffe.

MR. CALLAN:
Or Barbara Yaffe, who is a close friend of mine! Mr. Speaker, that is the question that has to be asked. Since the official Opposition is so interested in and so determined to gather information, the logical and obvious question that follows is: Why do you want this information?

MR. J. CARTER:
For mischievous purposes.

MR. CALLAN:
The answer, Mr. Speaker, is, as the member for St. John's North just indicated, for mischievous purposes, to try to embarrass the government or a particular minister.

MR. PATTERSON:
Smear tactics.

MR. CALLAN:
Smear tactics, the member for Placentia says. Mischievous purposes, smear tactic purposes, and, of course, to try and embarrass government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when did the official Opposition arrive at this point? I remember, and the members of the Liberal caucus will remember, that when the new leader

took over in June, nobody was allowed to speak publicly to the media unless, of course, it was approved by the Leader, and especially not allowed to speak if the statement had any negativity attached to it, or perhaps, if it could possibly clash with an idea that the Leader of the Opposition had. If there were any divergence of opinion, if the matter was controversial, do not go with it until you run it by me first. No negativity! That is how the Leader of the Opposition started out last June, Mr. Speaker. I was there, and I know. Now, what happened?

The idea was, Mr. Speaker, that this new Leader was going to portray to the people of this Province that, 'Here I am ladies and gentlemen, here I am, the alternative, the alternate Premier, and I do not intend to come to win power in this Province and become the Premier of this Province by dragging other people down. The members in my caucus who believe in that, forget it.' That is what the Leader of the Opposition said. I am quoting the Leader of the Opposition.

'I do not want the members of my caucus,' said the Leader of the Opposition, he probably did not say it in these words, but in so many words, that is what he was saying to us, 'I want to ascend to the Premier's job by portraying to the people of the Province a man of integrity who does not believe in dragging other people down and does not believe in fault finding and negativity.'

But, Mr. Speaker, what happened over the course of the Summer? Nobody really knows. I cannot point a finger to when exactly it happened, but over the course of

the Summer that all changed. The Leader changed his point of view; he had changed his approach, and by the time that the Round Pond road episode rolled around, now then, the Leader was very disappointed that certain individuals in the Liberal Party had not been doing their homework to the extent that they could embarrass government and bring it to the press before the NDP brought it.

MR. PATTERSON:

Oh, my lord.

MR. CALLAN:

That is what happened, Mr. Speaker. You see, what happened in essence is this: The Leader of the Opposition, as he talked to his backroom boys, and the Chairman, and the various committees that were set up to get election readiness policies and everything else in place, that they did not have any ideas. They did not have any alternatives to bring this Province to full employment or partial, to improve on on the status quo, really. There were no policies.

There was talk constantly about the School Tax Authorities. 'Let us get rid of the School Tax Authorities.' Then, of course, the question was, 'If we say that, what are we going to replace it with? We will cross that bridge when we come to it. We will figure out that when we form the government.'

These were the sorts of things that happened in the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker. That is what happened.

So, then there was a big rush on. Then there was an awful interest in gathering information through

the Freedom of Information Act, and it was about that time, Mr. Speaker, last Fall, and, of course, in the early months of this new year, January, and February, that we saw the leader of the Opposition on several occasions on television and in the media, generally, talking about how the Opposition members were restricted and hindered in their ability to gather information from various ministers.

Mr. Speaker, that is why the Liberal Opposition wanted to gather this information, not to use it for any positive, constructive purposes, but to use it to try and embarrass one minister after another, and, of course, for mischievous purposes and for smear tactics.

There are one or two people on the Liberal benches over there, Mr. Speaker, who were a lot better at it than others. I was interested, Mr. Speaker, a couple of days, or perhaps a week after the Legislature opened to discover the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey), I saw him on television one night, as the Transportation critic. That is what he called himself. The member for St. Barbe was on television speaking as a Transportation critic.

I looked across the Legislature for several days and I saw the depressed and perhaps the angry look on the face of the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert) because the member for St. Barbe was trying to pull the same tactic on his colleague for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir that he had pulled on me last Summer and last Fall.

MR. TULK:

(Inaudible) he has done.

MR. FUREY:

Nobody can find it.

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition and his rules of order are now. Now, it is quite in order for cat calls to come from his House Leader and also from the member for St. Barbe who rather than, instead of being given the Transportation portfolio, as he is quoted as saying here in this newspaper, he says, 'A month after I was given the Transportation portfolio,' instead of that happening, Mr. Speaker, the member for St. Barbe was given no portfolio. He was stripped of any shadow portfolio. He was punished, Mr. Speaker, for going on in every direction.

MR. RUSSELL:

A bad report card.

MR. CALLAN:

He got a bad report card. That is what it amounts to, yes.

MR. PATTERSON:

Subversive activities.

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell the Leader of the Opposition something now he should know. At a time when the Leader of the Opposition was saying that I was not carrying out my shadow responsibilities effectively, I remember the caucus that we had probably a couple of weeks before the House of Assembly opened and we were all expected to have resolutions for the Order Paper ready. I had a resolution ready, Mr. Speaker, and I have it right here in front of me actually. I read it, as other members who had them ready, did. I could read it now but I do not know how much time I have.

MR. PATTERSON:

Go ahead, read it.

MR. CALLAN:

The member for Carbonear, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Peach) thought that I should have put it on the Order Paper when I showed it to him. I had it prepared for the Opposition. Anyway, in consultation with the Premier and with the Minister of Health (Dr. Collins), and since a member is only entitled to one resolution, I was encouraged to go with my resolution on the Come By Chance Clinic. Everybody remembers that because it is on today's Order Paper.

Here was my resolution as the Opposition spokesman on Housing:

WHEREAS Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has produced estimates suggesting that there will be a significant decline in the demand for new housing, especially rental housing, in this Province over the next fifteen years; and

WHEREAS one of two primary causes for the decline in housing requirements in Newfoundland and Labrador is continuing out migration from our Province; and

WHEREAS housing construction is a major player in this Province's economy, contributing \$200 million to our economy on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS the second primary cause for the decline in housing requirements is the aging of the population, which will compound itself as a larger number of young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians migrate from this Province as unemployment increases due to lack of housing construction;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Minister of Housing take immediate steps to convince his Cabinet colleagues that housing and correcting the reason for out migration become provincial government priorities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN:

I read my resolution to the caucus and the Leader of the Opposition said, "That resolution does not make much sense. You are suggesting that Newfoundlanders come back home to build some houses."

I did not make any comment but I must tell the Leader of the Opposition this: After that caucus ended there were more than one, there were several caucus members who commented to me, "I do not know how he managed to pick that out of that." They thought it was a good resolution.

Mr. Speaker, since the Leader of the Opposition did not think that one was very good, I then made a comment in that caucus that the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey), who was the critic last year for Consumer Affairs, had a resolution on last year's Order Paper regarding the high price of oil and gas and home heating fuel in this Province. So I said, I could go with that one. The Leader of the Opposition responded, 'Yes, it is important. I think we should have a resolution on that.'

As the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, made that comment in that caucus, I can tell you that the member for St. Barbe, who was stripped, as I said, a couple of weeks before that of all portfolios, wrote a note that he

pushed along to one of his colleagues in caucus. I do not remember it word for word but I saw the note and it said, 'Does this mean that the Leader of the Opposition thinks that the high prices that Mel Woodward is charging in Northern Newfoundland and on the Coast of Labrador should also be investigated?'

Now, that, of course, Mr. Speaker, was an obvious reference to the fact that the former member of the House of Assembly and the millionaire from Labrador, Mr. Woodward, is possibly one of the contributors to the Leader of the Opposition's supplemental salary.

Mr. Speaker, if the member for St. Barbe, who a few days ago, when I made some statements here in this Legislature, went outside and told a different story and told it not the way it was, but the way he hoped it was, wants to deny writing that note, I can say to the Leader of the Opposition and to the member for St. Barbe that somebody has that note. I did not get it. I saw it.

I am going to make it very easy for the Leader of the Opposition. It was obviously handed to a member for Labrador. So that narrows it down very, very nicely for the Leader of the Opposition to find out to whom that note was sent.

I am sure that the two members who represent districts in Labrador will be honest and will say to the Leader of the Opposition, 'Yes, I remember quite vividly getting that note from the member for St. Barbe.'

That, Mr. Speaker, is an incident that I wanted to relate to the Leader of the Opposition because I

am doing him a favour. He may not realize it, Mr. Speaker, but if the Leader of the Opposition thought that I was one of the reasons why he would not win the next election, I say to him now, as I said to him in private, that I was here getting myself elected and re-elected on nobody's coattails, at a time when other members were going down to defeat. I stood on my feet on the other side of the House when there were only four or five of us there, or seven or eight. Who does he think kept the Liberal Party alive since 1975, when I was first elected here and the member for Bonavista North was elected here at the same time?

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

By leave! By leave!

MR. CALLAN:
I will have lots of time between now and the last of June, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a few points to make on the bill. But first I cannot avoid some degree of responsibility to make some

comment on the stupid tripe that we just heard come out of the supposedly hon. member for this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:
The poor fellow has got himself worked into such a state that all he can do when he stands in the House to speak on a matter like freedom of information or the budget or speak on anything is attack his former colleagues. We do not need to say anything, Mr. Speaker, except to point the press and everybody who is listening in Newfoundland to just listen to the hon. member and they will know very well why the hon. member is no longer in the Liberal caucus and why we were justified in taking the position that we did. The member was not performing his duties and when we drew it to his attention, he failed and he crawled away miserably to perform where he would probably be a star.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:
That is right.

MR. WELLS:
Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address this matter of the freedom of information resolution. That resolution -

MR. PEACH:
Table your salary.

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

MR. PEACH:
What is your salary under?

MR. WELLS:

That resolution, Mr. Speaker, has a real purpose and it seems that the hon. members from the other side who have spoken on this matter to date have either missed or are trying to avoid the point of the resolution.

The Freedom Of Information Act is a good piece of legislation. It provides that government must make available information in order to ensure that the public is fully and properly informed as to what government is doing particularly with taxpayers' dollars. That is a perfect and valid purpose.

MR. PEACH:

Did you do that with your salary?

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, would you try and find a brain to attach to that mouth or cause it to be quiet, one or the other?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Low blows!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I must admit that when the last member was speaking we did have a fair amount of silence and I would ask for the same thing on this side of the House. If anybody cares to speak after, I would be more than pleased to recognize them.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I

appreciate your comments.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the issue of The Freedom Of Information Act. Nobody, I do not think, questions the purpose or the validity of The Freedom Of Information Act. And I do not believe anybody really will quarrel with the government's desire to try and reduce the cost that application of the provisions of that act incurs for government. That is not an unreasonable approach.

But, Mr. Speaker, even if there is cost, the value of having free access to information is so important that that cost must be borne by government, if necessary, in order to ensure that there is proper access to governmental information. So, we have to find the proper compromise.

There must be public access. We cannot impose such fees as will render access impossible or effectively emasculate the provisions of the act. People who want to know what information government has on file concerning themselves should have access without being faced with a major financial penalty to achieve it. At the very least that is one group of people that should be exempted. Even if there are circumstances where increased fees can be justified.

I agree that The Freedom Of Information Act and its provisions ought not to become a research tool for the media. If the media want to do their research on any particular issue, it should be on the basis of their own effort and at their own expense. They should not be prevented from having access to information, but they should not expect the public

service to effectively do the research for them. So I can see circumstances where higher fees may well be justified. But they clearly cannot be justified in a situation where an individual wants access to his own information.

There is another major area where those fees cannot be justified and that is in the case of requests by members of the House of Assembly. In order for members to properly discharge their duties, they must have access to information that government has - particularly the Opposition - they must be able to access that information if they are to properly discharge their duties and inform the public as to what is happening.

If they are going to be expected to pay out of their own personal resources exorbitant fees, then that cuts off the information. Nobody can pretend otherwise. For government members to speak in opposition, as they have, and pretend otherwise is stupid in the extreme for trying to blindfold the devil in the dark.

If such fees must be paid by MHAs, then they are a legitimate expense which MHAs can expect to recover from government because they are incurring that expense in the proper discharge of their duties.

There is not much more involved in this resolution than that. The only thing that is involved is to ensure that MHAs do not have to pay these exorbitant fees to get access to information.

Only, Mr. Speaker, a government that is ashamed of the information in its record, only a government that wants to be secret and hide things from the public would

impose fees of this kind.

MR. PEACH:
You are doing that all the time.

MR. WELLS:
That is what this is all about, Mr. Speaker. That is why this resolution is there, to ensure that the public of this Province has access to the information that government obviously wants to hide and secrete behind high fees.

MR. PEACH:
You should give us your information.

MR. WELLS:
It is a legitimate expense, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PEACH:
Put your stub on the table.

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker I still want to continue speaking to this bill and I would ask you to name that hon. member, even if he is not in his own seat, if he cannot keep quiet and allow others the courtesy of speaking in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):
Order, please! I would ask all hon. members to please be silent. If you are not interested in listening to the hon. member's speech, I am. So, would you please be quiet.

MR. WELLS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The simplest approach is that provided for in the resolution. If the government can justify, and I can well understand that there are circumstances where they can

justify charging higher fees, provided that it does not really effectively emasculate the provisions of the Act, There are circumstances where they can be justified.

But this resolution does not request that those fees be eliminated altogether. It simply requests that members of the House of Assembly be exempt from paying the fees as they ought to be, where the requests are made in the pursuit of their duties as members of the House of Assembly.

There is no justification for treating it otherwise, unless the government wants to go through the procedure of reimbursing MHAs for the expenses incurred and that seems a pointless waste of time.

During the debate last Wednesday, I heard two or three speakers who were speaking on the government side express great horror at the fact that MHAs on the Opposition side of the House gathered information and made that information available to the public, to the news media. That was the objection, that they obtain the information and the next day it appeared verbatim in The Evening Telegram or The Sunday Express or on some television programme. That was the objection.

What do hon. members think we are going to do with the information, hide it, put it in a drawer so that nobody can see it? The purpose of Opposition members obtaining information is in order to state their position on the issue and ensure that the public at large in the Province are properly informed. That is the duty of the Opposition, or have they forgotten that? Well, they

had better learn it fairly soon because they are going to have to discharge that duty shortly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, that is no reason to condemn this resolution, because Opposition members make the information available to the media or disclose the information that they have obtained through The Freedom of Information Act. That is the duty of the members on this side of the House.

I would agree, Mr. Speaker, that any member of the Opposition who, if he were exempt from the provisions of The Freedom of Information Act, simply tried to avoid The Freedom of Information Act, obtain the information in the members name and turn it over to the media, I would agree that would be a subterfuge under the act, and there should be no exemption in that case.

I agree that that is not the right approach.

MR. BUTT:

Will the Leader of the Opposition permit a question?

MR. PEACH:

No, no!

MR. WELLS:

I will permit a question, sure.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. BUTT:

As hon. gentleman aspires to become Premier of the Province, does he feel that he should come under the Conflict of Interest

legislation as other members in the House do?

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

MR. WELLS:
The stupidity of the question is unbelievable. Of course, I should! Of course, I should totally and fully, and I am, and the hon. member is going to get one whopping great surprise one of these days that he will not like very much. Anyway, we will see when that time comes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

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

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

MR. PATTERSON:
Mr. Speaker, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. I do not think the Leader should be exempt from providing this House with information as to where his salary is coming from. I think he should be made tell that and put before the bar and flogged.

MR. SPEAKER:
To that point of order, there is no point of order.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:
The stupidity of the hon. member (inaudible).

MR. PEACH:

Is everyone stupid but you?

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, it is disclosed in total, totally disclosed, the same as, I assume, the Premier's is.

I do not infer that the Premier's salary is coming from any particular person, or two or three persons. I do not infer that. It may be, I do not know that. It is coming, I assume from the Conservative Party, the same as mine comes from the Liberal Party, from all of the donations made to it. That stupidity is not worth attention.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to the resolution at hand because this is important. The hon. gentleman opposite might think that this is insignificant and the people of this Province are not worthy of their attention, that they can sit and play clown in this House day after day after day and entertain one another.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:
Well, I have a higher regard and a higher respect for the taxpayers of this Province. I have a much higher regard for the taxpayers of this Province than those people who are performing as entertainers and clowns on the opposite side, day after day in this House. We should attend to the matters that are the subject matters of debate in this House, -

MR. PEACH:
Your salary.

MR. WELLS:
- not that nonsense.

MR. PEACH:

Your salary.

MR. PATTERSON:

'Harry' is in the gallery, now boy, be careful. Go easy on it today, the pay master is up.

MR. WELLS:

One of these days, Mr. Speaker, we may even hear an original thought from the seat. So far, we have not. It is the same thing, day after day, but that is too much to expect perhaps, of that particular mind.

Mr. Speaker, back to the issues in this debate. It is important for the taxpayers of this Province; it is important for the maintenance of democracy in this Province - if hon. members want to laugh at it, that is up to them. They can tell the public that they sit here in the House and laugh at. And they laugh at the public and the taxpayers. It is not important, I suppose, to the public to have full and unrestricted access to information about the expenditures of taxpayers dollars. That is important to the public, and we will stand up constantly for the right to have that information.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, in order to enable members sitting on the Opposition side of the House to properly discharge their duties to the taxpayers of this Province, they must have, at least as much access to information as the press, or anybody in this Province, any resident of the Province has who can pay for it.

If the media want to pay \$500 to obtain it, the taxpayers of this Province must have access to that

through their members who sit on the opposite side of the House.

AN HON. MEMBER:

For nothing?

MR. HISCOCK:

For nothing.

MR. WELLS:

They are the taxpayers. They own it. No, I do not want it for me, I want it for the taxpayers. That is what I am doing. I am looking after the interests of the taxpayers. And the sooner members opposite realize that, the more respect the taxpayers are going to have for them. At this point, they obviously do not recognize that. It is time, Mr. Speaker, that they did recognize it.

That is the sole purpose of this resolution. This resolution is not to get a free ride for any particular portion of the news media or any particular group, it is simply to enable the Opposition members of this House to have full and unrestricted access to public information in order to enable them to discharge their duties. How any member could vote against that, I cannot possibly understand. To vote against it, Mr. Speaker, a proposal that members of the House of Assembly require the information for the normal pursuit of their duties, is to say the taxpayers of this Province do not have the right to know. No member of this House, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, can vote against that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to speak in this debate, but in listening to the Leader of the Opposition I felt obliged to get up. How can the Leader of the Opposition get up on this business of Freedom of Information and talk in his pompous way about members of the House of Assembly and how we conduct ourselves here, as he just did? Why does the Leader of the Opposition not take a trip, take CP Air over to London and sit down in the House of Commons over there and see how these things work?

I understand when people come into the galleries and not understanding the cut and thrust of debate or what goes on in this House they, from time to time, will say, Well, they are only a bunch of clowns in there, and all the rest of it. But this Legislature, this institution is not one where everybody comes in and sits down and folds their hands and acts in a certain manner. There are various comments made back and forth across the House, and so on, and that is part of the nature of the atmosphere, the dynamic, almost, of a Legislature. And for the Leader of the Opposition to somehow put himself on this silly pedestal, coming into this House and almost saying to all of us in here - I mean, I object to it. He is insulting me, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition is insulting me, and I think the majority of the members in this House of Assembly. He is insulting us. We do not need any preaching from that hon. gentleman opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

If the hon. gentleman opposite wants to preach that we have no constitutional right to the offshore, have no constitutional right to get access to hydro power in the courts of this Province or in the courts of Canada, and be pompous in so doing it, let him do it. But do not let him bring his pomposity into this House and try to tell us, who have been here for many, many years, and others, that suddenly we are going to 'change your behaviour' and all our rules to accommodate the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, we do not need that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Neither do we need an hon. gentleman to come into this House and get up pompously and talk about Freedom of Information when conflicting stories about his salary come out to the public of Newfoundland. 'Respect the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador,' he says. Well, respect the people of Newfoundland and come out clean. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants, I will table on the Table of this House my income for the last three of four years, if the Leader of the Opposition will do the same.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I will put my income tax forms before him. I will table it. I have nothing to hide.

If the Leader of the Opposition is trying to make some equation between the \$6,000 I get from the P.C. Party to pay expenses as Leader of the Party to his

\$50,000, I think there has to be something said about the difference, Mr. Speaker. I think something has to be said about the difference, the \$6,000 or \$7,000, whatever it is I get a year versus \$50,000 a year. It has not come out to the public, Mr. Speaker, that on the one hand the President of the P.C. Party says 'I know nothing about it', you know, they did not know anything about it. That is what happened over there. That is the problem that the Leader of the Liberal Party has. I heard the President of the party say it. That is the problem! Then I read a paper on the mainland which talked about the fact that the federal Liberal Party is contributing to it - some federal Liberal on the mainland said it. That is the problem!

The Leader of the Opposition, and he knows it, cannot win on this kind of issue with that kind of controversy circulating around him. When you get into that kind of money being contributed to his salary, you just cannot. There is no way around it. So how can you talk about Freedom of Information? What we are doing here in this bill is very, very consistent with what is happening across Canada. It is like so many things in a democracy. Very often, when you blanketly give something, most democracies have to start putting parameters around them, because we have a tendency in all democracies to abuse and then to use for our own purposes.

I remember, years ago, when we brought out - was it the lobster thing that got into all kinds of trouble? - I think the member for Twillingate was Minister of Fisheries at the time, or it was before his time, even.

MR. RIDEOUT:
The Gear Replacement Programme?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
The Gear Replacement Programme - when we started that, or when we started some other programme. This is a natural kind of thing. Most of the information given through the budget system, through the Estimates Committees and through answers given in the House, is all public. People know it. What has happened to the whole Freedom of Information situation is that you have a few individuals - it is always true. A few bad apples spoil the barrel - who are just around to make a few cheap, political points. Talking about making cheap, political points, Mr. Speaker, that is what has happened here. Talking about activity and behaviour in the House, that is what has happened as it relates to how people are using The Freedom of Information Act. That is what has happened, therefore, you have to put parameters around it, because people are only using it for their own guised political motives. That is what has happened, Mr. Speaker.

Anybody who stops and sits down and thinks knows that when either a press person or someone from the Opposition puts in a big, long question and a whole series of sub-questions and you send that down to one of the departments, it sometimes will take two or three people a week to filter through all that information.

Talk about respecting the taxpayers! Here we have two or three people, or more, tied up in three or four or five or six different departments who are not doing the job which they are being paid to do. It is then the

taxpayers are not being well served, because in more chances than not, it is only for some so-called alleged political scam that the information was requested in the beginning, Mr. Speaker. That is what happens.

And for the Leader of the Opposition to get up in this House and talk like that is hypocrisy of the first order, Mr. Speaker. He cannot do it, and he should not be allowed to get away with it.

So, now, if we want to get income straight, let us agree to put on the Table of the House our incomes; I will table mine, if the leader of the Opposition will table his.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:
But let us not hear this silly, foolish, pompous speech from the Leader of the Opposition, as if somehow all of us have to forget and we all have to start anew and go under a whole bunch of new rules. No! This Legislature works okay, Mr. Speaker. And when it does not, it is then the Chair's place to step in and bring order to the Legislature. We are human beings and we bring with us all the views and concerns and prejudices and biases that we have as a political party. So do the people opposite. So do the NDP. We all do! If somebody says something that cuts us the wrong way, then we go back. We then shake hands afterwards, or whatever, and that is the way the thing works. And we get our work done here just as good and just as efficiently. We are open more often. We hear all the statements by some of the press and some of the members opposite: 'The House

has to be open. Government is hiding away.' And when the Government House Leader goes and investigates, he finds out we are open more days a year than any other province our size in Canada, and not only our size, the larger Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are not open as many days a year as we are.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Big deal.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Outside of the Federal Parliament, we are one of the longest open.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Yes, we are close, in most years, to the big Provinces of Ontario and Quebec in the time that the House is open.

So, the Leader of the Opposition suddenly getting up and preaching to us people here - I am sure the member for Fortune - Hermitage does not like being preached to by the Leader of the Opposition. I am sure of it. I know him well enough for that. He knows how to act and how not to act in the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:
And a lot of the other members over there. The same way with the member for Twillingate, and others who have been in this House for a long while. We do not need any lecture from the Leader of the Opposition, none, about anything to do with this Legislature. We have been around here and conducting our business. And if the Leader of the Opposition wants

to talk about Freedom of Information, let him table in this House his salary and I will table mine, all of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HISCOCK:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As was pointed out by the member for Naskaupi, Freedom of Information is needed in order for all members of the House of Assembly to be able to do their work. The Premier just made a rousing speech, and appeared to be taking off again.

When we asked to have Mr. Craig Dobbin brought before the Bar of the House, what did the Premier say? Foolishness! No need of it! The Premier's tactic has always been to turn the tables and demand that people to do their part first, before he shows his hand. If he is going to be Premier and going to lead, let him place whatever it is on the table. We, on this side, are not concerned with who gives money to the Premier of this Province, or to the PCs. We are not concerned one bit about that at all. We are concerned with the high cost of education for our students in rural Newfoundland and conditions in our hospitals, and we are concerned that he is the highest paid Premier in the country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:
He is not the highest paid leader, though.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Speaker, you may be interested to know that they are doing estimates in the Province of Ontario, and there is a bit of a commotion because the Premier of that Province, to operate his office, is spending -

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

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):
Order, please!

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

DR. COLLINS:
Mr. Speaker, this is not a matter that comes up often in the House, but I think we should bring it up whenever it occurs because we want the House to operate properly. The hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir is standing between the speaker and Your Honour. As a matter of fact, Your Honour could not even see the speaker. Now, it is against parliamentary practice for anyone not only to stand but to pass between the Speaker and the member given leave to address the House. I am glad to see the hon. member has now taken a pace, has at least moved away. I just wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.

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

MR. HISCOCK:
In the Province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker, they are debating their budget. The Premier just referred to the big province of Ontario. The Premier of Ontario spends \$1.6

million to run the Premier's office.

What do we spend here in this Province, Mr. Speaker? We spend, Mr. Speaker, in this Province on our Premier, little Newfoundland and Labrador, with a population of just over 500,000, we spend \$1.2 million. In Ontario, the press and the opposition are upset because they are spending \$1.6 million on the office of the Premier of Ontario.

We also know in this Province the Premier has a rent-free home. The only thing the Premier owns, according to his wife in an article, is the TV and the VCR. They do not even own their dishes. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador own the dishes, own the drapes, and own all the other furnishings for the house.

With regard to the security, Mr. Speaker, in our Province you have a Royal Newfoundland Constabulary officer who is with the Premier day and night. He gets his own salary and last year the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador had to spend \$35,000 extra in overtime so that he could carry the Premier's briefcase and open the doors to his limo, his car, wherever he went and also travel outside the country and in it. In actual fact, during the by-election in the Windsor-Buchans, when the Premier went into the schools, he even brought his bodyguard into the schools with him.

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:

Mr. Speaker, I could be doing the member opposite a disservice but, it occurs to me that he is reading his speech. Now, if he is reading his speech, he may have written it himself, but chances are someone else wrote it for him. Now, there is nothing wrong with speaking from extended notes but, I believe, the way he is looking down and looking up that he is reading his speech and therefore he should table it and just resume his seat.

MR. HISCOCK:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HISCOCK:
It is amazing what comes out of the mind of a former Minister of Education. We know now why former Premier Moores put him in the backbenches and why this past nine years Mr. Peckford has not brought him forward.

The main point I am making on this is that the Premier -

MR. SPEAKER:
Was the hon. member speaking to that point of order?

MR. HISCOCK:
To that point of order, I am saying there is no point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
There is no point of order. It is just a difference of opinion between two hon. gentlemen.

The hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

The Premier of this Province is one of the highest paid with regard to salary, with regard to his office, with regard to his living style, with regard to security, and with regard to the lifestyle with \$200 tips.

What do we have, Mr. Speaker, in the Opposition? Do we have a press secretary? The government and the Premier now have twelve press secretaries. Do we have adequate space with regard to offices? No, we do not. We have two people per office. Do we have, Mr. Speaker, an executive assistant and x number of secretaries, one per person? No, we do not, Mr. Speaker.

So, therefore, Mr. Speaker, when the Opposition, including the NDP -- by the way, two NDP members in the House of Assembly and each one has their own secretary. Fifteen members of the House of Assembly on the Liberal side, but we do not have our own equivalent secretaries or office space. Anyway, we are not the type of Opposition that gets up and complains and says that the NDP are ganging up on us and the PCs are ganging up on us, and therefore we cannot do our job, as the NDP have claimed to get the Speaker, the Leader of the Privy Council and the Premier's attention. In order to shut them up, they give them a few crumbs. We are not concerned with crumbs, Mr. Speaker. We are concerned with justice and equality and having democracy in this Province and making sure that the rules of this House are carried out and that the laws are debated and that the Opposition is allowed to perform its job.

What is happening for the opposition in this House now,

since I have been here in 1979, particularly the Opposition Leader, is we not allowed to perform his job. Any time he gets up to make a remark, the Tory Government over there gets up and brings up one thing only, the question of salary.

It is no business of the Conservatives or anybody else but the Liberals. If the Liberals in this Province decide not to put us into power because we happen to be paying the Leader of the Liberal Party \$50,000, then we will bear the brunt of it. You should not necessarily waste your time with it. You should be more concerned with the possibility of a leadership convention being called and who you are going to back to get your House in order over there.

To go back to the Freedom of Information Act. We have just finished doing the estimates committees. Our estimates committees are now finished. But the Chairman, the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter), when we ask our questions to a minister and to a deputy, for the most part, he is quite a good Chairman. I enjoy him as Chairman, to tell you the truth.

But when we get that close to getting something that is pertinent to the people of this Province and to the information on how money is being spent, he always interjects and basically says, 'Well, the minister does not have to answer that question,' or 'that is not a question of fact, that is more of policy, so the deputy minister does not have to answer that.' The end result is, when I ask questions to the ministers and to the deputy ministers on facts and I ask that the ministry, whether it is

Education or Health or Social Services or Culture, Recreation and Youth, that they table the information, I know that they are not going to get the information right away. So I give them a week or two weeks. What do we get from the ministers?

We are now hearing the ministers - it is the first time I have heard it in nine years in estimates committees - when you find out how the government money is being spent and scrutinize the budget - the reason why Parliament came into existence in the first place, after the beheading of Charles I, was to get control over money. The reason why it still is in existence is to collect money, disburse it and to make sure that it is spent wisely on behalf of the people. What do we hear now for the first time in nine years from the Ministers? 'I will take it under advisement. I will take it under advisement. I may, I may not.' There is no such thing, Mr. Speaker, before when the budget was there, when we did the budget. Each minister trembled in their feet when they come to the budget committee and to the House of Assembly when we were doing the budget. What are they doing now?

This is a sad thing, you know. What is coming out is all civil servants, all ministers, all backbenchers, and the Premier, everybody is taking the lead from the Premier, and the statement is, and the corollary is to it, 'Do not give any information whatsoever to anybody. Make it as difficult as possible, make it as expensive as possible, do not give out information.' Why? Because of the incompetency of the ministers, they know that a lot of them lived high on the hog, and they are afraid to give out their

Parliamentary secretaries' travel, and that is where it really came down. When we asked the parliamentary secretary to the Premier, the last one who is now the Minister of Social Services, when we asked for that travel claim, that is when the Premier put the boots to The Freedom of Information Act. I cannot afford \$700.

Mr. Speaker, the main main thing that comes down is this: The Premier is leading the way. The Premier is telling all civil servants, all Ministers, all backbenchers, all directors, all Crown Corporations, 'Do not give out any information to the press. Take as long as you like to try to get even if they pay for it. And do not help them in any way with their work.'

With regard to the Opposition wanting information, well, obviously, the end result is, the government there and the Premier do not want the Opposition to be able to carry out their role effectively. We know they do not want that. Otherwise, we would have individual secretaries. We would have a couple of press secretaries. We would have office space. We would not have the ministers complaining about the cost of telephone calls. We would, at least, have the Leader of the Opposition be able to use the government car he is provided with to go wherever he wants in the Province to do the work on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition. But no, that is not allowed.

The attitude of the government the former Minister of Public Works summed up. That was in the 1982 election when we went from 18 down to 8. The Minister of Public

Works came in and we were cleaning out some of the bookcases of the members who were gone. I said to the Minister of Public Works, 'Could you wait a few days until the defeated members come in from their districts and straighten out their own offices?' He said, 'No.' They had people throwing out all the things, whether it was valuable, whether it was not. The Minister of Public Works said one thing, and I think it is the attitude of the Premier and the attitude of the Government. 'If I had my way, I would put the Opposition in a phone booth.' That is the attitude of the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Give them no information, give them no research staff, give them no office space and make everything as difficult as possible because, if you give them information, if you give them office space and research, then they will find out the true state of the economy, the true state of our debt in this Province, the true fate of the running of the corporations, the true fate of Department of Education, Department of Health, of Newfoundland Hydro, and various other departments.

Mr. Speaker, with the very little that we do have, we know what we brought out about schools in our Province, that they are falling down, foundations are crumbling, there are leaks and there is faulty electricity. We know, with regard to our hospitals, as pointed out by the member for Port de Grave today, we know that there is people - just imagine - and the Minister of Health gets up and says, 'We should be proud of the Health Sciences Complex, we should be proud of it! It is the cadillac system of our Province!

It is the cadillac system of our health care technology and of all the equipment that we have. All the other hospitals do not have it but it is at the Health Sciences Complex. We have the specialists there.'

Can you imagine a person injured, prepared to go to the operating room three days in a row, three days in a row, because they could not go because they could not get a operating room that was available.

If that is happening, Mr. Speaker, at our cadillac system, at the Health Sciences Complex, what do you think is happening out in the district of Eagle River, or Black Tickle or in Makkovik or in Nain, or, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Come by Chance clinic? So we know, Mr. Speaker, if that is happening in St. John's, what is happening in the other areas.

But The Freedom of Information Act, Mr. Speaker, is extremely important because this government has claimed that when Premier Smallwood was in this Province for twenty-one, twenty-two years, there was no democracy.

MR. J. CARTER:

None at all! None at all.

MR. HISCOCK:

None at all, says the member for St. John's North. He was the only man in the House of Assembly when they decided to bring the television into the House of Assembly when the former Premier was leaving, he was the only man, of all sides, who vetoed it. That is what democracy is all about. At least Mr. Smallwood brought that in.

Mr. Speaker, they say the

tendering act is their white angel. Well, we found out what happened with the Tendering Act with Mr. Jim Morgan getting pavement without tendering. We have seen other things happen.

MR. DINN:

You would not say it if Mr. Morgan was here.

MR. HISCOCK:

That is a fact. It is a fact Mr. Speaker. There was an enquiry on it. Just like the member for Pleasantville can reach down underneath his desk and get the Mifflin report, like his always did. So you know, all I am saying, there was a report done on that, and the report is still there.

Mr. Speaker, this happens when rot sets in. When ministers and back benchers know they are decaying, know that the ship is aground and know that the captain is about abandon ship.

Now, we have the member for White Bay (Mr. Rideout). The member for White Bay, where he is sitting now is quite appropriate, Mr. Speaker, because he knows that the captain is going to abandon ship, and he is going to be right next to him to take his place and move up from the back and take over the helm. There are a few others over there.

In most cases, Mr. Speaker, the ministers are from the former Moores Cabinet and from Mr. Peckford's and they are a tired lot. They do not want the information on the mistakes that they have made for the past seventeen years to get out, because this party is organized, is well equipped, as hard as it is to get things from the government, under the leadership of Mr. Clyde

Wells, the Leader of the Opposition. The government knows and the Premier knows that if we had freedom of information, if we had the secretaries, if we had the research staff, we would be able to find things that would make the foundation of this building and of this Province rock with what has happened in the past seventeen years and what this government has done to our younger people, to our senior citizens, and to our educators in this Province.

That is why we are not getting freedom of information, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are not allowed to have the necessary research staff, because they know there is so much lying and corruption and filth that has accumulated out of the past seventeen years that they are afraid it is going to explode any moment if we happen to get our hands on freedom of information.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. HISCOCK:

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that this government is a draconian government now and they want to muzzle all freedom of information.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the hon. gentleman getting up on a point of order?

MR. TULK:

No.

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. John's

North.

MR. J. CARTER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are a few points to be made. I was going to rise earlier on a point of order, because the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) was insulting the Sovereign, but it happened to be that the particular Sovereign he was insulting was Charles I. So I figured it was probably a dead issue.

A couple of points should be made right away. Because so much has been made of it, I think it would be negligent of me not to mention it. No one pretends that the Leader of the Opposition is not free to accept \$50,000 or \$100,000 or \$150,000 from his own party. I am sure that some of those dollars may very well be from Mrs. Malloy down on Barter's Hill, who happens to give a couple of dollars a year to the Liberal Party. I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition can say, 'Look, this \$50,000 is made up of a great many very small contributions.'

But the point has to be made that because he is accepting a salary of \$50,000, \$50,000 more has to come into the Liberal Party somehow. Now, I have maintained all along - years ago I rose up in this House and made a resolution trying to reform the Election Act so that monies that came in to political parties would have to be disclosed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. J. CARTER:

I opted against limitation. I do not think limitation will work and I do not really think it is wise

for governments to subsidize political parties. It is an unresolved question in my mind at the moment but, on balance, I do not think it is wise.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What about unions?

MR. J. CARTER:

Exactly.

I do think that declaration is vital. I think it is most important. This latest issue, which as come to a head, about the Leader of the Opposition's salary, is one of those situations that brings this whole matter to a head.

Now, I am quite proud to have given money to the party in the past.

MR. TULK:

Would the hon. member permit a question?

MR. J. CARTER:

Sure. Go ahead.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

As Chairman of that Committee, I wonder if he could inform the House just where that piece of legislation is, because we would like to have it on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. J. CARTER:

I will answer that question. That Committee's report was not able to be implemented because of pac-men. That was the real stumbling block. What do you do when you have pac-men against you? Those are political action

committees. How do you fight them if you do not have unlimited funds?

MR. TULK:

Put the legislation there, we will amend it.

MR. J. CARTER:

For instance, if Brian Davies decides that the member for Fogo should not be re-elected, it is going to take a lot more than an ordinary amount of money. I do not know how much money the member spends on his campaign. It is probably I would guess, say \$20,000 because it would cost a lot to get him elected, I guess. But if Brian Davies decides to mobilize all of his seals, all his trained seals that is, then the member will require a lot more than just \$20,000 because you will have to go for

MR. TULK:

Is that all that has hung it up?

MR. J. CARTER:

Well, that is one of the main things. That was the reason I would not press it, I would not push it, unless you can have unlimited contributions, I mean, really unlimited.

MR. TULK:

Well, let us amend it.

MR. J. CARTER:

I am sure you are not willing to amend it to that extent.

MR. TULK:

Bring in the legislation and you have the (inaudible).

MR. J. CARTER:

That is only one. The other thing too is why throw out the baby with the bathwater. We have a fairly good Election Act in place now and with some relatively minor

amendments, would be a quite workable Act.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It certainly serves you well.

MR. J. CARTER:

To answer the member's question, one of the things that would make it a very workable act would be to have a permanent enumeration, a permanent voters list, one that is updated all of the time so that it is just as updated as the telephone directory.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. J. CARTER:

I think, without letting any cats out of any bags, that this is the direction we are going to move in. The late Harvey Cole, who was the Chief Electoral Officer made this

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder would the hon. member allow a question?

MR. J. CARTER:

Sure, go ahead.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Would he agree, and have his side agree, let us have now perhaps in the next three minutes an all-party resolution to put that bill before the House?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. J. CARTER:

I do not mind answering questions, but I do not intend to be put on the spot, nor do I pretend to be able to wise in three minutes. I am sure the Opposition are just

doing this to try and embarrass the government.

The Election Act is something that has to be thought very, very carefully. I do not see how any government can bring in a bit of legislation that is just thrown together by the drafting clerks and ill-considered and shoved on this table and then expect a little tiny bit of debate. I say drafting legislation is terribly hard, very, very hard, and I have the utmost respect for anyone who can do it. I do not think you can draft legislation that easily or that quickly. I really do not.

Anyhow, on The Election Act I think a permanently updated voters list because half your effort is spent trying to figure out who are capable and who are eligible to vote. The other thing is unlimited ability or no break on the amount of money that you may spend.

But the main thing is declaration. Now, we all know, all of us in this House who cared to inquiry into it, we know that several prominent people are supporting the Liberal Party because of the need for the party to find an extra \$50,000.

Now, if we knew who those people were,

AN HON. MEMBER:
Oh, we know.

MR. J. CARTER:
We know who they are, sure. But if we knew for sure, that is to say, if our knowledge was able to be used, we cannot use the knowledge of hearsay. That is not real knowledge.

MR. TULK:

Bring in the legislation and you will find out.

MR. J. CARTER:

But if we had the real knowledge of those who are supporting this party in large sums, then we would know when the Liberal Party or the Official Opposition gets up on a particular point whether they are being unduly influenced or not. I would suggest more times than not that the Liberal Party is being unduly influenced. This is what I suggest.

I know that is a very harsh accusation. But I suggest that members opposite know that what I am saying is correct and I am pretty sure of my grounds. Three or four, possibly five prominent people are working the puppet strings. They are pulling the strings and the hon. gentlemen are dancing, dancing to their tune.

MR. FUREY:

Would you permit a question?

MR. J. CARTER:

Certainly, a question.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder would the hon. member tell us the draft legislation that he prepared, would that require full disclosure? If it would, why has that not been brought in?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I recognize the hon. member for Menihok.

MR. FENWICK:

I do not know where this comes in, asking questions back and forth. We gave no leave. We are waiting to speak on the whole issue.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

I understood the hon. member had finished.

MR. J. CARTER:

No, no, no!

MR. SPEAKER:

I am sorry about that.

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

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I was responding to a question, as I am willing to do any time. I think it is the only reasonable way to have debate in this House. If an member opposite wants to ask a question, this allows for a little more interest.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey) was in order on that occasion. I thought that the hon. member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) had sat down at the time.

MR. J. CARTER:

To answer that question, Mr. Speaker, as fully as I can, the Legislation in question was drafted in rough form but it was not finalized and has not been brought before the House because there still are some outstanding problems.

MR. FUREY:

But would it not have required disclosure?

MR. J. CARTER:

It would have required full disclosure.

MR. FUREY:

Well, bring it in.

MR. J. CARTER:

That is only part of it. The other thing we were recommending -

MR. HODDER:

The Leader of the Opposition should show an example.

MR. J. CARTER:

The other thing we were recommending was some tax deductions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. J. CARTER:

Now, we cannot influence the Federal government because that is not within our competence but it is within our competence to issue provincial tax credits, or provincial tax deductions for monies that are contributed.

Anyhow, I should continue with the real subject that I got up on, and that is that the Premier was somewhat wrong when he got up to speak. He said that there was a great deal of cost involved in getting information for the Opposition. He said a lot of civil servants would have to be asking questions and writing down the answers. What he neglected to say was that an equal number of civil servants would be answering those questions.

If you are going to ask me involved questions that the Opposition are inclined to do, then you have to charge accordingly, otherwise the frivolous questions that are going to be asked, the very long and detailed questions that are going to be asked could - well, they would not bankrupt the government,

but they could certainly cost many tens of thousands of dollars. I think it is only reasonable that reasonable charges be made for this information.

To suggest that members opposite should have free and unlimited access to information, I think, would be a great mistake. It just would not work and they have proven it. They have shown that when we are willing to give them answers, they ask for the most detailed answers and it just costs money, not to mention all the paper.

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons), I think, whistling is not speech, so it cannot be considered an interruption.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) swan song.

MR. J. CARTER:
The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage made a lot more sense before his operation. However, I understand they only took half of it. Maybe they will take the other half later on.

Now, the Liberal Party have complained about their quarters. I have seen their quarters down there and not only are they very good, but they are being added to, and for them to complain about the quarters that we are offering them is certainly -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) Harvey Cole.

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, it was shocking.

I remember the kind of Opposition quarters that were afforded the Opposition when this party was in

opposition. It was one room, well, one and a half rooms to be fair. There were a couple of phones.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

It is now twenty minutes to six.

The hon. the member for Naskaupi.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. KELLAND:
I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that my private members' motion brought forth such interesting debate. I have to say, it was probably some of the most interesting debate that I have heard in the last two or three years on private members' motions. It obviously stirred a lot of interest on both sides of the House and apparently a lot of concern on the government side.

I say that because four of the speakers from the government side were former Liberals. I am talking about, of course, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout), the member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan), the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren), and the fourth being the Premier. Although he never sat in this House as an Opposition Liberal member, he was a recognized part of the Liberal Party at one time.

What is interesting about that is that just a short time ago we witnessed the Premier rush into the House to say a few words in this debate and rush back out, but I took note that there was not one single reference to the issue at hand, not one. There was not one reference to the motion itself.

Instead, the hon. the Premier took the opportunity to launch yet another personal attack - there is no other definition for the performance - on the Leader of the Opposition. This has been the norm of this House for some considerable time. We have all witnessed it.

By the way, the Premier only took nine minutes this time, which probably marked the first time since 1979 that he could not or would not use his full twenty minutes. His quick appearance on stage, as he tried to say what the norm of the House was, was a sham.

The norm of this House, under the Peckford Administration, has been to rise in your place, as a government member, and launch low down - there is no other way to say it - personal attacks on their colleagues in the House of Assembly on this side of the House of Assembly. Now, that is the norm. The norm that the Premier tried to say was the case is not so. It is a falsehood. It is not proper. It is not accurate.

But, having the Premier rush in and speak for his bare nine minutes, a very animated nine minutes, almost an example of a sort of paranoid egomania being portrayed by the Premier, that only serves, in my mind, to emphasize the importance of this motion. Not only does it emphasize the importance of this motion, it emphasizes, in my mind and in the minds of many, how scared the government is of the motion. I said, 'What are you scared of,' in my opening remarks last Wednesday. It just goes to show how scared the government is of this particular simple motion, which has a simple, plain purpose.

Now, in listening to the remarks of some of the other former Liberals, who did sit in the House as Opposition members, we would have to assume that to one degree or another, Mr. Speaker, they performed some of the functions in their roles as Opposition members. We have to assume that to a greater or lesser degree and to the best of their particular individual abilities they performed their functions. The member for Bellevue, the member for Torngat Mountains, and the Minister of Fisheries, all at some time in their role as Opposition members asked questions of government because they recognized that that was their role, that was their function, in this House, to question and examine the operations and the spendings of government. We would have to assume, within reason and limited by their own personal abilities, they carried out those functions to the best of those abilities.

Now, after their 'Tory awakening,' and I think the member for Torngat Mountains used that term in a press interview, after their Tory awakening, and the newest Tory awakening by the member for Bellevue, they have now changed their total approach so that information on government operations and spending is no longer available to the official Opposition and should not be made public in any way. They wish to maintain the wall of secrecy that the Peckford Administration continues to strengthen and build around us.

I was interested in one of the comments that the member for Bellevue made, in that he questioned the wording of the motion, where I used the term "particularly the official

Opposition." I will tell the hon. member and any other member that wants to know that the reason why I chose the words "particularly the official Opposition" is because the official Opposition is particularly charged with the responsibility of examining what the government is doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. KELLAND:
It is interesting that he should even raise the question because if the member does not know why the Opposition needs government information, it is certainly no wonder in my mind why he now sits over there. He only confirms what has been said and believed in the Province, that he was not adequately fulfilling his role over here, because he did not know what the role was. Now he sits on the other side and he has become a Tory. He has had his Tory awakening.

I should make one other point, and I do not intend to be personal at all, but when the member for Bellevue was talking about information out of the Liberal caucus, I suggest to the government caucus they take heed!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. KELLAND:
Take heed of what this member believes, or how he feels, his respect for the confidentiality and the sanctity of caucus. Be aware!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. REID:
I heard you say only for Joe

Goudie you would be a PC. I heard you say that yourself.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. KELLAND:
I suppose it is fair for me to say that only for me Joe Goudie would still be in the House, too.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. KELLAND:
Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I know you are going to control the crowd on the other side, but I do not really mind because when they heckle, you know you are getting to them, and that is a guaranteed certain fact. So how about it boys, I can yell to.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. KELLAND:
I think the words exorbitant charges and exorbitant cost came up somewhere in the debate. It is interesting that one of the people who used the word exorbitant costs was the hon. the President of the Council (Mr. Simms). I make reference Hansard, April 27, L1250, in which the President of the Council said, "We must recover all of those exorbitant costs." So I guess he is now admitting that the costs and charges are exorbitant. That is just a point.

I would also like to make reference to another former Liberal. Up to now, with due respect, I believe he has been very forthcoming as a minister, and I am referring to the Minister of Fisheries. I am not saying

that he was a former Liberal in any derogatory sense, but I liked his term. Because, as I said earlier, when he was an Opposition member he obviously had the need to obtain information from government and often asked questions, and when it was denied him, he was very upset. Had he been charged \$400 or \$500 for the information, he probably would have been extremely upset. He described my motion, in Hansard, same date, page R1263 - I would like to say this all over again, because I think it is interesting.

MR. WARREN:
(Inaudible) in Goose Bay, yesterday.

MR. TOBIN:
Yes, Son, where were you?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

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

MR. KELLAND:
The Minister of Fisheries says, 'And this resolution, Mr. Speaker, is puffery. It is not worth the piece of paper it is written on.' I think the minister for that comment. I sincerely thank him, because I was doing what my job dictates I should do, asking questions of government. To extend that to its logical conclusion, does that mean that when the Minister of Fisheries was an Opposition member asking questions of the government that every single question he ever asked in this house was puffery and not worth the paper it was written on, or the time it took to ask it? Because that is the logical conclusion that one can draw from that kind of a comment, Mr. Speaker. I think that is more

than obvious.

Now, we should talk about some of the comments from the member for Torngat Mountains, the Minister responsible for Northern Development. Again there is no intention of any kind of a personal attack on the man, but using his own words, let me tell you the level the hon. gentleman brought the debate to. I will give you a reference: Hansard, same date, R1271. I probably cannot do it exactly as he did it, I do not have the experience of the House that he does, but I can use his words. "Anyway, I would have to say if there are, Mr. Speaker, any members in this particular House who are sneaky and sleazy - I do not know if I am allowed to use those words, Mr. Speaker. If I am not, I withdraw them - and trying to be smart, I think they are the Bobbsey Twins; they sit next to each other down there, the member for St. Barbe and the member for Naskaupi. Mr. Speaker, for him to say that on reasonable notice information should be given!" I thank my colleague from Labrador for that comment, and I thank him for showing the people he represents, the people of Labrador, and the people of the Province the quality we now have representing Labrador in Cabinet. I thank him for that.

MR. BAIRD:
If you had crossed the floor first (inaudible) got it.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. KELLAND:
Now, another thing I have to thank the hon. the member for Torngat Mountains for. I believe, in the debate in which our leader was participating, there were some

backbench comments that some of the things he was saying were incorrect, to put it politely, I suppose, but the inference was there, in fact the statement is clearly there in Hansard and I refer you to comments by the Minister responsible for Northern Development, R1273: 'In what they are doing,' the hon. gentleman said, 'they are agents for **The Sunday Express**

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. KELLAND:

I thank the hon. gentleman for that. Again, it does nothing more than exemplify the level to which we have come, the level and the quality of the representation a great of region of Labrador now has in the Provincial Cabinet.

And, you know, in a way, Mr. Speaker, I am almost as guilty as the Premier in this - almost as guilty as the Premier - because for two and a half years I called on the Premier and suggested to him by different methods in the House, in the media and every other way, that we should have Cabinet representation from Labrador.

The trouble is, Mr. Speaker, at that time, and probably for the last time they will have that many, there was only one government member in all of the four Labrador seats. So, the Premier eventually took my suggestion, and I thank him for that, and they named the hon. the member for Torngat Mountains as, I believe, first, Minister of Northern Development and later on Minister responsible for Northern Development. I believe that is how it went.

Now, I have to say that I looked for that, but I also looked for a cooperativeness between all Labrador members so that we could accomplish things for the region we collectively represent. Now perhaps he represents it in a broader sense than any individual district representation, but I had hoped for a fairly good level and I have an extreme difficulty in believing that that hon. gentleman, who was so vocal in the House of Assembly as an Opposition member, literally howling in the media, asking questions and complaining and running down government every time they would not give him information he needed, now, in his new role, which really still is not clearly defined - I understand his department consists of himself and two others - is questioning whether the Opposition has a right to information.

In the course of his debate, and I kind of got a kick out of it, he made reference to **The Sunday Express** article in which he said something about the fact that he had to have a tuxedo and he had three choices: he could have bought one for some amount of money, he could have rented one for some amount of money, or he could have borrowed mine. You can have my spare, actually, hon. member, any time you want it, and have it cut down for you.

So, with these three choices, he decided to go for the rental. Now, I do not object - he missed the point of the whole thing - to him renting a tuxedo if he does not own one. Many members probably do not own a tuxedo. But what I suggested in that article, and I only bring it up now because he introduced the information into the debate, is that when the hon.

member rented the tuxedo he forgot the fact that he had his sessional indemnity, he forgot the fact that he had his other allowances, the money we use for those purposes, and he put that money in his pocket and then rented the tuxedo and charged it, additionally, up to the government. So, in actual fact, in that instance that hon. gentleman was paid twice for the same rental. Now that is the only point that was made in that paper. The hon. gentleman choose to bring it up in this debate, and I am only responding in that manner, Mr. Speaker.

In the few minutes I have left, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make reference directly to my motion where it says: "WHEREAS the access to information relating to Government operation is an essential element for the performance of duties of Members of the House of Assembly, particularly the Official Opposition;" - I have answered that for the member for Bellevue, if he did not know what that meant.

"AND WHEREAS this information should be readily available to Members of the House of Assembly on reasonable notice;" - we are not unreasonable people. We give you plenty of time within the structure of the Act, whether the House is in session or not, and that is what is important. Because when the House is not in session the government is not accessible to us, we cannot get the information, we do not have access to Oral Question Period or the Order Paper, and that is why that is there.

"BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the regulations be amended to provide that any charges, which might normally apply to agents or

agencies outside the House of Assembly, be waived for Members of the House of Assembly who require the information for the normal pursuit of their duties."

Nowhere, despite the debate by government members, despite the red herrings and the smoke screening, nowhere did I make reference to the fact that they should or should not charge anyone, other than the members of the House of Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that brings my comments to a close. I put the motion and I respectfully request that you call the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the House ready for the question?

MR. SPEAKER:

All those in favour of the resolution please say 'Aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Aye.

MR. SPEAKER:

All those against the resolution, 'Nay'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Nay.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Nays have it. The motion is defeated.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Division.

Division

MR. SPEAKER:

Call in the members.

All those in favour of the resolution, please stand: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Wells); Mr. Efford; the hon. Mr. Simmons; Mr. Tulk; Mr. Baker; Mr. Barry; Mr. W. Carter; Mr. Gilbert; Mr. K. Aylward; Mr. Hiscock; Mr. Kelland; Mr. Furey; Mr. Lush; Mr. Decker.

MR. SPEAKER:

All those against the resolution, please stand:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout); the hon. the Minister of Public Works and Services (Dr. Twomey); 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 Minister of Health (Dr. Collins); the hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Dawe); 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 Culture, Recreation and Youth (Mr. Butt); the hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands (Mr. Russell); the hon. the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Tobin); the hon. the Minister responsible for Northern Development (Mr. Warren); the hon. the Minister responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing (Mr. Peach); Mr. Parsons; Mr. Greening; Mr. Reid; Mr. J. Carter; Mr. Baird; Mr. Hodder; Mr. Woodford; Mr. Callan.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The vote is twenty-three against,

fourteen for. The motion is defeated.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, just before we adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

I guess this matter is known, but just to make sure, the Resource Committee will meet tomorrow at nine-thirty to consider the estimates of the Department of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development. At eleven-thirty, I understand, it is Fisheries.

AN HON. MEMBER:

No.

DR. COLLINS:

No Fisheries? Fisheries is finished, is it?

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is right.

It is the Department of Social Services tonight, the Social Services Committee, then tomorrow we will go back to the Meech Lake Debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 3:00 p.m.

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