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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!

Statements by Ministers

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, over the past decade the utilization of certain species of shellfish by both recreational and commercial groups has increased significantly. This has posed special health problems since these animals generally grow in coastal and tidal waters which are subject to pollution and other waste effluents. Since these molluscs are filter feeders, they tend to accumulate toxins in the flesh that when eaten may be transmitted to humans. Many of these molluscs are eaten raw or lightly processed and, therefore, cause additional risk to the consumer. It is essential that adequate procedures are in place to ensure that shellfish offered for sale to the public is a safe and healthy product.

Intermittent outbreaks of shellfish poisoning, most recently originating from Prince Edward Island waters, clearly demonstrates the serious consequences of unsafe products reaching the marketplace. This event prompted federal and provincial governments to impose additional restrictions on the sale and distribution of molluscs.

This government has jurisdiction over the purchase, processing,

sale and distribution of fish within the Province. The administrative authority is vested in the Minister of Fisheries by the Fish Inspection Act and Regulations (1969) and the Minister of Health under the Food and Drug Act. Under authority of the Fish Inspection Act, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may make regulations respecting in-province fish handling and marketing. This Act, however, does not presently provide regulatory requirements specifically for the handling and identification of molluscs. It is, therefore, necessary to amend the fish inspection regulations to ensure that adequate health and safety standards are maintained. This amendment is consistent with requirements of the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans with respect to the export and import of shellfish.

The amendments to Section 16 of the fish inspection regulations shall read as follows:

Section 16.1 No person shall market live clams, mussels or other molluscs (except scallops) unless:

A. The minister is satisfied on the basis of information submitted to him that the waters from which the said shellfish are taken are of such a nature as will ensure that the shellfish are wholesome.

B. These species when transported for sale to a processing facility or sales outlet, are in closed containers or bags that are tagged to indicate the type of species, harvesting site, date harvested and the name of the harvester.

C. Such person maintains a log book of a type approved by the

minister in which is recorded all species marketed, harvesting site, date harvested, the name of the harvester and the name of the buyer if applicable.

Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that this amendment to the fish inspection regulations will provide improved health and safety measures for the consumers of Newfoundland molluscs.

Additionally, to ensure that harvesting sites are adequately tested, my department has been working very closely with the Environmental Protection Service of Environment Canada and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans to expand testing initiatives. In 1988 approximately 50 areas throughout the Province have been selected for testing by the Environmental Protection Service and as new sites are identified, these will be inspected as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, this government and the Government of Canada remain firmly committed to ensuring that all possible safety procedures are incorporated to protect the consumer of our shellfish products and, indeed, all seafood products. I feel confident that our present regulations, together with these new amendments that I am announcing today, and these initiatives will guarantee that consumers will receive only the highest quality seafood products.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for

Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone can say that more and more stringent regulations are necessary to properly protect the consumers of shellfish. We all know what happened last year when the industry suffered a very severe setback because of an incident that occurred on Prince Edward Island. I am not sure that it was necessary for the minister to have allowed the action to be taken that was taken in closing down the mussel industry on the Northeast Coast, especially because, at least I am told, there is hardly any relationship whatever to conditions where that incident occurred in P.E.I. and in the waters around our coast. Looking back now, I think it might have been overreacting, and I think that kind of overreaction cost our mussel farmers a considerable amount of money.

Mr. Speaker, we think this is a good regulation. We do not see too much wrong with it. On page 2, Condition A, the minister says, the minister must be satisfied on the basis of information submitted to him that the waters from which the shellfish are taken are of such a nature as will ensure that the shellfish are wholesome.

Well, I suppose the question that should be asked and the minister did not address, is, who does he intend to satisfy himself? What type of information will he require? Who will be supplying this information? I presume he is talking about the condition of the waters in the various bays and coves around our Province and in Labrador, and that is a pretty tall order. He does not say here, so maybe he could sometime

elaborate on how he intends to go about collecting that information. Is there a mechanism in place now that will be used? Is it the Fishing Industry Advisory Board, or some branch of the minister's department? Or will he be depending on information supplied by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans?

MR. BAKER:
They will have to expand their capability.

MR. W. CARTER:
Yes. They will have to expand their capability, because my impression of that particular branch is that they are not capable of doing that which they are mandated to do now, much less take on the added responsibility of testing the waters around our coastline, of course, and in Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, there is not too much else we can say about this. As I said before, obviously the consumer must be protected. We do not want a recurrence of what happened last year in P.E.I. Too many such incidents could very well ruin the mussel industry, and we all know that it is now becoming a very lucrative industry. In fact, in my own district there are a number of mussel farmers who appear to be doing very well and have good potential. So I certainly would not want anything to happen that would impede their work, because it is, as I said, a very important industry. Mr. Speaker, with these few reservations, we support this statement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. LONG:
Mr. Speaker,

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

MR. LONG:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We also welcome the initiative by the minister and suggest that, indeed, this is an initiative that has been called for for some time in the absence of such regulations. Similar to the member for Twillingate, I had some concerns about how the minister will be provided information. As I anticipated, he said, when the member was speaking, that it would be through the Environmental Protection Service. But then, in the second last paragraph, he says in an important way that the Environmental Protection Service will expand to fifty sites for testing this Summer. I would suggest to the minister that it would be necessary to ensure that the regulations cover every possible eventuality, that all areas where mussels and other shellfish are being farmed be tested, because otherwise it is not going to be a fully comprehensive programme.

With that in mind, I would say to the minister that I think the emphasis on the statement is properly directed toward protecting the consumer and guaranteeing the consumer that the shellfish industry in this Province will be governed and regulated properly.

I think the minister must also, of course, take care to protect the producer. The people who are out there developing a very important and developing industry need to be

sure, Mr. Speaker, that this programme is not going to in any way jeopardize their ability to develop the industry further. So I would hope these regulations would be clearly spelled out to all producers in the Province and any difficulties that might arise, such as the Environmental Protection Service's ability to monitor, the minister will have flexibility in the programme to work that out with the producers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Before calling for Oral Questions, I would like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery two former members of this hon. House, Mr. Steve Neary and Mr. Graham Flight.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Premier concerning the rights of civil servants to fully participate in the electoral process. I know that the government has signed agreements with the NTA which include a clause covering this matter. I know from what I have heard that other unions have brought up the point and will probably be negotiating clauses to cover this matter.

I am concerned now about non-union employees, particularly senior

civil servants. Would the Premier give the House a brief summary of the rules and regulations that now exist regarding the senior civil servants, non-union people, participating in nominations for political parties and so on?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I was just trying to recall details as the hon. member spoke. This matter has been under review by government now for the last three or four months. We are trying to develop a fair and reasonable policy on it. I am not sure off the top of my head whether we finalized it all. I know we have gone through a lot of it as it relates to at what level. I think we are still trying to decide what level, whether management or executive, is involved in the government process. So I think that is where we are right now and we are trying to decide on a new policy on it. I can get perhaps more information for the hon. member in the next few hours. But it has been reviewed just recently by Cabinet and we are trying to establish a new policy on it.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Could the Premier indicate the rules and regulations under which you have been operating? I think of the Dr. Fagan case in the Waterford - Kenmount byelection situation. There were rules and regulations in existence at the time, and that one part of these

rules and regulations dealt with discretionary reinstatement. Can the Premier recall at whose discretion is this discretionary reinstatement?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
I cannot recall. I do not have the regulations here before me. I have to get them and go through them just to see who has the discretion. So I have to take that under advisement.

But we are trying to develop a new set of rules and regulations dealing with this, and I think they are just about ready to go. The minister or myself may have more to say about that in the next few days because we have, I think, gone about 90 or 95 per cent towards developing a new policy.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. BAKER:
I would like to inform the Premier that the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn) dealt with it from his point of view in the Estimates Committee, yesterday I believe it was. It was not at his discretion, and that is why I was asking that question.

I would like to ask would the Premier, in his review of the rules and regulations, take into account the position of the Liberal Party, which is that all civil servants be given leaves of absence to fully partake in the electoral process so that they have what we feel are their complete rights?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Well, I think we have already taken that under consideration. I think the Liberal Party is a bit late in putting it on the Table of the House right now.

It is not a new idea, you know. It is not something that just came along in the history of the race. It has been something that has been talked about by many jurisdictions for a long period of time.

MR. SIMMONS:
The Premier got leave.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Do I hear something from the member?

MR. SIMMONS:
The Premier got leave from me in 1972.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Oh, yes. From the school board at the time. I think others have too. I think quite a few members have gotten it over the years, yes. Nothing very new about that. That is not new. Obviously, we are considering the whole policy as it has to do with public servants being allowed to participate, take a leave of absence and all the rest of it. So I said, that policy is just about completely developed. It then just becomes a question of how far you take it, whether you take it all the way to deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers, management people who are in positions of policy making and so on, and that is what we are trying to resolve right now.

MR. BAKER:

Will it be completed soon?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Yes, very soon, extremely soon.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Tobin), and it is concerning another recent ruling by the provincial court that affects young offenders. Recently Judge Fowler ruled that the Young Offenders Review Board was unconstitutional. In reply to questioning, the Minister of Justice (Ms. Verge) said very clearly that while the case was before the Supreme Court young offenders' cases could be heard in the Provincial Court.

Now Judge Wicks has ruled that cases cannot be heard before the Provincial Court. I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services what does he propose to do to protect the rights of these young offenders?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, officials in my department and the department of Justice are now meeting to discuss that very issue.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. member

for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, that is the same answer that the minister gave me several weeks ago, that they 'are meeting to discuss.'

I ask will the minister immediately seek the unanimous consent of this House to enact legislation so that the Provincial Court can hear these cases and protect the rights of these young offenders, without any further delay?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Justice are looking at the matter. They are discussing the issue and they will be dealing with it. I would suggest that if any of the legal people feel that they need any advice from the hon. gentleman he will be contacted.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, final supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Social Services, if he wants to get down in that way, is it possible that the delay, as it was last year, is to keep the Young Offenders Review Board together so that he can pay out the salaries, the \$70,000, and his concern lies there, not with the young offenders whose rights should be

protected? They should not be held in custody, their cases should be immediately heard.

Will the minister admit that is the reason for this, to try and keep the board together so that he can pay his political buddies?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, obviously if somebody else said that you would take exception to it, but coming from the hon. gentleman I will treat it the way most people treat the hon. gentleman, as a joke.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Premier and it concerns a very important issue to the people of the city of St. John's. It follows on a ministerial statement the Premier presented last week concerning an initiative by the government which he was very proud of in a personal way, protecting the Newman Building. With reference to the O'Dwyer Block on Water Street, which is scheduled for demolition, I ask would the Premier, in like fashion to the very positive initiative the government took to protect the Newman Building, have government consider taking an initiative to assist the city - indeed, the federal government, have already identified the O'Dwyer Block as a national historic district - take action to protect this significant historic part of the downtown from demolition?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, I have not got the details here. As far as I know from news reports it is being dealt with now by the city and the arts groups that are involved. I honestly do not know because I do not have the details, and I would not be so presumptuous as to make a decision based upon scanty information.

MR. LONG:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. LONG:

I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the Premier may not have the details. The Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth (Mr. Butt) is perhaps more familiar with it, but he is not here today. But I would say to the Premier that this is a very critical situation at this moment, which sees the Mayor and Deputy-Mayor fighting a fairly heroic battle, some would say, on City Council against the member for Waterford-Kenmount (Mr. Gullage) and others, including the member representing my own ward on council, who want to see this area, which has been declared a national historic district, demolished.

My supplementary to the Premier would be, in light of the initiative that the government took at his own personal involvement, I guess, would the Premier give consideration to looking more closely at what is happening in a very current way with this issue, and consider the Province's ability to take action to assist the City in protecting

the site on Water Street?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I am sure that the arts groups and the City Council is aware that the provincial government is here. When it is appropriate, no doubt they will be approaching us, or talking to us about it. So, I will take the hon. members suggestion seriously and pursue it with the minister, and we will just wait and see what happens between the groups that are now involved in it.

MR. LONG:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. LONG:

I just wanted to say to the Premier, by way of a final supplementary, say that there is a very significant opportunity here to send a signal to the community. This weekend the Heritage -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

This is a final supplementary.

MR. LONG:

Committee is meeting in the City, and I would say that the timing -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Ask the question!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. LONG:

Would the Premier consider an undertaking, within the next day

or so, to meet with the Minister and perhaps make a statement on behalf of the government, as a point of intervention in a situation that is developing day by day, as a positive signal to the heritage community of the Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Well, I would have to get all the information. I do not know if intervention is warranted at this time, because it is being dealt with at the municipal level. I will undertake to become familiar with this and to talk to the minister about it and just see where it goes after that. As we did with the Newman Building, we are very interested in preserving, where we can, historic properties and building around the Province. If this is one, well, then I guess we will have to get involved there. But we will have to get all the facts of the matter to know just exactly what is happening, because, as the hon. member himself realizes, up to this point in time it has been between council and other groups in the community who are eager to safeguard this property. But I do appreciate the hon. member is coming at the issue from a serious and legitimate point of view. I appreciate that. His concern for the heritage area of the city is well known, I appreciate it and understand where he is coming from and I will talk to the minister about it. Quite likely it is an issue which may enlarge and, therefore, involve the Province and we will have to take a hard look at it. I appreciate the hon. member's concern.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. DECKER:

My question is for the hon. the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn), Mr. Speaker. The minister will know, I am sure, about the concerns about school bus safety throughout the Province, in spite of the rigorous inspection policy which I think the minister would have used as an answer if I had not cut him off on it.

But in spite of these rigorous inspection policies, the minister, no doubt, is familiar with this report on school buses which was just recently prepared for Treasury Board. I ask the minister would he be prepared today to table a copy of that report so the hon. House and the people of Newfoundland can see just what the problems are with school bus safety?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, the issue of school bus safety has been one that has been with us for quite some time. Just a year or so ago, our department, in conjunction with the Department of Transportation, arranged to hire school bus inspectors who are responsible for nothing else except the inspection of school buses. They carry out a very rigorous inspection. School buses are now inspected three times a year, but along with that, quite often the inspectors, who cover the whole island, pull in the buses, check them at the roadside, in garages, or whatever. So the safety of the

bus is ensured to the best of anyone's ability.

Along with that, because we know how important it is to provide a safe transportation system, we are going further than this now with some ideas and we are in the process of checking and working with other agencies of government in developing new policies. When we get them developed, we will certainly make the hon. gentleman and everybody else well aware of what we intend to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. DECKER:

The hon. minister just will not take advice. I told him not to give me this information about the inspection policy, we know the inspection policy. Obviously, the answer to my question is no, he will not table the report.

So I will ask him now if he will tell us something about the report. Will the minister, who refuses to table the report - obviously he is hiding something, I do not know what it is - tell the House whether or not this report confirms that there are problems with school bus safety, or is everything perfect? Is there no problem with school bus safety?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, if there were no problems with our school bus situation, we would not have come up with the report recommending improvements and changes.

MR. DECKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:

At least he finally admits that there is a report, Mr. Speaker. I was not perfectly sure there was one.

The Department of Education, the minister will know, has a policy to accept the lowest tender for school bus contracts. Would the minister not agree that this policy encourages, and I would even go so far as to say forces and compels contractors to buy cheap, old, secondhand buses in order to be competitive with their tenders? Would the minister not agree that this policy encourages them to buy those old buses in order to be competitive? Potentially, Quebec's scrap yards could become the main supplier for Newfoundland school buses.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure one of the former leaders of the party, who is here today in the gallery, is wondering what happened to the nice, sweet gentleman from the Strait of Belle Isle. I am wondering if he has visited his district recently and was bitten by a fox or something, because he has changed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN:

However, to answer his question, the present policy we use, as we use in anything, is The Public Tendering Act, which requires that we accept the lowest tender, within, of course, certain rules and regulations, and exceptions if things are way out of line. However, perhaps it does encourage people to buy cheaper machinery, but what we have to be assured of is that whatever bus goes on the road, whether it is a year old, whether it is ten years old, or whether it is brand new, that that bus has gone through a rigorous inspection and is a safe vehicle to carry students to school. If we did not accept the lowest tender they would be the very first to accuse us of not being prudent in what we do. Safety in the system is the key component, and that is the reason why we are working with Treasury Board, the Department of Transportation and other agencies, to make sure we continue to improve transportation in the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout), In February, when a delegation visited Japan to negotiate a price for caplin, I think they got an assurance from the Japanese importers that agreements on quantity and price

for this year would be in place no later than the end of March. Now, the minister himself stated, when he came back, I believe, that certainly we need two or three months notice, two or three months in advance of the opening of the fishery, so that everybody can plan accordingly. Yesterday, on **The Fishermen's Broadcast**, the minister expressed some concern that to date there has been no price established. I wonder if the minister would tell the House, Mr. Speaker, what time he expects there to be a price established, given the fact that Japan is pretty well the only buyer and that the caplin fishery is rapidly approaching.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, first of all let me just make a remark or two on the hon. gentleman's preamble. It certainly has been the position of this government, and of myself as Minister of Fisheries, that it is in the best interest of the caplin fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador that a firm price and firm tonnages be negotiated as early as possible with the Japanese.

Myself, on behalf of the government and representatives of the industry, and when I say the industry I mean the processors and the unions, made that position extremely clear to the Japanese when we had a trade mission to Japan a few months ago.

Since that time there have been a couple of series of negotiations. The industry people were in Japan a week or ten days ago to continue with those negotiations. As hon. gentlemen may or may not know,

right now, as a matter of fact the next five or six days, is a downtime in terms of carrying on business in Japan. My understanding from the industry is that they have made progress. They expect to reconvene in Canada, either in Montreal or Vancouver, probably next week, and everybody is optimistic that over the next week or ten days or so there will be an agreement in place between the Newfoundland processors, the Newfoundland producers and the Japanese importers.

So we are optimistic, Mr. Speaker, that will take place, and take place in plenty of time for our own processors then to carry on negotiations with the union here in Newfoundland.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on **The Fishermen's Broadcast**, I do not think the minister was as optimistic. In fact, I think he expressed some alarm that no agreement had been reached so far. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important industry and we cannot gamble with it. Given the fact that they are getting very little caplin from Iceland and other Scandinavian countries this year, it could be a good year for the caplin fishery. Can the minister tell the House he has a contingency plan? If for some reason or other the Japanese and the industry cannot come to some agreement, what action does he contemplate taking to make sure that the same thing will not

happen this year that happened last year to the caplin fishery?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say that I do not think it can be construed anywhere yesterday in my remarks to **The Fishermen's Broadcast** that I expressed alarm. What I did say, what I say again now and what I have said consistently on a number of occasions is that I think it is in the best interest of the caplin fishery in this Province to have negotiations on prices and tonnages out of the way early enough so that Newfoundland producers can have plenty of time to negotiate with the harvesters, with the fishermen of this Province, to reach agreement on prices in that regard.

And secondly, of course, Mr. Speaker, we took, as a government and an industry, a great forward leap last year in terms of the caplin industry when we imposed for the first time a regulatory regime that everybody thought was beneficial to the further development of the caplin industry. And as I told the representatives of the Japanese importers and the Japanese government quite candidly in Japan, our government system is no more efficient than theirs, and we have to have plenty of lead time in order to introduce those regulatory regimes here that our people want and that they want.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have every optimism at this point in time, having consulted with the industry representatives from Newfoundland, that in fact an agreement will be in place. Last year was a very

unusual year, as the hon. gentleman knows. I mean, we overproduced dramatically in 1986, which caused us a lot of the problems that we had in 1987, and we do not intend to allow that, Mr. Speaker, in 1988.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, in the caplin fishery report the minister submitted to this House some time ago, recommendation 10 recommends that the caplin processors should get together to formalize a single marketing and processing association. The minister agreed with that recommendation, even though the members of the industry and the trade, I think, had some reservations. In his release to the House on that date, he did suggest that he would be following up the matter and hopefully have something in place, maybe in 1988.

I wonder can the minister tell the House if that is still his objective, to get a proper marketing and processing agency in place in time for next year's caplin fishery?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the statement said, that I would be following up on that and hopefully have something in place for 1989, not 1988.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

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. Brett).

In view of the tremendous and apparent irreversible financial mess which municipalities find themselves in throughout the Province, preventing the provision of water and sewer and roads to the people of this Province, particularly the rural areas, a problem compounded by the fact that the government have a three-year freeze on capital funding for municipalities, in view of this problem, in view of this travesty, has the minister approached the federal government requesting funds from his political friends in Ottawa to assist in this most important problem, in the provision of adequate public services to the people of this Province, particularly the people living in the rural areas of this Province, to provide them with acceptable levels of public service comparable to those enjoyed by other Canadians? It seems like a justifiable and reasonable request.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, I personally have not been in contact with anybody in the federal government. I have only been down in the department for three or four months.

It is my understanding that this is an ongoing thing with the federal government every year. There will be another meeting in, I believe, Halifax, later on in the Summer where all of the Ministers of Municipal Affairs from the various provinces will meet with the federal officials. I am confident that that will be discussed again at that point in time. It is very valid, what the hon. member is talking about, and it is of great concern, not only to Newfoundland but to all the provinces, because not only is there a need for more money for addition of new water and sewer projects but there is also a growing concern all over Canada, and, I think, in the United States, that a lot of the infrastructure that is already in place is getting dilapidated - bridges, water and sewer systems - and the figures being thrown around to bring a lot of these services up to standard is in the billions of dollars.

So it is an ongoing thing and it will be discussed again this year. But no, this minister has not personally contacted anybody in the last three or four months.

MR. LUSH:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

I find it incredible that the minister has not approached his federal counterpart on this most important, vital matter. Now, will the minister undertake to find out whether some other of his colleagues have approached the federal government in this important matter? Because this

was the crowd, Mr. Speaker, that was going to get all sorts of goodies for this Province when they got their federal buddies elected in Ottawa.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:

Now, Mr. Speaker, a further question. Another area that can be very important to municipalities is the federal Job Strategy Programme.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Rules are not being applied fairly here. This is Question Period. Hon. members opposite have been getting up, on a supplementary and going on with a speech, and they have been getting away with it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the way you operate this House is that on the original question, obviously, a preamble to explain the context is in order, and all of the members on this side, and all the ministers on this side understand that. And we think that that is very appropriate, highly reasonable for the original question. When there is a supplementary, it is my understanding that then the hon. member following up on his original question, and therefore the context has been set, could just ask a question.

Now, the hon. member is doing the same as a number of hon. members have done over there today. They are having just as much preamble

and speech on their supplementary questions as on their original questions. And that does a number of things. It gets very boring, because we all understand the context at the beginning anyway from the original question.

And, number two, and more importantly, it limits the amount of time that other members opposite have to ask a question in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I do not dispute the general comments that the hon. the Premier just made. Essentially they are correct, with one exception. Even on a supplementary question, it is frequently going to be necessary to add a little bit to lay the proper foundation. But I agree, you should not make a lengthy speech. I do not dispute that, but there has to be some understanding that it is necessary frequently to perhaps have a sentence or two or three to lay the groundwork.

And to talk about taking up the time of the House, we have set here time after time in Question Period and listened to ministers drag on and on and on and on and on, just use up the time, and they have not been called to order.

So, Mr. Speaker, I basically agree with the comments that the hon. the Premier has made, but we should all abide by the rules and ensure that we have a proper Question Period.

MR. LONG:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LONG:
Mr. Speaker, we also support the position of the Premier on this, without exception. We believe that day in and day out we are held to the orders for Question Period, and we do our best to restrict our supplementaries, and we think there should be no exception for the official Opposition because there is certainly no exception applied for us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
I agree with the hon. the member for St. John's East - believe it, or not. I think the hon. member tries to keep it very short. I appreciate what the Leader of the Opposition said, but sometimes the reason why ministers' answers are longer is because the supplementary is the same as an original question, and they have to first make a comment on the preamble, the answer is dictated by the question.

Standing Order 31(a) clearly points out, Mr. Speaker, that Oral Questions must be on a matter of urgency, and goes on to talk about it in great detail. If our supplementaries are going to become like our original questions, then the hon. member

for St. John's East is not going to get a chance to ask a number of questions, nor are a number of people on the backbenches on the Liberal side.

I want more questions. It is getting boring, Mr. Speaker, it is getting boring here. Terrible!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

To that point of order. It occurred to me, in listening to hon. members on each side of the House, if hon. members would like to come up and conduct the Oral Questions themselves? I think the point is well taken. It is a point that I have made on a number of occasions. The whole idea of question time is to have as many questions and as many answers as possible.

For the Chair it is an extremely difficult matter. I do not want to get up every time an hon. member on my right is going a little bit overboard, and that happens on my left also. I think that one has to have a certain amount of laxity, and I am trying to do it as well as I can under the circumstances, without trying to treat the House as a classroom or anything like that.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
You have to be fair, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
I think the point is well taken as far as that is concerned. We have to be a bit, not lax but not too rigid in this matter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker, another area -

AN HON. MEMBER:
All the leaders are coming back.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. BAIRD:
Here are the real leaders.

MR. TOBIN:
Two for the price of one, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has now elapsed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

**Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees**

MR. J. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. J. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Social Services Committee I would like to report that the Committee has considered the estimates of the following departments:

Justice, Health, Education, Environment and Lands, Social Services, Culture, Recreation and Youth and Career Development and Advanced Studies, and has passed them all without amendment but with some trouble.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. HODDER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HODDER:
Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Resource 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: Mines, Fisheries, Development and Tourism, Rural, Agriculture and Northern Development, Forest Resources, and Energy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Are there any further reports?

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

MR. SIMMONS:
No, Sir, I was rising in my capacity as Vice-Chairman of that committee. The Chairman failed to report, Mr. Speaker -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:
Well, I can do it on a point of order if it suits the forum better.

MR. SPEAKER:

I will recognize the hon. member on a point of order.

MR. SIMMONS:

Whatever Mr. Speaker from Green Bay says. I raise the point of order, Mr. Speaker -

DR. COLLINS:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

I have recognized the member for Fortune - Hermitage on a point of order.

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

You can have a seminar for the hon. member on the rules of the House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Port au Port in making his report failed to inform the House that the Committee was less than satisfied with the unavailability of the Minister of Fisheries; we wanted to have him back before the Committee but he could not find a time that was satisfactory.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

The hon. member is not stating a point of order. The member is out of order.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition from 120 residents of Grey River. It is in the proper form, addressed to the hon. House in Parliament assembled, and all that. The prayer of the petition is this: Whereas the telephone system to Grey River is inadequate and ineffective; and whereas the telephone service to this community has deteriorated during the past few years instead of improving as one would expect; and whereas we have made numerous complaints to Terra Nova Tel without any improvement in the system, and only promises of improvements in the future; and whereas we have had many occasions where the people of this community lost badly needed employment because employers from outside the community were unable to contact workers in Grey River because the community telephone service was not working; and whereas there have been occasions when life has been endangered because communications with the outside world have been interrupted for as long as twenty-four hours when the telephone system was out of order; therefore we the residents of Grey River humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to contact the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications (Mr. Young) and Terra Nova Tel to improve the telephone system to the community before a serious accident or loss of life occurs because we are unable to contact the outside world in case of emergency. This petition is signed by 120 residents of Grey River.

Now, I know when the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications rises he is going to say that I brought this situation to his attention in the Estimates Committee, and I know that he has already written Terra

Nova Tel. He informed me during the Estimates Committee that he had not heard any complaints from Terra Nova Tel, so this petition will now reinforce the representation that I am made to him in the Committee. I hope that he then will be able to once again contact Terra Nova Tel and ask them to move their capital works project up from next year to this year because of the very serious situation that is occurring in Grey River.

I am sure that, as has been pointed to me numerous times, and in my requests that I have made to Terra Nova Tel - I have passed it along - there have been life-threatening situations.

First of all, a man had his back badly injured in November, in fact it was broken, and at that time the telephone system was out and the only connection they had with the outside world was when the ferry came in from Ranea the next day. It was twenty-four hours later before there was any contact with the outside world, and this man had to go for medical attention.

Some of the residents have also pointed out to me that in the old days, when the tungsten mine was there, there was a direct line from the tungsten mine in Grey River to Buchans. At least there was contact with the outside world twenty-five or thirty years ago, but what has happened now is the system has deteriorated to the point that they are faced with periods of time, up to twenty-four hours, without any contact with the outside world.

The other thing is I have letters from residents down there about how they have lost employment.

Grey River, unlike many of the communities on the South Coast of Newfoundland, is not a fishing community. Originally, because of the situation where boats could not get in and out because of the tide, the people turned to working at the Buchans mines, or in the lumber woods. And now a lot of them are employed in survey parties in the mining industry, and they have to be called from Toronto somewhere for employment and those people cannot get through. This is a serious problem, Mr. Minister, and it is one they want addressed.

I have other letters from people who are doing business in Grey River, and from the people who are doing business with the people of Grey River. If they do not get the orders out in time, they miss the boat. The highway for Grey River is the coastal marine service along the South Coast, and if they miss a shipment date on freight coming out of Port aux Basques, there are hardships because of the supplies not getting in on time.

So, for all those reasons, Mr. Speaker, the people of Grey River feel that Terra Nova Tel should be made aware of the problem. It is an extreme problem and something should be done about it immediately. They have the feeling that Terra Nova Tel are taking the same approach to Grey River as the government are taking to Opposition districts. If it is an Opposition district, we will not give it as good service as we would a district that is represented by the government. Now, for this reason, I feel that there should be serious representation from the minister to Terra Nova Tel telling them to move up their capital works

project and ensure that the system in Grey River is brought into the Twentieth Century. Because, as they say to me, they had a better system twenty-five or thirty years ago. At least they then had some contact with the outside world, now they have not.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. GILBERT:
In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister to make strong representation to bring the telephone system in Grey River up to Twentieth Century standards.

MR. YOUNG:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

MR. YOUNG:
Mr. Speaker, I support the petition, but I do not believe the petition should have been brought to this House of Assembly. It is a federal matter. It comes under the CRTC. When the hon. member brought it to my attention during the estimates I did, I think the next morning, write Terra Nova Tel. I do support the petition.

The hon. gentleman said we should pay more attention. If the hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir receives letters of complaint from his constituents - I never receive complaints - and he does not forward them on to a minister or someone who is responsible, he cannot blame that on government, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe the hon. gentleman is doing his duty as the MHA for that district.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, so much for the concern of the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. YOUNG:
The very next morning I wrote a letter to Terra Nova Tel.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:
He would have served the cause a lot better had he got up and told the House that he empathized with the people in Grey River who depend on a telephone service for their access to jobs, to education, to medical facilities and to shopping.

MR. BAIRD:
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMONS:
Grey River, I tell the gentleman from Humber West, is one of several communities along the coast which are particularly dependent on good telephone service. I am thinking of communities like Petites and Grand Bruit and LaPoile, all of which he will know intimately. Grey River and Francois and McCallum, all three are in the district of the gentleman from Brugeo - Bay d'Espoir, a district which it was my pleasure to represent in this Chamber at one time. It was my equal pleasure to have represented those communities federally at one time.

The member for Humber West is getting all of this now? I am not talking too quickly for him?

MR. BAIRD:

I will pick it up in Hansard.

MR. SIMMONS:

Then, also, communities like Gaultois and Rencontre East in my district of Fortune - Hermitage, and then further down the coast, of course, South East Bight.

MR. BAIRD:

Belleoram, St. Jacques, and then on up.

MR. SIMMONS:

No, no. There the member shows his very limited knowledge of communities like Southeast Bight and Petit Forte. The distinction I am making in listing those eight or ten communities is these communities are not connected by road. If you phone system goes out in Grey River, you cannot get aboard your car and go to the next community because there is no next community in terms of a direct road connection. They are very much at the mercy of the elements. They have to wait for the right kind of weather to even get a message out to the next community.

I was in Rencontre East not too long ago when that very kind of situation transpired where they had been without phones and they had to say to me, 'When you go back to Pooles Cove, would you call TNT and tell them we have been without phones?' They have no back up system. They have no road. For those people, Mr. Speaker, in Grey River which is the subject of this petition today - the petition is from that community - but also for other communities such as I have mentioned, a good telephone service is an absolute necessity.

In mentioning those communities, let me throw in one community

which, though it has a road system, is experiencing some real problems with telephone service in recent weeks and that is the community of Grand Le Pierre in my particular district.

MR. BAIRD:

Why are you turning your back on the Speaker?

MR. SIMMONS:

There must be something in my subconscious, I say to the gentleman for Humber West (Mr. Baird).

MR. FUREY:

The soon to be former member for Humber West.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to support the petition so ably presented by the gentleman from Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert). We take the minister at this word, that he will be in touch again with TNT. We recognize that in terms of statutory jurisdiction, it is a federal matter. But, why is it that we always insist on being so clinical? These are matters which affect people in rural Newfoundland and that fact alone makes them our concern in this particular Chamber here.

MR. BAIRD:

(Inaudible) petition.

MR. SIMMONS:

That is why the gentleman for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir, I and my good friend from Humber West all endorse heartedly the prayer of this petition and hope that TNT will recognize its responsibility here and very soon address the problem in Grey River.

My friend for Burgeo - Bay

d'Espoir suggested a solution: Advance their plans in terms of capital expenditures. What they are going to do down the road, let them do it now, let them do it this Summer so that we will have an adequate system in Grey River.

MR. BAIRD:

It should have been done five years ago.

MR. SIMMONS:

The gentleman for Humber West (Mr. Baird) is agreeing with that too. I thank him.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by approximately 170 people from the community of Fairbanks, which, of course, is on New World Island in the Twillingate district. The prayer of the petition, Mr. Speaker, is that the road to and through that community be upgraded.

The petitioners say, 'We are fed up with the dirt roads that we have to travel over. We are sick and tired of having our vehicles damaged by these bad roads. We are fed up with our children having to travel over these bad roads on school buses.

'We appreciate what the [ocal] Highways Department has done, but it is like putting a new patch on an old pair of pants.' They are referring here, of course, to some of the minor repairs that they made to the roads. They are asking that a contractor we engaged to upgrade the road to and

through Fairbanks and that it be paved.

Mr. Speaker, that is one of many such roads in my district that need attention. I have in the past couple of years brought these matters to the attention of the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Doyle) on numerous occasions.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Fairbanks should not have to put up with such intolerable conditions. These people, like a lot of other people in Twillingate district, and I suppose around Newfoundland generally, in my view are being treated like second-class citizens. Surely something could have been done these past number of years to make the roads better in these areas because, the people in Fairbanks, as are the people in Herring Neck and Cobb's Arm and Pike's Arm and a number of other communities in Twillingate district, are taxpaying people. They pay the same tax as does a person living in Churchill Park, St. John's, or in the heart of Grand Falls, Gander or Corner Brook. They pay an identical licensing fee for their vehicles. They do not get a break because the roads are bad. They pay the exact same licensing fee as a person living in the more well-to-do urban areas. They pay the same taxes on their gasoline as do Newfoundlanders living in the other better looked after areas.

Mr. Speaker, there is a difference in that the people who live in Fairbanks and that area, their vehicles are depreciating at a much greater rate. The trade-in value of their vehicles, when they go to trade them in, is considerably lower than that of a person, say, living in another

part of Newfoundland. In fact, I am told that in some cases a vehicle, for example, that has been driven over these roads, the road to Fairbanks, would probably depreciate by more than 50 per cent greater than a vehicle that has been turned in that has been driven over roads in the more densely-populated areas.

Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that the government does have a very serious responsibility to these people. Unless and until they are ready to do something with their roads - this is something that did not happen overnight. These roads have been in this condition now for the past thirty or forty years, and unless and until the government is willing to do something to upgrade these roads, I do not think the people would be unreasonable if they were to ask the government for maybe a reduction in the cost of their licensing, maybe even an exemption or a partial exemption on gasoline tax. I know that is a far out suggestion because it would be difficult to administer, but I cannot say I would blame the people if they refused to pay the full licensing fee for their vehicles. I cannot say I would blame them if they would at least try to refuse to pay the full gasoline tax on the gasoline that they use in their vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very serious matter and one that the government, I think, should address immediately. Because of these bad roads, as the petitioners point out in the petition, the lives of their children are endangered, youngsters who have to travel over these roads in school buses, back and forth two or three times a day, to and from school, over

very, very dangerous conditions.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. W. CARTER:
In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, may I say too that property values are affected, that the health and safety of the people living in the area is affected as well.

So I would strongly urge the government to pay heed to this petition, Mr. Speaker, give the people a decent road over which they can drive, and start treating them like first-class citizens.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand in support of the petition so ably presented by my colleague for Twillingate, as I once again see him in the determined way that he represents the district and the hard work he is putting in representing the people of the district of Twillingate.

It is a shame, Mr. Speaker, that this is a familiar cry in this petition. Rural Newfoundlanders are being treated this way by a government that has an 'inside the overpass' mentality. I believe that the Minister of Health's philosophy is the one they are using. He believes in St. John's. We see a government that can spend \$22 million to grow cucumbers in Mount Pearl, but yet,

they cannot find money to put into the roads in rural Newfoundland.

As those 170 people from Fairbanks have said, their cars are depreciated and torn up by driving over those roads; Their children are put in danger by having to go on those roads and school buses, and yet we have a situation where the government can find money to spend on foolishness, like the 'cutting edge' of technology, as the Premier talked about when I talked about Sprung. He said it was so far advanced that, he said it was developed in Disney World. I have a feeling that maybe it was, and Mickey Mouse was the fellow who engineered it, Mr. Speaker.

When we talk about roads in rural Newfoundland, they have not got a policy. They have not got a policy for paving roads in rural Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor-General's report said that there was no policy or procedure in the department for dispensing funds to pave roads.

We, as members of this House, get these requests from our constituents, as the member for Twillingate did. And it is a continual thing. The member for Twillingate is working twelve hours a day for the people of his district to try and make this government understand that they are rural Newfoundlanders and they have serious concerns that should be addressed.

They pay the same taxes that are paid in St. John's, but they are not getting the benefit. This is where the problem is. The government has lost its sense of direction and they are trying to buy the people's votes with the tax dollars from all over

Newfoundland.

The government will spend \$500,000 on press secretaries. That \$500,000, I would submit, Mr. Speaker, would do a lot to the road in Fairbanks. For this reason, it should be looked after.

I hope now, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Transportation - I do not see him here, but I am sure he will be here to respond to this petition - I hope when he rises in his place that he will support this petition and say that when he releases the next goodie list on road upgrading in Newfoundland, that the good people of Fairbanks are going to get the justice they deserve and the member's hard work is going to be rewarded.

So, I hope the minister will stand and support this petition now, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any further petitions?

MR. FUREY:

Does anyone from the other side want to support that petition?

Orders of the Day

DR. COLLINS:

Motion 3. The Meech Lake debate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines adjourned the debate.

The hon. the Minister of Mines.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult when you get into a debate as important as the Meech Lake Accord to really carry over from one day to another. In other words, you get half of your few remarks in on one day and then adjourn the debate, and then you come in the next day and you have only half the time in which to get in all the arguments that you want to make on the Meech Lake Accord.

I was saying last day that I found that the arguments of those opposed to the Meech Lake Accord lacked some credibility, in my opinion, especially with respect to what has happened here in the House of Assembly. What has happened here in the House of Assembly since the Meech Lake Accord came in -

MR. TUIK:

Talk about the distinct society, now.

MR. DINN:

The hon. the member for Fogo just now interrupted and broke the rules of the House again.

Since the Meech Lake Accord was passed what basically happened here in Newfoundland is this: The Liberal Party under the former leader said, We agree with the Meech Lake Accord and we will support that. The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage, I believe, said at one time that he supported Meech Lake.

MR. SIMMONS:

Where? Where?

MR. DINN:

I do not have to find it. The hon. member either knows that he did or he did not.

One would think, then, that the

people opposite, the Liberal Party in Newfoundland supported Meech Lake. Now they say they did not support Meech Lake, and now they have a different position. So, let us say that that is true. Just this week the leader of the Liberal Party said, 'Let us get together as Liberals and support, Mr. Turner. Let us stop all this bickering here in Newfoundland and throughout Canada with respect to the Federal Leadership, let us stop all of this and let us support Mr. Turner'. One would think he would say then, Well, let us think over Meech Lake. Let us think over where we have differences with Mr. Turner and then we will either support Mr. Turner or not support Mr. Turner.' He decided 'we will support Mr. Turner', which is very difficult, because, Mr. Turner supports Meech Lake and they do not support Meech Lake. How can they then say they are supporting Mr. Turner?

MR. FUREY:

(Inaudible).

MR. DINN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for St. Barbe wants to interrupt.

He has had his time in this debate.

MR. FUREY:

Would the hon. the minister permit a question?

MR. DINN:

No, I will not permit a question because I have very limited time now to get in the few remarks I want to make in this debate. It is a very important thing.

So, what happened then? Two weeks ago, when the present Leader of the Opposition spoke in this debate he said, We do not support

Meech Lake, but we will not put in any amendments, we know it is of no use because the government supports it. What happened two weeks later? The hon. the member for St. Barbe, presumably in the same caucus - the member for St. Barbe is a Liberal and the Leader of the Opposition is a Liberal - jumps up to speak in the debate and he says, I want to make an amendments, and he made the following amendment: The amendment would basically recognize, according to him, that Newfoundland and Labrador constitutes within Canada a distinct society. I believe we are a distinct society, and I do not believe we need it in an interpretative clause in the Meech Lake Accord that we are a distinct society.

MR. FUREY:

What is your (inaudible). My very argument.

MR. DINN:

The hon. member believes that by putting an interpretative clause, which is what this is - it is not a substantive clause, it is an interpretative clause - in the Meech Lake Accord that that will make a lot of difference to the person out in Fogo, or the person in Pleasantville. He knows he is a Newfoundlander, he knows he is distinct within Confederation, and it is not going to matter a row of beans whether that distinctiveness is put into an interpretative clause in the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Speaker, it just does not make sense. What has happened opposite does not make sense. Last year the Liberal Party supported Meech Lake. The then Leader of the Liberal Party, the hon. the member for Mount Scio, stood up and supported Meech Lake and

presumably all of his caucus supported Meech Lake. I know the hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage did. This year a new leader and the new leader says, I do not support Meech Lake, and all the people opposite say they do not support Meech Lake, with the exception of one person, and that one person is the guy who is the most consistent opposite. He said last year 'I support Meech Lake' and he said this year 'I support Meech Lake.' Consistency is not one of their virtues, so, Mr. Speaker, I have great difficulty with arguments made now by members opposite that they do not support Meech Lake. And, Mr. Speaker, the only reason they do not support Meech Lake, apparently, is because of that distinct society clause, which is an interpretative clause in the Meech Lake Accord not a substantive clause, it has no real bearing on the situation.

We know that there are cultural and language differences in Canada. They have been recognized before and that is all that interpretative clause does, recognizes the languages and recognizes these things that are already within the Constitution of Canada. Mr. Speaker, the arguments used just do not hold water.

In the interim, since I spoke last in this debate, Mr. Speaker, many things have happened. What we have to say is, if you read through all the clauses in the Meech Lake Accord you have to come out and say to yourself is this basically good for Canada? Because we are here today in the process of building the nation Canada. We are taking another step along that route in Canada. If you read them all, and we have read them many times - as a matter

of fact, we went through the Meech Lake Accord on a clause by clause basis and discussed it and debated it, and so on for long hours, and, Mr. Speaker, we came up with the fact that it has to be good for this country; it brings Quebec back into the family of provinces.

Now, should I be up here praising the fact that Quebec is back in, the people who got together and basically robbed us of our hydro power? That is what happened. Or we gave it away, one or the other of the arguments. Either the Liberal Party here gave it away or Quebec took it. We started the project, could not do anything with the power but transmit it somewhere, and Quebec said you are not transmitting it. It is started now so it has to be finished. They did not negotiate it at first. They did not sit down to the table and say, would you give us wheeling rights? Could you do this? Could you make a deal for us? No. They negotiated, and while the negotiations were going on, they started to get the project going. Which is what the pressure was, by the way, for this government with respect to offshore.

Everybody wanted it to start. Let it go! Do not get the i's dotted and the t's crossed. Give it away, as long as we get the few jobs. That is what happened with the Upper Churchill. But, Mr. Speaker, we said, No, that is not going to happen in this case. That is not going to happen. We will get it signed. We will get the i's dotted and we will get the t's crossed and we will get it. And we got the Atlantic accord. Then, if it is feasible, if it is profitable and it goes ahead, we will get the advantages here in this Province. We will not give

it away to anybody. That is the way it should be done on the Upper Churchill but it was not. So why should I be here in this House of Assembly, here in Newfoundland, supporting the Meech Lake accord that brings Quebec back in? Why should I care? Should anybody care? Because it is a nation, because it brings that family of provinces back together again and gets them all down to the same table discussing this nation and keeping this nation together. And that is what it is all about.

The hon. the member for St. Barbe gets up with this amendment that really does nothing and he knows the amendment does nothing. He knows his amendment does nothing, yet he proposed the amendment.

MR. J. CARTER:

He is just a servant.

MR. DINN:

That is all. They are playing games, Mr. Speaker, with a very important issue in this Province, which is not new. They have done it before. But that is basically, Mr. Speaker, what they are doing in respect to the Meech Lake accord, they are playing games with things that are very important not only to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador but to this nation as a whole.

Now, I can understand somebody who is consistent. The hon. members down to my far left, and they are way to the left of me, are at least consistent. Last year they were against the Meech Lake accord, and this year they are against the Meech Lake accord. They were against it last year because the CLC told them right quick, right off the start, the boys got together up-along, the CLC, and said Shirley Carr just

called and rang Peter's chimes. They said, Peter, 'You shall not vote for this. Unions do not go along with it. You know who supports you, and you better not vote for the Meech Lake accord. That is basically what happened. So Peter, being the good little fellow that he is, did what he was told. So they do not support Meech Lake and I understand that; they did not support it last year and they do not support it this year.

What I do not understand, what I shall never understand is a group of individuals, be they Liberal or NDP, who stand in their places one year and say I support Meech Lake then get up the next year, because there is a new leader, and to a man, with the exception of one, say we do not support Meech Lake now.

DR. COLLINS:

There is confusion on that now.

MR. DJINN:

One week the Leader of the Opposition says we have to support Mr. Turner. We cannot have this dissension in the Liberal Party, we just cannot have this any more. We have to bring this party together behind our federal leader. He says that one day, yet the next day he does not support Meech Lake. Mr. Turner supports Meech Lake but he does not support Meech Lake. How is that coming behind their federal leader? How is that trying to hold the Liberal Party together? It just is not.

Mr. Speaker, we saw this inconsistency yesterday when the hon. the Leader of the Opposition stood in his place in this House and talked about freedom of information. The Premier came in and said, 'You were talking about

freedom of information. Let us not be so pompous. Table your salary. I will table mine and you table yours.' Do you know what he did in the House, by the way, Mr. Speaker? In the House he said, 'No problem. I will do it.' He thought about it between there and outside the door. Outside the door a reporter comes along and asks, 'Are you going to table it?' He said, 'No, I am not going to table it. I made too much money last year. I do not want the people of Newfoundland to know what I made last year or where the money came from.' He could not do that, Mr. Speaker, in the House.

Look at the consistency of the party and the consistency of their leader. In the House he says, 'Yes, no problem. I will table last year's salary. I have no problem with that.' A minute later, outside the House, a reporter comes along and he says, 'What do you think of this idea the Premier had of tabling your salary for last year?' He says, 'No, not me. I made too much money last year. I cannot table mine.'

MR. FUREY:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the member for St. Barbe.

MR. FUREY:

I am sorry to interrupt the hon. the minister, Mr. Speaker, I know he is closing his speech, his remarks, but for the record, I was just wondering if he will be, because it sounds to me like he will be, voting for my amendment to see Newfoundland be constituted as a distinct society?

In the last few minutes that he

has remaining, I wonder if he would address the amendment and tell us whether he is voting for Newfoundland or against Newfoundland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

DR. COLLINS:
Mr. Speaker, to that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:
To that point of order, the hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:
That is a clear abuse of the rules, which has occurred frequently on the other side, and it has already been brought to Your Honour's attention. There is absolutely no point of order there. The hon. member knew there was no point of order, yet he persists in interrupting my hon. friend.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

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

The hon. the Minister of Mines.

MR. DINN:
Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order, but there is an attempt by a member opposite to interrupt what I am saying. I am starting to get to him. The points are starting to bear down on him. He is starting to wonder now about his leader's inconsistency. He does not want this inconsistency of both his leader and his party opposite exposed to the people. That is what has happened. So in order to stop that, so this exposition cannot take place, so

that the debate cannot go on freely, he breaks the rules of the House.

People may not know it, but the hon. member just got up on a spurious point of order and broke the rules of this legislature. That is what he did. He got up in the House, Mr. Speaker, because the points were starting to hit home. He knows that last year under one leader he agreed with Meech Lake, and this year, with a new leader who says we do not agree with Meech Lake, he had to change his mind.

Two weeks ago his leader said, We do not agree with Meech Lake but there will be no amendments, and he gets up not knowing, I suppose, what his leader said, which points out the inconsistency, and he says, I want to propose an amendment. So, the whole country stopped and waited to see what this hon. member had to say - what amendment has he come out with now that will make this country greater? He wants to change, Mr. Speaker, an interpretative clause that does nothing. Now, that is what the hon. member likes to waste his time on, actually, doing nothing.

Mr. Speaker, it was only a few years ago now that he stood in this House - they are getting a little bit nervous now. They are starting to check the time at the table. Mr. Speaker, this side supports Meech Lake because Meech Lake helps to build this country. That is what it does. It helps to make this nation great. It is another step along the process of nationhood, nation building, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. DINN:

How unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. I was just getting in full stride. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMONS:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, The gentleman was not quite right. I was checking the time for the opposite reason. I did not want to interrupt his brilliant trend of thought, so I was waiting till he had finished to make my point of order. I would like, for the benefit of the House, to correct something the gentleman said. I have a transcript which I am going to pass over to him. He quotes me as saying certain things. What I said, and it is hear in Hansard, May 4, 1988, page R1771, I said 'The Meech Lake has 'frightening implications. It was done at great cost for the country. It has the effect of weakening the Confederation at great expense to Provinces such as Newfoundland and Labrador.' There is what I said, and it goes to show, Mr. Speaker, how that minister will say whatever is convenient, whether there are facts to support it or not, to make his point. But I would like him to look at that, and he might want to retract and apologize to the House for misinforming the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

To the point of order, the hon. the Minister of Mines.

MR. DINN:

Obviously, there is no point of order. What the hon. member has done right now is again break the rules of the House with a spurious point of order. There is no point of order and the hon. member knows it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, just in case my point of order was not understood by the member for Pleasantville, my point is that the minister misinformed the House and that is a breach of the rules. You cannot misinform the House. I never said he deliberately misinformed the House, because that would require some planning on his part. But he misinformed the House, and he should be asked to retract and apologize for that blatant misinformation.

MR. J. CARTER:

To the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. J. CARTER:

It is well known that the hon. gentleman opposite is always saying things under his breath, and how do we know that what is printed in Hansard bears any resemblance to what he actually said. I suggest that he probably said a lot more than the minister accuses him of.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order. The point is well taken, but I do not think the minister had any intent, if there was any. There is no point of order.

The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker, we just heard as indepth an analysis and profound dissertation on Meech Lake, I say, as will ever be heard across this country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker, what a dissertation on Meech Lake. I know Senator Forsey will be awfully sad that he missed the speech.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. LUSH:
He will be awfully sad that he missed the speech of the hon. gentleman with his profound dissertation on Meech Lake. Mr. Speaker, what we heard today was a latter-day Socrates talking about the constitution.

Mr. Speaker, quite obviously the gentleman does not understand the Constitution, does not have one clue of what is in it, or at least he did not demonstrate it here today, if he knew anything about Meech Lake.

It is a great pity, Mr. Speaker. I say, God bless us all if other gentlemen are voting for Meech Lake and not understanding any more about it than the hon. gentleman who just spoke on it, because he did not demonstrate, Mr. Speaker, that he understood

one iota. What did he talk about?

He talked about the salary of the Leader of the Opposition. He talked about what the leader said last year and what the leader is saying this year, as if that had some relevance on where we stand today on Meech Lake and as to how we are going to vote on Meech Lake. What a lot of nonsense! Unmitigated nonsense, Mr. Speaker! Unmitigated Twaddle! I have never heard such twaddle in all my life.

I can only say, Mr. Speaker, if I did not know where I stood on the Meech lake, after listening to the hon. gentleman, I can tell you I was still no more enlightened. I still did not know where I stood.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know where I stand. I know where I stood last year and I know where I stand this year on Meech Lake!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:
I know precisely where I stand. Nobody from the other side has certainly helped me make up my mind. The Minister of Health (Dr. Collins), who I would have expected, certainly, to have made some profound desertation on Meech Lake, his remarks were centered around, again, what the leader of the Opposition said last year and what the leader is saying this year and on the fact that we had changed our strategy. He said the leader of the Opposition had said he was not going to present an amendment and then, lo and behold, he did. In his view, what a catastrophe in the Liberal Party that we had, all of a sudden, decided to make a minor change in

strategy, that we were going to present an amendment. Now, that was going to result in fracturing and fragmentation of the Liberal Party and its direction and its policy.

Mr. Speaker, I would not want to bore the House with all of the changes in direction that have resulted with the hon. gentlemen in the last seven or eight years and with their federal counterparts. I would not want to do that. I could make my full speech on that, but, Mr. Speaker, I want to address the issue.

Why did we present the amendment? I do not know whether hon. gentlemen are familiar with the story of the gentleman who was found beating his donkey this day. He was really going into it with a piece of two-by-four when this animal lover came along the road and he was quite disturbed by what he saw. He saw this man really going after the donkey with a piece of two-by-four. He went up to him and he said, "Sir, what are you doing? What are you doing, abusing that animal?" He looked at him rather surprised and said, "I am trying to train this animal, I am trying to train this donkey." "Train it," he said. "That is a poor way to train it." "Well," he said, "I have got to get its attention first."

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, that is why have this amendment. We want to emphasize, we want to accentuate and we want to expose the fallacy being promoted by this government on the achievements of Meech Lake, namely that it creates equality; namely that it makes equality exist among

all of the ten provinces. This is why we are presenting this amendment, to highlight, emphasize and accentuate that fallacy. Mr. Speaker, that is why we are presenting this amendment.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the amendment is not going to pass. We know that it is not allowed to pass. This was the great democratic process that was initiated in drafting up Meech Lake, that there was to be no debate on it. The eleven first ministers got together in secret and they came up with this Meech Lake in one day and presented it all the parliament of Canada to be passed, not to be altered, not to be changed, not one t not crossed or an i not dotted, not a thing was to be changed in this. This had to be approved the way it was presented. That was the process, Mr. Speaker, and it indicates the weakness in Meech Lake.

Is this the kind of thing we are going to see in the future at the annual conferences on the constitution? Is this what we are to see? Eleven first ministers will make recommendations to be sent back to the parliaments and say 'Now, you approve this. You approve this. No one is supposed to debate it. No one is supposed to say anything about it negatively, just approved it.'

Mr. Speaker, that is what Meech Lake indicates can happen to Canada in the future. That is what can happen to democracy in this Province. It has already happened. We can see it, and we are not supposed to change this amendment, so what we wanted to do was to highlight, emphasize, and accentuate the fallacy that Meech Lake achieves in equality for all Provinces, Mr. Speaker, because it

does not. It creates just the reverse.

The fact that Quebec wants it so vigorously is an indication that it is not making all of us equal. Why did not Quebec sign The Constitutional Act of 1982? Why did they not do that when all the rest of the provinces thought it was good? Nine of them thought it was good, they thought it created equality. But there was one that did not think, Mr. Speaker, that it created equality. So they did not come, they did not come until recently when they advanced five conditions on which they would join the constitution and they would become partners of the Constitution of Canada.

Five conditions, Mr. Speaker, how many did they get? Negotiation is negotiation and Quebec said that they wanted five conditions.

The five conditions were these: Recognition of a distinct society - which I will deal with in a moment - the right to nominate some Supreme Court justices, limited, but distinct powers over national immigration policies, limits on federal spending in areas of provincial jurisdiction, and the most controversial one of all, a new amending formula. Mr. Speaker, these were the five conditions.

What was so great about these five conditions that they were going to create equality if the equality did not exist? Nine provinces had previously signed and now Quebec comes up with five conditions, Mr. Speaker, by which they will enter the constitutional accord. How many did they get? One? Two? One would have thought in negotiations that we gave them three. How many did they get?

They go all five, Mr. Speaker, all five of them! No wonder they came!

Monsieur Le Président, il n'y a pas de personne au Canada qui veut, qui desire que la province du Québec entre La Constitution du Canada plus que moi, plus que moi!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:

Je veut, je desire que la province du Québec entre La Constitution du Canada immédiatement!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:

Maïs, Monsieur Le Président, ne pas pour de pres nous ne pouvons pas vendre le magasin.

Mr. Speaker, there is not a person in this Legislature who wants Quebec to be a part of the Constitution more than I.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:

I expect I understand the Province of Quebec as much as any member in this hon. House. I undertook to make myself conversant with the French language many, many years ago. I made my living by teaching French. I taught in Churchill Falls which had a French community. I taught French to English and English to French. I was in Churchill Falls with this Quebec community at one of the most crucial times in its history, during the time of the FLQ uprising, so I have empathy and sympathy for the people of Quebec and I want them to be a part of the Constitution but, Mr. Speaker, it is not at any price.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, Quebec gets in under the condition that they be recognized as a distinct society. Our amendment is asking that Newfoundland be recognized as a distinct society as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, what is the measure for distinctiveness? Who says that it must always be a linguistic measure? Who says that the only measure for distinctiveness is linguistics, is language? Who says that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I can say that Newfoundland could almost qualify under linguistics. I know there was time when there were professors at Memorial University who thought they had come into a gold mine linguistically. They had been sending students all over Newfoundland with tape recorders to record our accent. But, Mr. Speaker, linguistics or language cannot be the only measure on which we base distinctiveness.

The Premier said, when he was speaking to this, Meech Lake reflects reality in Canada. Come on, if we are going to reflect reality in Canada, this Province is an island. That is a reality, Mr. Speaker! Prince Edward Island is an island. That is a reality. As a result of being an island, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of distinctiveness that makes life pretty rough in this Province. Distinctiveness, Mr. Speaker, that makes it a hardship many times to live in this Province. Cannot

that be considered a distinctive measure? Was there no case to be made for our geography? It is such an expanse of land so difficult to service. It is so difficult to put in public services. Could we not recognize that? Could that not be recognized? It is so difficult to provide for transportation.

How about the economic and financial problems of this Province? A province with the highest unemployment in Canada, could that not make us distinctive, Mr. Speaker? Could that not be considered to be a distinctive society, the fact that we have the largest unemployment, the most outrageous levels of unemployment in the country, consistently and constantly double the national average? Mr. Speaker, that is a distinction that I am not proud of, but it is a distinction and it is a problem that has to be dealt with by the nation as a whole!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH:

Now, Mr. Speaker, language, linguistics, that is not the only measure by which we measure distinctiveness.

What has the Premier meant so often? I have heard the Premier time and time again get up in this House and say that this province is a distinct province, that we have a distinct culture, and a distinct heritage. Mr. Speaker, he did not say that in the Meech Lake Accord. He did not allow for that. He allowed Quebec to say that, that they were distinct. But much further, Mr. Speaker, the bill goes on and gives the Parliament of Quebec power to

promote and preserve their distinctiveness, their identity.

Now, the other nine provinces of Canada have only the right to preserve the characteristics of Canada, which we are talking of, the identity of Canada. Here we assume about the two languages, the two nation concept, English and French.

Now, what is going to be the result of that? Why is it that Quebec can preserve and promote? Why did Mr. Bourassa ask for that? Why did he ask for that distinctly, to preserve and promote the distinct identity of Quebec? Why did he ask for that? Do we think he just asked for that just for something to say, just for nonsense? No, Mr. Speaker. That was asked for a reason. I am afraid of what the reasons were.

The result of this, Mr. Speaker, will be to destroy bilingualism in this country that we have been working on so long to try and achieve. It is going to destroy bilingualism, Mr. Speaker, where in this Province we are trying to encourage our people to speak French, and where in Quebec they encourage their people to speak English. What a better way to understand the distinctiveness of any nation than to be able to speak their language. That is what we have been promoting in this country. But this bill, Mr. Speaker, destroys that. It destroys it.

Example: What is happening in Saskatchewan surely sours the spirit of Meech Lake, where they have recinded laws that gave rights to French people. Now they have removed them. Now what they are going to do is have the primacy of English accentuated.

That is an indication of what is going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

What is going to happen in Quebec? I am afraid the result of this is going to naturally have a primacy of French, Mr. Speaker, and at the expense of English.

Even Mr. Bourassa now realizes he is into problems. Mr. Bourassa got elected on the basis of promoting English and French, but he has stopped now. He has it referred to the courts.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is what this distinctiveness is doing to Canada. The minorities will not be protected. In provinces where we have English, there will be no French rights. In provinces where we have French, there will be no English rights. That is the effect of it.

I hope that that does not happen, but, Mr. Speaker, this is the effect of the interpretive clause that the gentleman talks about, the hon. gentleman who just took his seat. The only phrase that he uttered about Meech Lake, the interpretive clause, Mr. Speaker. He was not worried because it was not a substantive clause, it was only an interpretive clause.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that we have created here a nightmare for the courts because none of us know exactly how the courts will interpret all of the things that are in Meech Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I talked about the process. I do not know why Meech Lake was not referred to the courts in the beginning. I do not know why it was not referred so that we would all know what is it we are voting for. I do not know why it was not referred to the

courts like The Constitution Act was, so that we would know what it is we are voting for.

Mr. Speaker, there are things here that I do not know what I am voting for, and I am sure there are things that hon. gentlemen are voting for on the other side that they do not know what they are voting for. They do not know what the implications will be.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell them some of the things which can happen. Senator Forsey, speaking here some time ago, in talking about the kinds of things that could happen to the Meech Lake Accord and he was not in favour of the Meech Lake Accord - was saying that we have possibly created eleven nations. That is a possibility. We have created eleven nations with each province wanting to have jurisdiction in its own area. There are all sorts of scenarios and all sorts of things which can happen in this particular situation, having one case where the provinces are going to be supreme and another case where Parliament is going to be supreme. Nobody is going to know what the implications are or what is going to happen in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to make one other observation, although it is not right to the amendment. I just want to give Senator Forsey's reaction to the right that the Premier talks about so much.

In the constitutional conferences that will take place in the future, it will be placed on the agenda the roles and responsibilities of fisheries in this Province, as if, Mr. Speaker, that was going to mean something. They asked Senator Forsey what he thought that was going to give

us. They asked Senator Forsey what he thought, including that on the agenda, was going to give to Newfoundland. He said, the right to raise the question year after year. That is exactly, Mr. Speaker, what it is.

So, Mr. Speaker -

AN HON. MEMBER:

What did Tom Siddon say?

MR. LUSH:

Yes, their own minister acknowledged that in similar words, that it did not mean a thing.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen already, by the actions of the Legislature of Saskatchewan, what can happen, what the affect of the main condition of Quebec, to consider it to be a distinct society, we have already seen what that will do to the spirit of Meech Lake.

The amazing part about that, the absolutely, amazing part about it, was that Mr. Bourassa gave it his tacit agreement. He said this was a good thing that was happening. Now, Mr. Speaker, do not hon. members find that absolutely amazing? Talk about changing position!

I remember when this came up before the Legislature of Saskatchewan that people were concerned. Those people concerned about Meech Lake were very concerned and said, 'We should stop Premier Devine from doing this, we should stop him.' They called on Prime Minister Mulroney to go in and see if he could not get Premier Devine to change his min. When he went in there, the next day he showed up at a meeting with Premier Devine and said, 'This is a great Act. This

is a good Act,' he said, 'that Premier Devine is passing through the legislature here.' He turned about face, and he knew, Mr. Speaker, what that was doing to Meech Lake.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we have done, and I am afraid it is going to hand a hard blow to those that believe in bilingualism in this country. It is going to hand bilingualism a fatal blow, I am afraid, because that is not annunciated in the Meech Lake Accord. The Meech Lake Accord, rather, Mr. Speaker, is addressing the unilingualist of each province. They are addressing the primacy of whatever language there is in that particular province. So, in English provinces, it is going to be English, and in French provinces, it is going to be French.

Mr. Speaker, the sadest part and the part that hon. members should address is what purpose does these two key words have with respect to Quebec, to preserve and promote their special identity? Why that?

In Newfoundland we can only preserve the characteristics unique to Canada. Does that mean we cannot promote them? That means we are really not asked to promote French in this Province. I do not know what Quebec has in mind. I do not know what they have in mind, but as I said, I am very fearful of what they have in mind.

Mr. Speaker, it is very easy to get carried away with the euphoria, the hype, and the excitement that was generated by the Prime Minister and the other ten premiers the day they concluded the Meech Lake Accord.

It is very easy to get carried away with the euphoria and the excitement generated by that moment because Quebec had finally come, and I say, under what conditions did they come? It created a great degree of inequality in Canada when they did come.

Mr. Speaker, some people have the view, 'Oh, we have had so much constitutional wrangling in Canada, now that Quebec is agreeing, let us have done with it, let us sign it.' Mr. Speaker, that is a very poor reason to be signing the Constitutional Act. That is a very poor reason why to agree with Meech Lake because for all those years we have had constitutional wrangles as if somehow this Meech Lake was going to stop constitutional wrangling forever in Canada. Mr. Speaker, what we have done, we have guaranteed that the conflict and the disputes will continue because we are having an annual conference on the constitution. We guaranteed that the process stays so those people who say, 'Let us sign it so we can get over with the constitutional wrangling and get on with doing something for Canada' are only kidding themselves when they have a built in mechanism so that the dispute and the confrontation continues.

Mr. Speaker, I am not suggesting for one moment that we should not have annual conferences on the constitution. I am not suggesting that, but I am just pointing out the fallacy of those people who say, 'Let us have it done with because Quebec now wants to come and we probably will not get another time in our history.'

I believe that is what keeps Canada together, this

constitutional wrangling. If we look at our history, it is replete with it. I believe we love constitutional wrangling. It is only by the constitutional wrangling that we can improve upon the constitution.

Mr. Speaker, Meech Lake, I am afraid, is not an improvement upon the constitution. It does not create equality, indeed, it just enhances and expands the degree of inequality that existed in this country all along. The changes, Mr. Speaker, do not go deep enough structurally. They do not go deep enough in making changes to the political system.

My time is just about up, Mr. Speaker. I have not had a chance to deal with the Senate as to what that means, absolutely nothing. I have not had time to deal with the fact now the Premiers can nominate people for the Senate. Anybody knows that does not make any difference in the world. It does not make a bit of difference in the world in improving juridical equality. The fact that the Premier appoints them or they are appointed by Ottawa does not make one bit of difference. What matters is the representation, the numbers, that is what counts, Mr. Speaker. In my view, it matters little that the Premier appoints the seven or that the federal government appoint them. It is just a different source of patronage. That is all. It matters little.

The Supreme Court judges, I do not know if we have achieved anything. I have always had great respect for the Supreme Court of this country. I thought federal appointments had been very good, but who gained on it all? Who gained? Look at the number of

senators that Quebec can appoint as to what Newfoundland can name and the same with the Supreme Court judges. Mr. Speaker, it is the same all the way through.

With respect to immigration policy, again that is not a real problem with us immigration. Emigration is our problem. Emigrating, that is our problem! This is what we should have addressed in the constitution, not immigration, but emigration, e--n not i--m, Mr. Speaker! That is what we should have addressed. Because since this government took over, people have been just moving out of this Province in the droves. It is not the moving in that we are concerning about, it is the moving out.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that in the signing of this constitution, by agreeing to the distinct society of Quebec that we certainly did not allow for the distinctive society of Newfoundland. There is no provision in Meech Lake that deals with the distinctiveness of Newfoundland.

I believe, rather than creating equality, is that we have widened the gap and we have created a greater state of inequality than existed before Meech Lake.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Before I recognize the hon. the member for St. John's North, members will realize that this is Thursday. We have a Late Show at 5:30 and the following questions will be debated at that time: The hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir is not satisfied with the

answer given by the Premier to a question regarding the Province's ferry system. The hon. the member for Port de Grave is not satisfied with the answer given by the Minister of Health, and not satisfied with the question concerning the fenitrothion monitoring study is the hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

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

MR. J. CARTER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On dealing with this amendment, I am surprised that the gentleman opposite did not call it mooch lake, because that would have been more their style, trying to get something for nothing. Their whole attitude has been one for years and years and years of trying to get as much out of the federal government as possible.

I do not see anything wrong with trying to co-operate with the federal government as much as possible, but it should not be one sided, and, of course, this has been the whole thrust of liberalism in this province, initiated by we know who. He was a great practitioner for that and I think he did a lot of harm to the Newfoundland image. I would hate to see anything proposed by the Liberal party in Newfoundland gaining any or having any effect on our attitude towards Canada. I think they are a baneful lot. I would not pay any attention to them, but they are there, and I suppose we have to recognize that there are sitting across.

They do rather remind me of the Supreme Court. Now, that may come as a surprise to them. They have no appeal.

Anyway, I want to deal really with only one aspect of Meech Lake. Before someone opposite suggests that it is not relevant, I suggest it is relevant under this amendment because the amendment calls for special recognition of Newfoundland. I disagree with that, and I do not think any part of Canada should have special attention, and I would like to deal with the aspect of bilingualism. I think that this would be a useful exercise.

For instance, in our Order Paper the Meech Lake Accord is in both English and French. I suggest that the fact that there is a French version in Newfoundland and no one living in Newfoundland does not understand English, and very, very few who visit here, can have the proper protection, the proper services in French, or should be able to have, I think it is patronizing and insulting to the French to put this in French in Newfoundland. It is not necessary. It is just a sop to them to put this in French in Newfoundland, in the same way that Hotel Newfoundland or Air Canada. No one who is English is unable to understand Hotel Newfoundland or Hotel St. Pierre, I suppose, or if they are in Montreal, Hotel Champlain. It is just not necessary to put in the English provinces in Canada everything in French. every way highway sign any more than it is necessary to put everything in French and English in Quebec. I think it is insulting to the English.

What you want to do, if you are going to promote bilingualism or rather, I should say, the bringing of the services of both French and English to everyone, for instance, if a French speaker, a person who is only comfortable in the French

language comes to Newfoundland, what is important is to provide essential services in French to him.

If he goes into the bank, will he be able to find a person there who can speak French and can serve him in the bank? Will he be able to be represented in a court of law in the language of his choice? Will he be able to business in French? It is no help to him to have highway signs in both English and French. I am sure that it is insulting to us to suggest that we cannot understand Avenue Maison Neuve, any more than it is just as insulting to a Frenchman to suggest that he cannot understand Newfoundland Hotel and has to have the order of the words reversed in order for him to understand it.

I wish that the Premiers and the Prime Minister when they sit down to talk about Canada and matters in general in Canada, that they would address this bilingualism. I would call bilingualism nonsense. It would not be such nonsense but it is so costly.

The cost of putting everything in English and French all over Canada where it is not needed, French in the English provinces and English in the French provinces - not only Quebec is French, Northern New Brunswick and large parts of Ontario are French as well, there I can see some justification, but no one in English Canada does not understand English and no one in French Canada cannot manage to understand a bit in French and those people who travel, what they need are the essential services in French and/or English, not the peripheral services, such as the odd highway sign or the name of our national airline translated. It is just not necessary.

For instance, when you go to buy gasoline, the name of a gas gauge on nearly every gasoline tank is in French as well as in English. Now I will give a dollar to any member in this House who can tell me what is says on that gas tank in French. I rest my case. No one knows. So what is the use of it? What is gas gauge in French? It is on all the gas tanks. Well, not all of them, but nearly all of them.

MR. SIMMONS:
(Inaudible). What is the point?

MR. J. CARTER:
Well, the point is, what is the point of having it there in French, nobody notices it. You see it every day, but you do not notice it. I am just saying that to have everything in English and French, on every can of soup, every label, is silly and I think it is insulting to the French. I really do. To suggest that they cannot get by in the simpler matters of shopping and doing business in English Canada, as we can get by a bit in French Canada -

MR. SIMMONS:
Would the hon. member permit a question?

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, certainly.

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

MR. SIMMONS:
I might have misunderstood the member. He suggested that everybody ought to be able to read the French equivalent of the gas gauge. Here is my question. Surely bilingualism is not so that the individual served will be able to read everything in both

languages, but rather that their language will be available to them at important points, like at stop signs and in courts and so on.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. J. CARTER:

This is the point that I am trying to make. I am perhaps not making it well enough for the hon. member, but I think it is an important point, and that is why I am dwelling on it. I am suggesting that the really important things are services like in a bank, in a court of law, in a large business, I think there a French speaker or a person who is only comfortable in French, as we would only be comfortable in English in Quebec, should have these services available to them. But this is hardly ever made available. I do not think there is a bank in this city that can deal with you in French. Well, I suppose if you ring the toll free number for the Port aux Basques ferry, they say, 'Port aux Basques ferry, bon-jer.'

MR. SIMMONS:

Have you tried dealing with them in English?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. J. CARTER:

Yes, I have and it is a very frustrating experience.

Anyway, I just throw this out as a suggestion to hon. members. I think that when the Premiers and Prime Minister get together, they should look at this proposal of mine.

I have no objection on the other

provisions for Meech Lake, that the Senators be nominated by the individual provinces. Perhaps, in fact, the whole Senate should be reformed. I do not know if hon. members opposite would have any suggestions on that. I am sure that they all have their eyes on the Senate. This is where all good politicians go when they die.

MR. FUREY:

Do you support triple 'E'?

MR. J. CARTER:

On the suggestion that Newfoundland is a distinct society, well, we like to think we are unique, but I do not think we are.

I do not agree with Quebec's demand for control over immigration. I would like to see a little more control or say in how federal money is spent in the provinces. For a long time we have been deploring the fact that very little money has been spent by the federal government on defence in Newfoundland and Labrador. It look as though some more may be spent in Labrador, but really this is a NATO investment, not a Canadian investment.

On the Supreme Court, I see no objection that the Supreme Court should be really made up of members from all the various provinces. The amending formula, I do not mind that we have to get consensus. It is practically an agreement from every premier. I do not see anything wrong with an agreement by consensus as opposed to agreement by majority. I think if any one province has a very serious concern about a particular development, that they have every right to object to it. I would not like to see something carried over their disagreement.

So, I intend to vote against this amendment and I will be voting for the Meech Lake agreement. I am surprised that hon. gentlemen opposite are trying to waste the time of this House with a lot of irrelevancies. I will give someone else time to talk.

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker, I always find myself confused when the hon. member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) speaks because, having listened to his speech, I was convinced that he was going to vote against the Meech Lake motion and vote in favour of the amendment, otherwise his speech was totally irrelevant to the conclusion which he finally reached. The member says that he is not in favour of any special society or any distinct society in Canada. Those are his own words. I am sure Hansard will bear it out.

On page 5 of our Order Paper, Clause 1, section (b), 'The recognition that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society.' Now, obviously the hon. member is having trouble with that clause and so are we. We are saying the only way to solve that problem is to give all provinces the same thing we have given Quebec and make them all distinct societies. That is the only way to get around this. Obviously the hon. member agrees with that. He said it and he is on record. So how he can get up and support this, to me will be

the puppy dog on a string of all time, that he gets up and votes against his very belief. That is totally unbelievable.

However, Mr. Speaker, I suppose this whole exercise is nothing more than an academic exercise anyway because, with the recent election which just took place in Manitoba, we understand now that the Meech Lake Accord is dead. When Mrs. Carstairs was elected, she did not make a threat, she simply quoted the fact that she could not vote in favour of this. She controls the government in Manitoba and, therefore, the Meech Lake Accord is dead. Now, I say good riddance. All Canadians will say good riddance. Because in years to come we will see, throughout this great nation of ours, statues erected to Mrs. Carstairs or Miss Carstairs or Ms Carstairs, because she will be given credit with saving this nation from destruction.

A few days ago I heard the hon. Minister of Energy get up and say that this Meech Lake Accord was nation building. Nation building, he had the gall to call it. Nation building, he has the silliness to say, which convinced me that he has never read the Meech Lake Accord. How a man could call it nation building! This is not nation building, this foolishness which is presented before this House. This is nation tearing down! This can only destroy this nation which it has taken us over 100 years to build!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:
This is not nation building. This is nation tearing down. Because if this Meech Lake, if it had not

been for Mrs. Carstairs, if it had not been for what is happening in Manitoba, we would have seen Canada completely balkanized. We would have seen the Greek City States all over again, Mr. Speaker. We would have seen the Greek City States before they realized that there was union in strength and before they coined the phrase that 'United we stand and divided we fall.'

Meech Lake divides this country into nine provinces which are somehow equal and one province which is special. Now, that is the ultimate result of this Meech Lake Accord if Mrs. Carstairs had allowed it to become part of the Constitution of Canada. Quebec is special, nine equal provinces, and someone said that Quebec is more equal than all the rest.

This Meech Lake Accord, which we are discussing, this proposal, could never be fair because one province in this federal system is being given special treatment. Now, how are we going to set about changing this problem in this proposed Meech Lake Accord which is nothing more than an academic speech anyway, because thank goodness it is dead, it is gone, it will never be heard, and good riddance, I want to say. However, it is before us so we have to discuss it. I will be taking my full half hour. I have ten minutes left today, Mr. Speaker, but I will come back to it when the House sits again.

The only way now that we can see to rectify the problems which are presented in this Meech Lake Accord is to ask that all the provinces in Canada be given special treatment, that all the provinces in Canada be treated as distinct societies. Now, that is

the only way that we can see to get ourselves out of this quandry which those First Ministers are trying to inflict upon the nation. We, as an Opposition and we, as members of this House, have no jurisdiction in other provinces. Therefore, we can only be concerned with the immediate, which is Newfoundland.

Our amendment, which was presented by my friend, the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey), says that Newfoundland should be a distinct society.

I said, Mr. Speaker, that in years to come there will be monuments and there will be statues erected throughout the nation in gratitude to the Leader of the Liberal Party in Manitoba, and I honestly believe that, Mr. Speaker.

But likewise I believe that throughout this Province of Newfoundland there will be statues and monuments erected to my good friend, the member for St. Barbe, because he saw the quandry that this Meech Lake Accord - I should not say accord, because it is such a misuse of language. From here on I am going to refer to it as the Meech Lake discord. Discord would certainly be a more appropriate name to put on this silly piece of paper!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

The member for St. Barbe has the foresight to find a way to take us out of the quandry. He came in with the suggestion, a good suggestion, a good amendment, and any Newfoundlander who has any loyalty left in him, any regard for this rock on which we stand, any Newfoundlander who has any

belief in our civilization and in our people, will stand up and vote for this amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

Otherwise, he should be ashamed to call himself a Newfoundlander. He should be ashamed to let people know that he belongs to this rock, unless he is satisfied to stand up and vote for this amendment, so ably presented by my colleague from St. Barbe.

I would hope that every other province in this great Dominion would likewise put forward the same amendment, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and British Columbia. That is the only way out of this quandry that we are put into. If that is done, then I would have to say that there is some reason whereby we could support the proposal, not totally satisfied with it, but at least it would make it more palatable to Newfoundlanders and to all Canadians.

Now, the amendment put forward by my friend says, 'Adding to section 1 a number 2 which would read: 'The recognition that Newfoundland and Labrador constitutes within Canada a distinct society.' And to add part (5) to section 1 and 2 to read, 'The role of the Legislature and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to preserve and promote the distinct identity of Newfoundland and Labrador referred to in 1 (c) is affirmed.'

What effectively would this amendment do? This amendment, Mr. Speaker, would make us equal to Quebec. We would be equal partners in Confederation. The

only way we can have the same Confederation that we would have had before this silly piece of paper was discussed in the first place would be for every single province throughout the nation to take the same amendment so that the Legislature in New Brunswick would say, 'The recognition that New Brunswick is a distinct society,' and British Columbia would say, 'The recognition that British Columbia is a distinct society.' If that were done, Mr. Speaker, then we could again have a nation of ten equal provinces. Otherwise, we are stuck with an anachronism, we are stuck with nine equal provinces and one province which is more equal than all the rest.

That is contrary to our federal system; that is contrary to what our forefathers had in mind when they tried to eek out this nation in the first place; that is contrary to the original intent of Confederation, Mr. Speaker, and we are trying to solve that problem, we are trying to remedy the wrongs which were almost perpetrated upon us had it not been for Mrs. Carstairs, that great woman in Manitoba who statues will adorn the landscape of this nation for many years yet to come, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

This amendment talks about Newfoundland as being distinct within the Confederation. I will give a few examples as to why Newfoundland is distinct. Newfoundland is distinct because it is the oldest European settlement in North America.

I heard someone say some years ago

that Water Street was a street of merchandise when people in New York were going around chopping off their scalps with tomahawks, and that, I am sure can be substantiated. I am sure that that is a fact. We were an established colony when the people living in New York were going around chopping off scalps with tomahawks.

When I say that Newfoundland is the oldest settlement in Canada for European civilization, I am not talking about Jack Cabot, some would call him John Cabot. I am not talking about Jacques Cartier. It is hard to distinguish back in the 1400s and the 1500s who was French and who was English or what was going on. So I am not talking about them when I talk about European civilization on this rock, on this island. Nor am I talking about 4,000 years ago when we had the red paint society. They were not from Europe. They were Indians native to this land.

I am talking about the Viking influence on this province, on this country, on this colony, on this island. The Vikings settled in Northern Newfoundland around the year 1,000 and they left a stamp upon this Island which can never be removed. Our discovery by the Vikings around the year 1,000 makes us a unique society within Canada and we should be proud of it.

Our culture is different, unique, distinct within Canada. We are different from every other part of Canada, Mr. Speaker, and, furthermore, we are proud to be different. We boast about it and we brag about it.

The Premier, in his more saner

days, recognized this cultural difference.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

It was the Premier himself who was instrumental in introducing into our day schools courses of study in Newfoundland culture, and he was proud of it and he boasted about it, and I believe he almost got an election out of it. The Premier recognized this distinct culture, this distinct society.

Speaking of culture, Mr. Speaker, there are text books written by anthropologists where they studied the Newfoundland culture, and they have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that Newfoundlanders are different. Maybe I could refer to Dr. Chiaramonte who did a course on the Southcoast I believe, in my hon. friend's district, and he came up with the concept that Newfoundland men gave their wives fertility tests before they married. That is a unique feature of our culture which was distinguished by an anthropologist some years ago, Mr. Speaker. I was fortunate enough to study under the man who had such profound wisdom and made such a profound discovery about our own culture.

My colleague for Bonavista North talked about the difference in Newfoundland language. He was talking about the dialects that are contained within the Newfoundland language, and he pointed out beyond any reasonable doubt whatsoever that Newfoundland is close to having our own distinct language. I would refer members to the conjugation of the verb to be as it is done in the true Newfoundland dialect, and I

say it with pride because I am bilingual, I speak the Newfoundland dialect quite well, Mr. Speaker. I am going to conjugate the verb to be if the hon. Minister of Health will allow me. There is a very simple way to conjugate the verb, very easy for foreigners to learn, none of this confusion about the idiom of the language, very simple - I is, thou is, he is, we is, you is, they is. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a distinct language which makes us distinct within Confederation and that must be forever recognized.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:
Another point I want to make before my time is up. I was talking about culture, and I want to refer to some of our great literature. Newfoundland is proud of some great literature, and I refer to the great works of literature exemplified in the Premier's own book, his own publication about the present in the future, or the future in the past. No other province, Mr. Speaker, could have spawned such a work. And I will go even farther. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there is not another province in Canada where this piece of work would have been published anyway.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

It is 5:30 p.m.

Debate on the Adjournment
[Late Show]

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

MR. GILBERT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier in the week I asked the Premier a question which was prompted by the fact that when I went through the estimates I noticed that we were spending over \$10 million a year in the operation of the intraprovince ferry system, the ferries between Ramea, Burgeo, Grey River, Change Islands and Fogo. It was brought about because of the attempted cutback of service to Change Islands and Fogo and the increase in the rates every year, where it is costing sixty dollars for a man and his wife and two children to go from Ramea to Burgeo, just nine miles.

We have heard the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Doyle) state that he agreed with the Dr. House study that the distance across the Gulf, from Sydney to Port aux Basques, should be considered the same cost as it would be to travel by car, so we wonder why the people who live in Ramea have to pay more than their fair share of the cost to go the nine miles between Ramea and Burgeo.

When I started looking into this, I came up with some interesting facts: In the mid-1970s, the federal government decided that the ferry systems they were operating here and in British Columbia would be more efficient and more effective if they were operated by the Provinces. In 1977, the B.C. government negotiated a deal with the federal government whereby British Columbia assumed the responsibility for the operation

of their intraprovince ferry system, and provision was made, recognizing the fact that up until 1977 it had been a federal responsibility and the cost was borne by the federal government, for the federal government to fund the operations of the ferry system in B.C. in perpetuity.

The thing that surprised me next was that two years later the Newfoundland Government signed a deal with the federal government to assume responsibility for the operation of their ferry system and there was only one little difference. Unlike B.C., where the yearly rate was pegged to the CPI, the Consumer Price Index, in Vancouver forever, ours was a five-year agreement that was pegged to the CPI in St. John's. Now, that expired in 1984, but it was renewed on a one-year basis to 1985 and then renewed again to 1986.

The first year Newfoundland entered into this agreement they got \$1.3 million to operate the ferries. The last year they were in it, in 1986, there was \$2.3 million. Now, the thing about it is if it had been an agreement the same as B.Cs. right now we would be getting about \$3.5 million to go into the operation of the ferry system in Newfoundland, and this would mean that we possibly would not have to be inflicting more hardship on the people who live in rural Newfoundland, with a system that the government says they can ill-afford to operate. The Premier did not know why it happened, and he was going to check into it.

The thing that is interesting about it is, the last time this agreement was negotiated, the last extension to this agreement, our

federal member in the Cabinet, Mr. Crosbie, was the Minister of Transportation. We had heard in 1984, the year that agreement expired, how the Premier and the Prime Minister were going to inflict prosperity on Newfoundland, drag us kicking and screaming into prosperity if they had to. If this is an example of the way the Premier is going to inflict prosperity, I think it is time for him to call an election. Let the people decide that they have had enough of his form of infliction of prosperity and let someone else in there who can do the job and look after the interests of the people.

The Premier is only concerned about the people who live here in St. John's. He can spend \$22 million on his Sprung vote, but when it comes to providing a decent transportation for the people of rural Newfoundland, he is saying we should lump them all into ghettos.

This is what I am saying: It is an expensive thing, and what is happening right now is it is costing us \$10 million a year to operate a ferry system, of which at least \$3.5 million should be coming from the federal government if the same formula had been followed as was followed in the BC agreement.

How, two years after the agreement had been signed with BC to assume the same sort of responsibility as in this Province, could this government sign an agreement without reading the BC agreement and knowing about it? I have checked with civil servants in Ottawa who tell me they were amazed when they saw the Province sign this agreement. They could not believe that this agreement

was signed by anyone in their right mind, when they knew that the previous agreement was there, and there was no provision made for payments in perpetuity.

This is where I think the Premier has fallen down and again shown his inability to provide government for Newfoundland.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. GILBERT:
In conclusion, I ask him to reopen the negotiations and try to get one like B.C.s?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, we were in touch with BC yesterday and we are now in the process of getting the alleged agreement the hon. member refers to to see the details of it and to see, as I said the other day in answer to the question, whether it is really apples and apples. Because we suspect that there are a number of federal departments who are using some of the facilities and are paying rent to the Government of B.C. In any case, we will have a full examination of that and I will be in a position, in a little while, to respond in detail on it.

It is one thing for the hon. member to make an allegation, but it is another thing for it to be true. I would like for the hon. member to give me, either in the House or privately, the names of those federal civil servants who said what he alleged they had said. I would like to have the names of those people if he would be prepared to give them to me, even privately. I would be only

too happy to have the names of those people.

No doubt, if he is willing to make that kind of statement he is willing to back it up with some kind of evidence, in the same way as I am going to back up my response with a full assesment of that alleged ferry agreement out West, to see whether it is similar to the one that we have here. We are highly suspect of what the hon. member says and that is why we are going to decide on it. The hon. member should not misrepresent what we are trying to do in rural Newfoundland. It is this government that put the ferry system on to Gaultois, to Ramea, and to Grey River. We are not trying to do everything just for St. John's. It is this government that has built a brand new ferry for the Fogo/Change Islands system, and built it in Marystown. We did not built it in St. John's, the ferry itself was built in Marystown, in rural Newfoundland, to serve Fogo and Change Islands, which are in rural Newfoundland. We do not have \$22 million into the Sprung project at all. When we talk about that, there are loan guarantees, there is not cash. There is some cash but a very small amount of cash, the rest is loan guarantees in the same way as we have, I think, \$98 or \$99 million worth of loan guarantees out to various fish processors and other people, people in the woods industry and so on around Newfoundland. We have a very small amount.

I would say 90 per cent of the loan guarantees that are out are out to industries in rural Newfoundland and not in St. John's at all, or the St. John's area. They are where they are supposed to be. Even in my own

constituency, when I was elected, there was one ferry system serving Long Island and Little Bay Islands, and now there is a ferry system for each Island. There are roads being built and terminals being built, both with the federal government and by ourselves, and we have introduced new ferry systems in Gaultois, Ramea and Grey River, which was not done until this government got into power.

Mr. Speaker, when you starting talking about money and trying to compare it to Sprung, we are proud of the Sprung project. We are not trying to be defensive about it. We have over 100 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians working in there today. The company has hired people from the Deaf School to work in there as well, and they are now working in that facility. It is a research and development opportunity in the same way as NORDCO or C-Core is. Nobody else in the world has it, and hopefully we will be able to build more of those facilities around the Province. There is about \$100 million out in loan guarantees, as I say, 90 to 95 per cent of them in rural Newfoundland.

Most of the small and medium sized fish companies in Newfoundland today are financed by the provincial government through loan guarantees. The other day the Minister of Fisheries indicated and gave a list of some - there will be more - loan guarantees that are out to fish plants on the Great Northern Peninsula, Northeastern Newfoundland, Southwestern Newfoundland, Western Newfoundland, Eastern Newfoundland, all over the place. In every bay in Newfoundland, I guess, there is a loan guarantee out which has nothing to do with

cucumbers and nothing to do with tomatoes; it has to do with fish, it has to do with trees, it has to do with sawmills, and so on. But once again, as we keep saying, we must have balanced growth to our Province. You do not put all your eggs in one basket, you put them in many baskets. And that is what we are trying to do. And that is what we have done with ferries. If you look at the cost of ferries in Newfoundland five years ago and the cost of ferry operations today, it has increased astronomically, the amount of operating costs of ferries, because of the new ones we have put into operation. Once we get the so-called agreement with British Columbia, we will do an assessment of it, and let the hon. member know the full assessment, to see whether, in fact, it is the same as the agreement we have in Newfoundland, because we highly suspect that it is not.

It is too bad that the hon. gentleman in making the allegation did not have, as any reasonable person would have, all the documentation at his fingertips; he is prepared to make an allegation without having all the evidence present.

So, it is an extremely fragile and superficial attack, an allegation. If the hon. member was really doing his work, and hon. members opposite, instead of getting all their questions out of **The Evening Telegram** - we have seen this now for the last nine years, all members of the Opposition crying for the House to be open, they have all these great questions, and today in Question Period what did we have? - the most boring, unchallenging, intellectually, set of questions I have heard of. I got bored. I

was not being challenged by the Opposition. You are allowing my intellect to wallow into mediocrity. And that is not good, Mr. Speaker, to allow the government to wallow into mediocrity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

We want to be challenged. We do not want to be challenged by allegation without substantiation.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

We want to be challenged. And I would have thought that an entrepreneur like the hon. member would have more evidence. How can he be successful in business if he does not have any information?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I now call on the hon. the member for Port de Grave who is not satisfied with an answer from the Minister of Health.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, during Question Period I put a supplementary question to the Minister of Health concerning the situation at the Health Sciences Complex, and at that particular time I used as an example a patient, who is a very close friend of mine, who had had a very serious accident on Friday evening. He was rushed to the Health Sciences Complex, and he had to wait until Monday night to be operated on because there was no operating room space available before that. I use that as an example to try to point out to the

Minister of Health the serious situation occurring not only at the Health Sciences Complex, but in most hospitals in and around Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, it is coming to a crisis situation in all hospitals.

When we talk about the health and the lives of individuals in this Province, we cannot value it in dollars and cents and go arguing and throwing politics back and forth across the floor to try to create a situation where we gain political points. If the minister wants to accuse me of that, fine. I can stand up and take those accusations. But the point is, Mr. Speaker, that these people -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

If the gentleman for Trinity - Bay de Verde (Mr. Reid) and the Minister of Career Development (Mr. Matthews) - is it? - would like to come over to the Health Sciences Complex after we leave the House, I will take them to some of the people and I will show them what the situation is.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) last week?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, there is the reason why we are in the situation we are in today. I know what the Minister of Health said the other day is correct. A lot of dollars are going into the health care systems, \$620 million plus, but

that is not the answer when it comes to saving people's lives.

We had situation today where we wanted to get a senior citizen admitted to the Carbonear Hospital. The only way they could get her admitted was if they signed a form saying that the very minute the tests were completed, they would take that person back home, which shows the desperate situation in which the administrators of the hospitals are placed. They are doing the best job they possibly can with the amount of money that is available to them. There is nobody going to argue that case. It is the same with the nurses and the doctors.

I know it is not an easy answer. You cannot go out and pick money off a tree in the backyard to get enough money to supply everyone, but there comes a point in time where somebody has to sit down and realize the crisis situation which is developing in the hospitals in this Province. People's lives must come first. Dollars and cents cannot come first and people's lives come second. That is what we are trying to point out to the Minister of Health. That is what we are asking him to recognize, that there has to be, number one, more money. Probably the priorities of government have to come into question. Where is the money being spent?

I do not know what the answer is. It is the responsibility of the Minister of Health. It is the job of the Opposition to point out where the problems are. We have continuously, on a day to day basis, pointed the situation out to the Minister of Health.

MR. REID:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

Probably one day, member for Trinity - Bay de Verde, a member of your family may be placed in that situation and then you will have a totally different attitude. It is fine now for you to sit down, everything is okay. But the next day it could be your turn. Let us hope that never happens, but the possibility is there, and that is what we are trying to point out. There is no politics to be gained on people's lives. Recognize the situation and do something about it.

MR. REID:

(Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

I would hope, when the minister rises in his place this afternoon to answer the question, he recognizes the crisis situation which is taking place in the hospitals of this Province, not only the Health Sciences Complex, every hospital, and the tremendous strain being put on the administrators, the doctors, the nurses, in fact all the working staff of the hospitals. They are overworked. Let the Minister of Health answer the question, Mr. Speaker, and let him answer it in a positive manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. TULK:

I see the Premier is on his way

out of the House, and I rise on a matter which I think is of some urgency. I do not want to take away from the Minister of Health's time, but I understand there is a news report that the French Navy has arrested a Canadian fishing vessel off St. Pierre.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Yes, I understand that, too.

MR. TULK:

I wonder if the Premier would now consent to an all-party resolution asking the Canadian government, in view of this latest action by the French, that we suspend all trade relations with France, in particular with relation to Airbus and the submarines?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I just heard about the incident, and the Minister of Fisheries did. Now, you talk about playing politics and all the rest of it. On the surface - we do not know all the details, so we have to wait - it looks like the French are breaching something that had been agreed to between Canada and France in the disputed zone. As we understand it, the boat from Fortune, owned by a person from Fortune, in the hon. member's district, has been arrested by France - I guess it has something to do with their presidential elections - and this violates an agreement between the two countries, where neither country would fiddle around with the others vessels because of the disputed zone. If that is true, well, then, this is a very, very serious, grave breach of something that we both agreed upon, and totally different from the case of the French coming into Canadian waters in a non-disputed zone as opposed to a disputed zone. I do not think we are going to get an

agreement on the kind of resolution that we would like to pass, but I would be willing -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Let us try it.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

We will look at it tomorrow to have a group from both sides, from everybody, do a resolution for tomorrow. I think what we should do now is - I think the hon. member for Fogo was right in getting up in his place and doing what he did - make sure we have the facts first.

MR. TULK:

I agree. Absolutely.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

There are a few thousand, a million, Canadians around, up in Ottawa and other places, who think, erroneously, that we are doing something terrible to 176 fishermen in St. Pierre and Miquelon, because it is hard to get your message out. There are a lot of people up there thinking that we are trying to ram them into the ground, even though they are taking nine times as much fish per capita per year as we are taking on the South Coast. I think we can, before the House closes, just say that if it is true that it is in the disputed zone where there was a memorandum of understanding that we would not arrest one another's boats, which is completely different from a non-disputed zone, as before, this House goes on record as considering this to be the most gravest violation of an agreement, the most gravest infringement upon agreements that have been entered into between the two countries, and that in the absence of additional information that we get overnight and tomorrow morning,

this House views with utmost gravity what is happening, and this House will be taking further action tomorrow to build on it. Once again it brings up this whole question of trade levers, which we will have to discuss in a resolution for tomorrow.

MR. TULK:

If I could just add one thing to what the hon. the Premier is saying?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

I agree absolutely that you should

MR. TOBIN:

Did you get the approval of your leader (Inaudible)?

MR. SIMMONS:

Come on now, Glenn. Come on Glenn. What a clown!

MR. TULK:

I agree absolutely with what the Premier said, that we should, in all likelihood, get the facts and we should get them as quickly as possible. Perhaps tomorrow morning all parties may be able to get together before the House opens to put together a resolution to present to the House as soon as it opens tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I guess the Minister of Fisheries cannot take it upon himself now to make sure he contacts the two parties tomorrow morning, after getting the facts tonight, and sit down and see if we can put together a resolution.

MR. TULK:

In the morning.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Yes, in the morning. But not let the time go by now in saying that. As we understand it now, and we have to get more facts, if this is true, what I said a few minutes ago and what the hon. the member for Fogo said a few minutes ago, that they arrested a Canadian vessel in the disputed zone, violating the memorandum of understanding between the two countries that neither country would interfere with the other's boats, then this is a grave, grave matter which completely throws into question moving on into mediation or anything else to do with the French. Just because they have a presidential election on, they are trying to bully us into something. I am getting mad now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, that was by leave, a certain amount of exchange from both sides there. I need a little guidance, I guess, from the Chair now. Strictly speaking, the time allotted to me is up.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. minister's time, in theory anyway, has elapsed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave.

MR. SPEAKER:

All right.

Then, would you like to stop the clock at six?

AN HON. MEMBER:
Sure. Why not?

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

DR. COLLINS:
The hon. the member for Port de Grave mentioned a few particular cases to express his concern about the adequacy of hospital services in the Province. I think that is a good approach from his point of view, but, on the other hand, I could do exactly the same thing; I could bring forward a number of incidences where there was an emergency situation, whether it was a car accident or something like that, where there was very expeditious treatment given, the patient was in and on the operating table within a half an hour, and so on and so forth.

So, you really cannot judge on particular cases. I might mention, Mr. Speaker, that I have been, in the short time I have been in the portfolio, and I have certainly not done the travelling and the surveying my predecessor has done, but in the short time I have been there I have been in the Waterford Hospital, the Western Memorial Hospital, the Grace Hospital, St. Clare's Hospital, Sir Thomas Roddick Hospital, and the Melville Hospital in Happy Valley - Goose Bay. So I have a pretty good idea of what the pressures on the hospitals are. And I am not complaining about the hon. member bringing these to my attention, but I just have to say, and reiterate what my friend from Trinity - Bay de Verde said, that we are aware of these issues. We do not have to be told in terms of this is the first time we are hearing about them, we are in touch with the issues in health care in the Province.

Let me point out one further thing, and that is the Royal Commission on Hospital and Health Care costs looked at the adequacy of our acute care beds in this Province. They came up with a figure of four beds per thousand of the population, which would work out at something like 2,300 acute beds. Well, they also pointed out that we are in excess of that. I do not know the exact number, but instead of having four per thousand, we are about 4.5, or 4.7, or 4.8 per thousand.

So, it is not that we have too few acute beds in the hospitals. As a matter of fact, you can make an argument that there are too many. And as far as closures go, the closed beds in this hospital are usually during the Summer months -

MR. EFFORD:
They are closed now.

DR. COLLINS:
- when the pressure on hospital services is less than at other times of the year. Summer closures are common throughout the whole Canadian scene in this regard, and the percentage of closures is something like 5 per cent or 6 per cent during that period of time.

Now, it is not that we like closures, we would prefer to have the acute beds open all of the time, but nurses have to go on holidays, patients do not like to go into hospital in some months of the year, Summertime, Eastertime, Christmastime and so on, and doctors do not like to work as extensively and as long hours in those times of the year as other times. So we will always have a certain amount of closures at those particular times of the year.

Now, the other point I would like to make in the brief time available to me, is that we are having an increasing number of specialists come into this Province. There is a rapid improvement in the number of specialists coming into this Province. Secondly, we are spreading a more sophisticated type of medical and hospital care throughout the Province, and we only have to point to what is happening in Clarendville, where they have some very good not tertiary care beds, but high-class secondary-care beds there now and they have specialists on staff.

At the Salt Pond Hospital they have specialists who are ready to go in there as soon as the beds are ready to open. We are upgrading the Grand Falls Hospital, and I could point to other areas where we are expanding the facilities for high technology health care in many areas of the Province.

I could go on with some other statistics, but let me finish on this: The health budget, for instance, in this year is \$37.5 million more than last year - \$37.5 million more in the health care budget. There is \$24 million extra in the grants to board operated hospital budgets this year - \$24 million more in 1988-89 than there was in 1987-88 in the board operated hospital budgets. So, Mr. Speaker, we have nothing to be ashamed of in how we are helping, within our means, our health care system. We would like to do more, but I think we are doing a pretty good job.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage is not satisfied with the answer he got from the

Minister of Forest Resources about fenitrothion monitoring.

Is it agreed that the hon. member would speak for five minutes and the minister respond?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

I believe the Minister of Environment and Lands is going to respond.

I can make it much faster. My concern does not take five minutes to state. I had raised the matter in Question Period yesterday and really I would like to have a couple of answers. In the report itself, and I recognize the minister who is going to respond in the absence of the Minister of Forest Resources may not be fully conversant, it mentions that if fenitrothion is going to be used in the future, as we know it will be according to the department's plan, that monitoring studies on song birds ought to continue. My first question to the minister is can he confirm that if the department's present plan goes forward this year, using the fenitrothion, that the monitoring of the song birds will continue as recommended? That is question number one.

The other question I have for the minister is, and this was implicit in my exchange yesterday with the Minister of Forest Resources, is there any particular reason why the department will not switch completely to one of the Bt formulae? I understand it is more effective, and I understand also

it is a little more expensive. Is that the reason, because of the cost consideration? Or is the reason one that has been suggested to me, that there is a fair inventory, a fair stockpile of fenitrothion available and for that reason the department is going ahead with its spray programme this year, using about 75 per cent fenitrothion and just about 25 per cent Bt? My second question to the minister is what is the specific reason?

I understand that the licencing has not been done yet, but he will be aware that is a formality. An application has to be made to Agriculture Canada, and that application, I presume, has been approved in respect of the 25 per cent. Given the precedent of three or four years ago in Manitoba, where fully 100 per cent of the spray programme was affected with one of the Bt formulae, I ask him what is the specific reason why Bt is not being totally used this year?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of the Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, very briefly, there are some concerns but not about the current spray programme, because I think it is being done in line with all the considerations. I, too, hope that continued monitoring will take place. One of the problems with the study that was done in the past couple of years is that it was not done over a long enough period to get results that everybody would like to have.

So, briefly to the hon. members question about continued monitoring, I would hope that it

would continue. I have no reason to believe, Mr. Speaker, that the only reason fenitrothion is being used is because it is stockpiled somewhere. I have no reason to believe that whatsoever. I can repeat, of course, as the hon. member already indicated, that Bt is not yet officially registered by the federal people for this purpose.

I know time is going on, Mr. Speaker, but just very briefly, the study itself certainly was not conclusive as to the effects of fenitrothion. Everybody in this legislature, I am sure, would like to see Bt as the only spray being used, the only formula being used.

As I understand it, this year New Brunswick are using up to a 50/50 mixture in some areas.

AN HON. MEMBER:

In twenty years (inaudible).

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Speaker, this study as I read it, and I think the hon. the Minister of Forest Resources indicated this yesterday, indicates that other than birds that were shot, there was one found, one only, and I do not think that that is very conclusive, Mr. Speaker, of the effects of the spray programme. Maybe with a longer study period of the results -

MR. BAKER:

The birds die and are eaten, right?

MR. RUSSELL:

The hon. the member for Gander interjected the comment, 'birds dying and get eaten.' I suppose that is quite correct. But if the spraying of fenitrothion was killing birds in large, large, large numbers, I am sure the

people who are monitoring this programme would find more than one, and I think that is a fair statement to make.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Is it agreed to stop the clock?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I realize it is six o'clock, and maybe there will be other opportunities for us to comment on this report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, if I might just say that tomorrow the hon. the member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms) will be with us again. He had duties out of the city today, but he will back tomorrow. He informs me that we will have the Concurrence Debates Friday, Monday and Tuesday. I believe there is an agreement that we will start the Concurrence Debates with the Social Policy Committee Estimates, that area, and my understanding is that we will have fifteen minutes each side rather than the usual thirty.

So, that is Concurrence Debates tomorrow, and again on Monday and Tuesday.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until Friday, May 6, 1988, at 10:00 a.m.

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