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(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Friday

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The House met at 9:00 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):
Order, please!

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time to advise the House of recent decisions taken by Abitibi-Price Inc. concerning the Grand Falls Mill. Government was advised by Company officials on Wednesday of the Company's decision to scale down and then re-structure the capacity of the Grand Falls Pulp and Paper Mill. I understand that the Company Executive is meeting right at this time with its management employees and with representatives of the Union to advise them of this decision. They will, I understand, be calling a press conference to make a public statement later today.

Abitibi-Price Inc. has decided to close down its No. 6 paper machine which was built in 1926, and also to eliminate the sulphite pulping plant. The remaining two machines, No. 3 which was built in 1967 and No. 7 which was built in 1926, will be kept operating. The net result of the decisions being announced by the Company today will be a reduction in capacity by about 50,000 tons.

Mr. Speaker, the Company has stated a number of reasons for this action. The most important is the lower quality of paper produced by the two older machines, particularly No. 6.

Market adjustments were required because of current over-capacity, paper production needed to be balanced with the thermo-mechanical pulping capacity, and mill efficiency had to be improved. Other implications will include a reduced demand -

Mr. Speaker, I have been in this House now for a couple of years and there is one hon. Member who keeps yattering on, and not just me, but while every other hon. Member is speaking. If he is going to persist in this, we will never get any statements read properly. So I would ask the hon. Member if he would kindly refrain and allow somebody else to make a statement without his constant interruption.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) call a press conference if he cannot stand a bit of bantering, Mr. Speaker.

PREMIER WELLS:
I am not bantering. The Member never shuts-up. He keeps talking no matter who else is speaking, so let us just have a little respect for the rest of the House. He is not the only Member in the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

It is a time honored tradition in Parliament that when a Member asks for silence, that courtesy be extended to that Member.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
- mill efficiency, Mr. Speaker, had to be improved. Other

implications will include a reduced demand on the timber resource, and a reduction on pollution because of the closing down of the sulphite mill.

The company projects that this decision will result in the layoff of 250 permanent employees representing approximately 30 per cent of the total permanent work force in the Mill. The company has advised me, however, that it plans to institute a program of labour adjustment which will include an early retirement package. The changes in mill operations will result in corresponding reduction in wood requirements, but it is understood that there will not be any significant impact on the existing woods workers.

In advising Government of its decision, the company has assured us of its continued commitment to a successful pulp and paper operation in Grand Falls. It is the company's view that the changes being made at this time will result in a more efficient and competitive enterprise. As a further demonstration of this commitment, the company has advised that it is actively considering the development of a new hydro power project to increase the generating capacity at Grand Falls. This project would further improve the viability of Abitibi-Price's operations in this Province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I mention it but I hasten to add here, that a definitive decision has not been made on that, but the company advises me that the information they have been gathering lately indicates a high degree of probability that they will move in this direction. So, I am happy to

see this, and this will, I am told, result in some 500 or 550 man years or person years of employment. So, it will have a significant offsetting -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible)?

PREMIER WELLS:

No, a total of that over about a three year period. It would be close to 200 a year for about a three year period, so it would help in a transition period at least.

The company has advised that the main consideration in making their decision at this time is the world market outlook for newsprint. Newsprint markets are projected to be on the decline for the next 4 - 5 years creating significant excess capacity in the industry. This over-capacity will mean downtime for Abitibi-Price Mills in Canada in the coming year. We are advised by the company that the action they are taking today to close the No.6 machine will mean there will be no downtime in the Grand Falls mill in 1990. Also, it is their view that the high quality of newsprint being produced at the Stephenville mill should assure a high level of operation during the period of tight markets.

Mr. Speaker, Government is deeply concerned with the impact of this decision on the people and the economy of Central Newfoundland, and the whole Province for that matter. While Government understands some of the reasons for this business decision by the Company, we are not fully satisfied with the explanation provided so far. Despite the company's assurance of improving the remaining two paper machines

and enhancing the viability of the mill, we will investigate the entire issue of the reduction in capacity and the company's future plans. Government is very concerned about the impact of the company's decision on the employment situation and the overall economy of Central Newfoundland and indeed the Province as a whole, and has, therefore, decided to appoint a special committee of Cabinet consisting of the following Ministers to review and monitor all aspects of the situation: The hon. Graham R. Flight, Minister of Forestry and Agriculture, will act as Chairman, the hon. Charles Furey, Minister of Development, will be a member of the Committee, and the hon. Patricia Cowan, Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, will also be a member of the Committee. These Ministers will be charged with the responsibility to: review fully the basis for the company's decision to permanently close No. 6 paper machine; to examine the company's long term plans for the Grand Falls mill with a view to ensuring its continued viability; and to monitor the labour adjustment aspects of the restructuring plan, as well as to work with local levels of Government and other concerned groups to reduce the impact of this decision on the economy of Central Newfoundland.

This special committee of Cabinet will report to full Cabinet on a regular basis. Government is assigning highest priority to this task and hopes that this timely action will assist in ensuring the future viability of the mill and the stability of income and employment in the Grand Falls/Windsor area.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, Government assures the people in the many communities in Central Newfoundland who will be affected by the changes to the Grand Falls mill that we will spare no effort to alleviate the impact of today's decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day indeed for the people of Grand Falls and the people of Central Newfoundland; it is a great Christmas present, I suppose, one could say. I am a bit disappointed in knowing that the Premier and the Minister of Forestry were aware of this situation since Wednesday and did not have the courtesy to advise the elected Member of the people of that area about this matter. I find that a bit discourteous. I think that is the least they could have done. With respect to the statement itself, let me just go through it a bit and perhaps comment on some aspects of what the Premier has said.

First of all, he mentions the lower quality of paper on two old machines, particularly No. 6 paper machine. There are some questions and there is some debate on that issue, about the quality of that particular paper. I know that they have in recent years installed new linting equipment on that machine, which was supposed to have made the paper much more competitive, and, indeed, many say, including the union representatives, that in fact that paper is competitive. Because it was not competitive in the past, they had a problem with the reputation of the paper,

therefore, some argue that the problem is with their marketing strategy, and that perhaps what they should be doing is improving their own marketing strategy. I am not totally satisfied with that in my own mind at this stage.

Secondly, the Premier indicates in his statement that there will be a reduced demand on the timber resource, and later on in the statement he says it is understood there will not be any significant impact on the existing woods workers. Now, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is absolute nonsense. If there is going to be a reduced demand on the timber resource, you can be certain that that will mean layoffs in the woods. The loggers are going to be affected by this decision, and anybody who does not believe that just has blinkers on.

The company projects the layoff of 250 permanent employees, 30 per cent of the total work force. It is now at 840, as I understand it. This will now leave it at 590. But, I should add, because nowhere in the statement does it reflect this fact, that the 250 direct permanent job losses are not related solely to the closing of No. 6 paper machine; because what the company has done in addition to that is it has restructured its entire work force throughout the mill, and that is what is transpiring in addition to the closure of the No. 6 machine. And, of course, with the spinoffs, I suppose, using even the most conservative estimates that economists use, even if you use the one to one basis, you are talking about 500 jobs that are probably going to be affected in that entire Central Newfoundland area, using the most conservative estimate that economists use.

The development of the hydro power project is something I am quite familiar with myself. I have been involved with the negotiations and discussions and so on with the company, I would say, at least for the last three years those discussions have been ongoing. They have not yet reached a decision. They have some questions with respect to financing that package, because I believe it is about a \$20 million project, or at least, it was three years ago. Maybe it is more now.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:
I am sorry. Yes, \$170 million. I was thinking of something else - a \$160 million to a \$170 million project. So it is a big project. That, of course, will create jobs only for the short-term, and so it would be helpful at that period of time. But the point is they have been three years discussing it, thinking about it, and I would not hold my breath on the thing. Perhaps the Government and the Premier could intervene, act and work directly with the company to see if there is a way that the Government can help put together some kind of a package that would ensure that this project gets underway.

Now, Mr. Speaker, he talks about the market. Yes, indeed, the market is very competitive. I have made the point about marketing strategy being very important and that maybe the Company should be asked to give the Premier a briefing on what marketing strategy they have used.

So I want to ask, and I would have to ask if the Premier, when he met with the Company officials on

Wednesday, Mr. Vatcher I guess it was he met with, although I am not quite sure who he spoke with, or maybe it was Mr. Koken, whomever it was, I hope he scrutinized the Company's decision thoroughly and that he is absolutely satisfied that this is the only decision the Company could have made.

PREMIER WELLS:
(Inaudible) are not.

MR. SIMMS:
Okay. Well, he says they are not. I am pleased to hear that, and hopefully we will hear further reports back from him. Interesting the Premier would interrupt after chastising a colleague over on this side, but I have asked the question, which I am entitled to do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the response, to this point in time the establishment of a special committee, I have to tell you in all sincerity that I would feel a lot more comfortable if that committee was not headed up by the Minister of Forestry, quite frankly. I certainly would feel more comfortable if the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations was not sitting on it. I do not have too much confidence in either one of them, quite frankly.

It says that the Cabinet committee will monitor the labour adjustment aspects of the restructuring plan, presumably respond some way if there is a way to do it. Well, I hope their response in this regard will be much more effective than their response with the Fisheries Response Program that we talked about for weeks, and much more effective than the Minister of Employment's response to people, suggesting that if you run into situations like this, job loses

and serious job loses, on an immediate basis that they simply go on welfare. I would like to think that the response would be more effective than that.

This, Mr. Speaker, represents another blow to the economy of the Province, notwithstanding the very devastating effect it will have on the people in Central Newfoundland.

We have seen in recent months 500 jobs gone in Marystown, 300 gone from the Newfoundland Dockyard, 300 jobs gone from NatSea, we are estimating 6,000 in the fishery, 250 jobs gone in Long Harbour, and now 250 to 500, I suspect, jobs lost in Grand Falls.

This statement today, Mr. Speaker, represents a tragedy for the economy of our Province, it is devastating news for the people of Grand Falls and central Newfoundland; it is a terrible Christmas present, and I will have more questions to ask on this matter in the days and weeks ahead, Mr. Speaker.

Oral Questions

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Forestry. In the past I have asked the Minister of Forestry questions in this House relating to the loss of jobs at Wooddale Nursery, sixty jobs at that time, and his answer, and it is recorded in Hansard, 'I have no reason to be concerned.'

Our Forestry critic, the Member for Humber Valley (Mr. Woodford), has asked the Minister of Forestry about silviculture agreements. His answer, 'I have no reason to be concerned.'

The Member for Humber East, on November 9 in Hansard, asked the Minister about wood supply problems. Quote from the Minister, 'I do not have any concerns.' I have publicly asked the Minister in weeks gone by, three or four weeks ago at least, that he go to Toronto to meet with the Chief Executive Officer of Abitibi-Price to find out what is going on, to come back and to report to the people and respond to their concerns about the future of their mill. He said to me and he said publicly, 'I do not need to go to Toronto to find out anything about what is going on in the forest industry.' Now we see the results of that.

He also implied to me, Mr. Speaker, 'the hon. Member need not worry about Grand Falls.'

Now I want to ask the Minister a simple question. Does he have any reason to be concerned today about Grand Falls, or should I not worry about that, either?

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

MR. FLIGHT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for his question. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have reason today to be concerned about Grand Falls, and I also have reason to be concerned about Windsor, because this is going to impact just as much on the towns of Windsor, and Badger, and Millertown possibly, as it will on

Grand Falls. It may not to the extent, but it will affect them very greatly and I have great reason to be concerned.

I have had reason to be concerned the past six months, Mr. Speaker, when that hon. Member knows Grand Falls/Windsor was rampant with rumours that Abitibi-Price was making a decision.

They had various options. We were kept informed. We were notified, as the Premier indicated in the statement, on Wednesday exactly what the situation was. There has been a concern that maybe the announcement made yesterday by Abitibi would have been a four-month shutdown.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) six months ago?

MR. FLIGHT:
There are greater concerns in Grand Falls than that, as the Member knows. Yes, Mr. Speaker, to the Member, I have grave concerns, and I still have a grave concern. We will do whatever we can do as a Government to lessen the impact of this announcement today in Grand Falls/Windsor and all of central Newfoundland.

MR. RIDEOUT:
By saying that you were not concerned about it.

MR. FLIGHT:
I never said that.

MR. RIDEOUT:
No! We just quoted it to you.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I am now somewhat

surprised to hear the Minister admit in the House that he has known what was going on there for the last six months, when we have asked him questions publicly in the people's House and he never once indicated that he knew what was going on. In fact, he kept sloughing it off and suggesting that there was no reason to be concerned.

Mr. Speaker, over the last twenty-four hours I have spoken to several people, several employees from the central Newfoundland area, I have spoken to the Mayor of the town, I have spoken to the Vice-President of Abitibi-Price in Toronto, the Vice-President for Eastern Canada, and I have spoken to the senior union representative, the international representative, and they are all shocked I can assure you, and they have a lot of questions - a lot of questions - and a lot of anxieties.

I want to ask two or three questions. I can do it in whatever format you wish, Mr. Speaker, but I have a number of questions. I am going to ask two or three, if I can at this stage on their behalf, and I want the Minister of Forestry to respond to them.

Is the Minister absolutely satisfied that nothing can be done to improve the situation with respect to that No. 6 paper machine? Did he ask the company to look at the feasibility study they presumably undertook when they made their decision? What about their plan to put in a brand-new paper machine? Where does that stand at the moment? And, finally, at this stage at least, in view of the fact that Grand Falls is bearing the brunt of this restructuring throughout

the whole Abitibi system - this is taking place throughout the whole Abitibi system, the brunt of it is being taken in Grand Falls - has this Minister, who only a few weeks ago told us not to worry about anything, insisted that the company guarantee that there will be no annual downtime in the mill in future years, not just in 1990? Has he demanded a guarantee in that respect, or should I not be concerned about those things, either?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, in the first instance I want to take this opportunity to tell the hon. Member in all sincerity that I never at any time said, and I doubt that he can produce a document which says so, that I have no concern about the various issues he has stated.

I am amazed, Mr. Speaker, and I accept his concern this morning, and I accept that he is concerned about the impact this is going to have on Grand Falls, but I am a little surprised about the tenor of his questions, Mr. Speaker. I am not prepared to play politics with this issue this morning. I detect in the tenor of the Member's questions that he is prepared to milk this if he feels that it is in his better political interests.

Mr. Speaker, let me deal with the three questions. Will Abitibi-Price install a new machine? I have to presume that Abitibi-Price - they are a great corporate citizen, Mr. Speaker, they are a good corporate citizen and they are concerned about maintaining their presence and their business in central

Newfoundland. They have spent, I would say, a lot of hours this last year determining what they would do with regard to production in their mill in Grand Falls, and their decision at this point in time.

As the Premier indicated, we will, over the next week or two, ask all the questions and determine whether or not there was an alternative.

MR. RIDEOUT:

(Inaudible) ask the questions.

MR. FLIGHT:

But they have already been asked. Abitibi have made a corporate decision, the same kind of corporate decision that was made on the Linerboard Mill, which probably had a greater effect on the economy of Newfoundland than this particular action will, when he sat and supported it.

MR. RIDEOUT:

(Inaudible) criticizing
(inaudible)?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I would ask the hon. Minister to take his place.

The Chair is having great difficulty trying to determine -- there were a number of questions asked, and that, again, is why the Chair discourages asking more than one question. The Chair is trying to determine when the Minister has answered the questions, and when another Minister interferes, asking another question, it further complicates the situation entirely.

So if hon. Members want the Chair to call when the questions are

answered would be, I am asking hon. Members to co-operate and it is to help the Chair decide when the answers have been given, and not throw extra ones.

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to getting a guarantee that there will be no more downtime, the Premier in his statement indicated that Abitibi advises us that as a result of this action there will be no downtime, to the extent, I guess, that they can say at this point in time, to the extent that anybody can say anything, that this action results in no downtime.

Apparently, had this action not been taken Grand Falls would have been looking at approximately four months downtime this year, and nobody knows how much for 1991.

With regard to the Member's question about a new machine, no, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time Abitibi have not indicated to us that they are about to replace -- and I might say to the Member, also, that from an employment point of view, from the number of jobs affected, if Abitibi were to install a new machine that would replace 6 and 7, the effect on the level of employment would be more drastic than this one. The technology in that machine would mean more job losses.

The Member shakes his head, but the Member does not want to accept the facts as they are. And, Mr. Speaker, the company tells us, and we accept their word, that there will be no downtime in Grand Falls, particularly as a result of this.

The hon. the Premier announced a

committee of Cabinet that will, starting now, look into the situation and determine whether or not there was an alternative, whether or not Abitibi-Price can be encouraged to look at another alternative. But I can say to you now, Mr. Speaker, and I say to the people of Grand Falls and Windsor, we do not have very much manoeuvring room in that area. Abitibi-Price has made a corporate decision, a decision we have to accept, a decision in which we have to use whatever influence we have as a Government to decrease or to alleviate any negative impact that this action has on central Newfoundland.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I must say I am finding it very difficult to follow the logic of the Minister, in a number of ways. He says we have now closed down No. 6 machine at the mill in Grand Falls, 250 jobs are gone. If you put in a new machine, you are going to lose more jobs. I do not quite follow that logic. Perhaps he can elaborate at some other occasion. I would not expect him to respond to it here now. I am not getting into a debate. I simply asked him - I asked him - what is their plan with respect to the machine? He said they have not indicated anything, and I wondered if he asked them about it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this Minister need not try to cover up his own incompetence in dealing with this situation by somehow questioning my motives, somehow suggesting that my motives are political. I can tell him that the politics of this are not very exciting for me,

I can assure him of that. And I resent the suggestion he made to that effect, by the way. I am asking questions, and I said in my preamble I am asking questions on behalf of the people I have spoken to in the last twenty-four hours. Those were their questions, I say to the Minister.

MR. WALSH:

(Inaudible) supplementary.

MR. SIMMS:

The Member for Mount Scio wants me to get to my supplementary. I will get to my supplementary when I am ready. If that is not acceptable, I will ask a new question.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister this: Does he recognize and is he aware of the fallouts from spin-offs with respect to this dramatic news, spin-offs that will affect medium and small sized business, spin-offs that will affect loggers in the woods, despite the statement which indicates otherwise, contractors who have invested a considerable amount of money in equipment, and so on? Would he acknowledge that this blow is probably equivalent to 400 to 500 jobs lost in that central Newfoundland area, and does he also realize - I know he mentioned Windsor - Buchans, but does he also realize that these fallouts will occur not only in Windsor - Buchans, not only in Grand Falls, but in Exploits, in Lewisporte, in Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir, in Baie Verte, in Twillingate, in Green Bay, in Fortune - Hermitage, and even, Mr. Speaker, as far as Gander? There are people in all those areas. I want the Minister to tell me if he recognizes that, and does he acknowledge it?

Finally, I know the Premier addressed the question in his statement, but I want to know if the Government has insisted, and I ask the Minister if he has insisted on, demanded, an assurance that the 250 employees affected by this particular situation now will be given an acceptable severance and an acceptable early retirement package, acceptable to the union and to the membership?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. Member's first three or four questions the answer is yes, yes, a qualified yes. I, as Minister, and this Premier and the Government are aware of all the various effects and negative spin-offs, and that is the reason why, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the Premier announced a Committee of Cabinet, which I will chair, to determine the effects and determine what action the Government can take to soften the blow and eliminate to the extent we can the hardships as a result of these effects.

Now, Mr. Speaker, can I assure the House of Assembly that Abitibi-Price will negotiate, or that the 250 people laid off will have an acceptable package? It is our information that the company is going, to the extent they can, to negotiate a severance package with these 250 employees. I am sure there are management people there will be no problem in doing that with, because there are no union agreements in place. But the Member will know, having lived in Grand Falls, that the company's ability to negotiate a severance package for men who have not

reached retirement age is totally dependent on the co-operation of the union, and I understand, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time -

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition 'tuts', well, he knows it is true. The union today will decide - the membership, itself, depending on the age of any given one of these 250 people will decide.

The answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes. The company have informed us that they are going to negotiate the most acceptable separation package they can and we and everyone hopes that the union and management can agree on a package with more for the workers, that will see most of these people going out with an acceptable separation and pension package and, hopefully, we will not have that many new entrants into the job market as a result of the 250 laid off.

MR. SIMMS:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I hope, with respect to that last point, that the Minister is prepared to use his authority and follow his responsibility, and lay the heavy hand on the company. I am suggesting that he lay the heavy hand on the company.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I want to remind hon. Members again that Question Period is not Statements by Ministers, that Ministers are not to respond to questions, they are supposed to

get into the next question. So I ask the hon. the Opposition House Leader to please get into his question.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, in that respect a new question, which will entitle me to do some preamble.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Hon. Members would know that it is very difficult to decide - hon. Members just cannot decide that it is going to be a new question just to evade the rules of the House, and by a new question an hon. Member is, again, not entitled to long preamble. Hon. Members cannot play around that way.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, this hon. Member is not playing around, I say to Your Honour. This is a very serious matter.

My colleagues on this side of the House have agreed to let me ask as many questions as I wish. I am entitled, as an elected Member of this House, to ask those questions, and I will do it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Forestry.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

This Chair cannot accept that. The Chair's decisions in Question Period are final and they are going to be final. I ask the hon. the Opposition House Leader to continue with his question.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the Minister of Forestry. I want to ask the Minister of Forestry this, but before I do, I want to make some particular preamble on it.

MR. BAKER:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

This is ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous!

MR. TOBIN:

We might as well go home. We are serving no purpose here.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You can say that again.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You have to be a lawyer or something here, and be like this...

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I do not take pride in having to stand and raise a point of order at this time.

I believe what has happened here is totally outside the bounds of what is parliamentary. I would, on the first hand, excuse it in my own mind, because the hon. Member is emotionally tied up in this, and I believe that he has gone far beyond the bounds of what should happen in Parliament. He has gone far beyond the bounds of what any Member in this House should say to the Speaker. He knows full-well that during Question Period the rulings of the Speaker are not to be questioned, and he has openly, deliberately challenged the Speaker and given direction to the Speaker, and I am slowing this

down to give the hon. Member time to cool down a little bit. I would agree to extend Question Period, if the hon. Member wants to. I am giving him time, Mr. Speaker, to think about it, and I would suggest to Your Honour that he has gone too far because of his emotional involvement. And for the sake of parliamentary procedure and for the sake of decorum in the House, the hon. Member should reconsider and apologize to the House and to the Speaker for the comments he made about the Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, to the point of order. Look, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Government House Leader now is trying somehow to turn this thing around, that is all he is attempting to do.

MR. RIDEOUT:

(Inaudible) challenged the Chair when you were over here.

MR. SIMMS:

I have not challenged Your Honour's ruling. Your Honour has not asked me to withdraw anything. He asked me to put a question. I simply rose to put the question. Now, if this continues, Mr. Speaker, then I am quite prepared, rather than to offend Your Honour or offend Members on that side - I am not interested in doing that. I have no interest in that whatsoever. But if Members are offended, if Your Honour is offended, rather than put anybody in a precarious position, I am quite prepared to leave the Chamber and I will ask my questions outside.

MR. RIDEOUT:

We have seen the Chair challenged, and you fellows vote (inaudible). We have seen that in this House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I ask that the hon. Member continue with his question. In view of the seriousness of the situation, I would ask that this time not be taken out of Question Period. If hon. Members would like to debate it, debate it appropriately at the end of Question Period.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your ruling, and again there is no point of order, obviously.

Mr. Speaker, I want to get back to the Minister of Forestry who, in his last answer to the question, or the question before that I asked, mentioned that nowhere in Hansard can it be found that he took such a cavalier attitude towards questions that were answered in this House with respect to Forestry. Well, I ask him to read Hansard, November 9th edition, where, in fact, in response to a question from the Member for Humber East about wood supply problems, for example, he did say, "I do not have any concerns," Mr. Speaker. That is a direct quote. He also said, and this is what makes me nervous, I say to the Premier, about having the Minister of Forestry involved, he also said in response to my last question, "I give the Member a qualified yes," I am absolutely certain. At least I hope he meant to give me an unqualified yes.

That is what I would prefer to hear him say.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask one more question on the issue right now, and that will be the end of it for me, and I want to ask him this: What specific plans, what specific ideas does his Government have aside from the Cabinet Committee establishment? Surely they have discussed it. He told me he has known about it for six months. What specific plans and ideas does the Government have to help ease the anxieties of the people out in this area? How are they going to respond to this devastating blow for the town? How are they going to respond to the town? Are they going to cancel more projects like the regional recreation facility, the water treatment plant and the college expansion? Are they going to take \$350,000 in taxes from the town of Grand Falls? Is that going to help them? Is that the kind of plan they have? Are they going to lay off and eliminate another 60 jobs or so at the Wooddale Nursery, or should I not be concerned about those matters?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

I think I can answer all of the various questions with one answer. Mr. Speaker, we were informed, we were aware as a Government, and I was aware as a Minister, that there were concerns amongst the work force in Grand Falls about the possible - particularly triggered, I think, by the market situation, that there were concerns among the employees that there would indeed be a lot of downtime, that Abitibi-Price would take certain actions. We were notified, as the Premier indicated in his

statement, 5:00 Wednesday evening of the company's definite decision. They may well have come to St. John's and told us they were going to take four months downtime, which would have a devastating effect as well. They did not, they decided to take this particular action.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as of yesterday, as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee I have put together a committee of the three Deputy Ministers to meet immediately on a priority basis. Abitibi-Price have assured us of their co-operation, and they will appoint high level officials to work with that Committee. We will determine the extent of the layoffs - in the mill we know - in the woodlands. We will determine if there is an alternative. That committee will, on a priority basis, determine and advise Government as to just what action we can take as a Government to alleviate the effects of this shutdown. Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I can go no farther, and I would hope that answer satisfies the hon. Member.

MR. RIDEOUT:

(Inaudible) officials.

MR. FLIGHT:

Yes.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Why did you not tell us six months ago? You said you knew six months ago.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. House that the matter I wish to raise is not dramatized,

sensationalized or that of political expediency. I am sincere. Over the last month, as we have discussed the fishery, the predominant feeling for me has been one of hopelessness and despair. To know that children go to bed hungry, Mr. Speaker, is unnerving, a disgrace and unacceptable. There are fishermen who have not been addressed in all of these discussions; those of the winter fishery on the southwest coast. The winter fishery in the Seal Cove/Harbour Breton area has been a devastating catastrophe. The average income of fishermen over the past three weeks has been thirty dollars. My question is to the Minister. What programs are in place to help those bona fide, professional, longliner fishermen to help them survive in this time of crisis?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. Member that the news that I am hearing is equally disquieting for me, as well. I did meet with the fishermen of the south coast, in Harbour Breton, in Marystown, in Port aux Basques and in Burgeo within the past month. We listened to some of their problems. Mr. Speaker, there is a response program in place by the Federal Government and I am told that the criteria by which that response program is being administered has relaxed where communities with a history in the fishery and people with a proven history in the fishery will be assisted under that program.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

These people do not qualify under any Federal program. No program. These are the people in the winter fishery and they have no recourse to any program until after the winter fishery is completed in the spring. Everyone knows, including the fishermen, that the fish is not there. The fish that they do catch is about the size of conners and pan sized trout. The fishermen are devastated. Some of them have given up. Will the Minister put some temporary, financial package in place for these fishermen and their destitute families to augment their catch income?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Member stated, these are winter fishermen, and I presume they are getting ready soon to start to go fishing. Mr. Speaker, we listened to their problems and we are taking some action within the Department to address some of those problems, but certainly we cannot be held responsible for the fact that the fish just are not there. But I can tell you now that if it comes to pass that the winter fishery is a failure, as it might very well be, then we will do all we can to make sure that the people affected get whatever help is available to them.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

Mr. Speaker, these fishermen have gone to the Department of Social Services and asked for help and have been told that they have to wait a two week period to get in a

deficit position before they can qualify. There is just no money. Will the Minister try to influence his fellow Cabinet colleagues to devise a package for these desperate fishermen and their families before an act of genocide is perpetrated on the people?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I had a meeting no later than Wednesday of this week with the Federal Minister of Fisheries. We discussed a number of matters pertaining to the industry, and I can tell you now there is a lot of consideration being put into coming up with programs that will be necessary to ensure that people affected will be helped over this crisis.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the absence of the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, and in view of the fact that the Premier has just run off downstairs, perhaps I will address my question to the House Leader, and he may be able to give me some information in relation to the Mount Pearl Fire Department. Mr. Speaker, the Minister will know that some two studies now, one by the Organization and Management Division of Treasury Board and one by Woods Gordon, have both confirmed that the City of Mount Pearl is not adequately protected by fire department, both have indicated that a fire station should be built in Mount Pearl on an urgent basis. The Minister will also know that the previous

Administration authorized the City of Mount Pearl to borrow the necessary funds to build a fire station and to buy the fire trucks and other equipment that is necessary to fully operate a fire department in the City of Mount Pearl. That has been done. We now have a building completed or substantially completed and most equipment, including two 640 gallon per minute pumpers which are on site and ready to roll.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Speaker, has delayed the hiring of personnel. Would the Minister now tell me when he proposes to come in with whatever system he is proposing, be it a regional system or whatever? When we will get that answer so that the fire department in Mount Pearl can be made operational?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a serious situation that the hon. Member refers to. I can say to him that within the next few days the legislation should be brought into the House. If, in fact, it is held up any longer than that, then the Minister is going to have to go and look at the whole situation.

I do not know in the last short while what has been happening, but I will take that under advisement and I promise the hon. Member something further on Monday.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister probably not being in possession of all the facts, but I want to get these questions to him because I will not be here on Monday.

I would like to ask, how much time are we going to wait? Six months have elapsed since the Minister asked the City of Mount Pearl to defer hiring their staff, in spite of the fact that the Minister authorized the Fire Commissioner to travel to Halifax with the city officials to do interviews for a potential chief.

It was only a month ago, Mr. Speaker - I give the Minister this information because he probably does not have it - the Minister actually asked the Fire Commissioner for his views on the studies that have been done. And the Minister may not be aware that the Fire Commissioner has recommended that the City of Mount Pearl be authorized to proceed on their own, and that he does not recommend the regional system that Woods Gordon have recommended, and that he feels that if a regional system is put in place, all the volunteer fire departments in Conception Bay South and other areas around the urban area will disappear and will have to be replaced by full-time paid staff, and that the actual cost of fire protection, therefore, will increase dramatically. In view of that, will the Minister and will the Government now allow the City of Mount Pearl to proceed with the full implementation of their fire department?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am not absolutely certain of some of the conclusions of the hon. Member - of consequences from the implementation of the Woods Gordon Report in terms of the disappearance of volunteer workers. I believe we have a very strong volunteer fire brigade movement in this Province and I think we will continue to have it.

I will simply say I agree with him in one regard, that this is taking far too long and I will look into it and get back to the hon. Member on Monday.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Speaker, I see the Minister of Municipal Affairs is there now and I appreciate that he is coming in late. For his benefit, I have asked a couple of questions about the fire department and why the Minister is now holding up the implementation of that fire department. I want to ask him this question: In view of the fact that those facilities are in place, as I said a moment ago, a fully built, completed fire station, fire trucks on site and other equipment ordered and soon to be in place; and the fact that the City of Mount Pearl is now paying almost \$2 million a year for fire protection service; they have invested \$1.5 million to build this fire hall and equip this fire hall; and studies have shown that they can save more than \$500,000 or \$600,000 per year, Mr. Speaker, so that that \$1.5 million can be recovered in three years, and it is shown that they can operate that fire station for about \$1.2 million, including the

amortization of the capital cost of that, and that at the moment almost 50 per cent of all property taxes collected in the City of Mount Pearl are going towards fire protection, \$20 per capita on the average, \$80 per household, yet there is not adequate fire protection in the City of Mount Pearl.

Now the Minister was not here, but I have indicated to the House that I am aware that the Fire Commissioner has told the Minister that he recommends that the City of Mount Pearl be allowed to proceed on its own, and that the fire station be put in place immediately. Now, I ask the Minister this question, Mr. Speaker: Will the Minister now stop procrastinating and allow the City of Mount Pearl to complete the operation of that fire department immediately, before somebody is burnt to death in their beds and before serious property damage results?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are in the process now of finalizing all the procedures necessary and entering into discussions with the Union that is involved. Hopefully, we will have a regional fire fighting service in place before the Union Agreement expires, that is our goal, which is March 31st.

We have the same concerns as the Member does, about the inefficiencies of the Fire Department as it presently is constituted. We know we have to make changes. We know the costs are excessive in some areas and we have had discussions with the

union concerning that. Those discussions will be ongoing in union negotiations as well.

In my meetings with the City of Mount Pearl, the Mayor and councillors, my staff and myself, we have had detailed discussions about the fact that they are paying extra costs. There is no question about it, the Member is quite right when he says that they are paying extra costs over and above what they should pay. The City of St. John's is in the same position, and we sympathize with that.

I have made a commitment to them that if we put together a regional fire-fighting service - which is not finalized, and a lot depends on union negotiations - but if we put together a regional service that includes Mount Pearl, they will be compensated for the costs they have had to bear to the point when we make that decision. I have made that commitment to them. I have also said that it is imperative that we have union co-operation to put together a regional fire-fighting service that would include Mount Pearl and other parts of the urban area. Hopefully we can achieve that; a lot depends on union negotiations and being able to achieve that with their co-operation.

The Fire Commissioner has raised some concerns, and we have had concerns from other areas, as well, because this discussion does not just involve my immediate officials. The concerns are the fact that we are trying to put together a fire-fighting service that includes urban and rural areas of this particular Northeast Avalon area. That presents some real challenges, because we have a full-time fire-fighting force

covering St. John's, Mount Pearl, Wedgewood Park, St. Phillips, Portugal Cove and Paradise/St. Thomas, and we have volunteer departments surrounding those communities in the rural areas.

The concern of the Fire Commissioner is the volunteer fire departments, and that they be left in place. We have had some discussions as recently as a couple of days ago with the Fire Commissioner and Mr. Hollett, his assistant, trying to come to grips with that particular problem. It is a good point and we have to resolve it before we decide which communities should be involved in a regional fire-fighting service and which should be left outside, if you like, as volunteers. So, we are addressing that, Mr. Speaker.

To go back to the Mount Pearl situation, as quickly as possible, not just for Mount Pearl's sake, but also for St. John's and the other areas I mentioned in the urban core, we are trying to put in place a regional fire-fighting service, and we will be doing that, Mr. Speaker, as fairly as possible to address all the concerns, including the concerns he has raised about Mount Pearl and the extra costs they have to bear. We will certainly be addressing that and making sure that when this new full-time fire-fighting service goes in place to cover this region, as well as a volunteer component surrounding the urban area, that it will be done on a fair and equitable basis to all the communities involved.

MR. SPEAKER:
Question Period has expired.

MR. WINDSOR:

Perhaps we could have a couple of more minutes just for one final supplementary, in view of the time that was lost.

MR. SPEAKER:
No, Question Period has expired. I have already gone eight minutes over.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By leave?

MR. SPEAKER:
Is there leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the tolerance of the House. This is an important issue. As I indicated, I will not be here Monday, and I want to deal with this issue.

I want to put one more question to the Minister. The Minister has answered my question, because he has talked about the negotiations that are necessary, legislation which has to be brought before this House, which we have not seen yet. And I tell the Minister, if that legislation includes provision for the Minister to force municipalities to participate in any regional fire system, it will not go through this House very quickly, I can assure him of that.

Cost, Mr. Speaker, is a concern here.

MR. SPEAKER:
I am waiting for the hon. Member's

question.

MR. WINDSOR:

I will, Mr. Speaker, very quickly.

The City of Mount Pearl is paying \$26,000 a month now in interest alone on the facilities that were put in place. And I remind the Minister, when he talks about union negotiations, here is the problem. He is talking about negotiating with the St. John's Fire Department union. The City of Mount Pearl has an agreement in place with their union which covers the Fire Department in Mount Pearl until December 31, 1994. To proceed with the Fire Department, Mr. Speaker, does not require negotiations with a union. To proceed with the regional system does, because it talks about the St. John's union.

MR. WALSH:

(Inaudible).

MR. WINDSOR:

The Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island should not say anything, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter here signed by him when he was President of the Chamber of Commerce, asking that this be done immediately. So his position is pretty firm.

I ask the Minister, in view of the length of time that obviously will be taken to negotiate with unions, to negotiate with all of the Municipalities around, the various fire departments and to bring legislation to this House, does he not now agree that it is imperative that Mount Pearl be allowed to proceed immediately with staffing of their fire department from the 600 applications that are on hand?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

The City of Mount Pearl, the mayor and councilors in that particular city, as recently as three weeks ago I met with them and they have agreed to take the time that is necessary to do this right. I am not sure where he gets his information, Mr. Speaker, but in my recent discussion with them, their reaction was that they realize we have a problem situation. I asked them to wait; throughout the last several months I have been asking them to wait and hold off in staffing their Department. And they have agreed to do that. We are moving as urgently and as quickly as we can to resolve the problem, and they are willing to wait until we resolve the problem. We do not want to see that particular location staffed with people - the complications with another union in play. That union, incidently, that agreement is only a tentative agreement subject to -

MR. WINDSOR:

It is a firm agreement.

MR. GULLAGE:

No, it is not a firm agreement. According to the mayor and councilors it is not a firm agreement, it is a tentative agreement subject to the City of Mount Pearl having a separate fire department. If the fire department does not become a separate department, the agreement does not take place, and that is the mayor and councilors telling me that. So I can only reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that we will make sure that any cost borne by the City of Mount Pearl, when a regional fire-fighting service goes in place, will be covered off

by the Province. We are moving with great haste, Mr. Speaker, and as quickly as we can, we will have the matter resolved.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It is unacceptable. If somebody burns to death, you are responsible.

MR. GULLAGE:

Why would you make comments like that, that is totally irresponsible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. GULLAGE:

Mount Pearl is being covered by the St. John's -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Sit down. The Speaker is standing, sit down.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order!

The time for Question Period has elapsed.

MR. GULLAGE:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, for the hon. Member to make such an irresponsible comment is intolerable. It should not be tolerated by the House.

The St. John's Fire Department covers the Northeast Avalon Region and he knows that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Sit down. The Speaker is standing.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. gentleman is not up on a point of order. It is not a point of order.

I would like to welcome to the House of Assembly today on behalf of hon. Members, sixty grade IX students from St. Peter's Elementary School, Mount Pearl, accompanied by their teachers, Mr. David Denine and Mr. Chris Hatch.

I would also like to welcome to the House of Assembly fifty, Level I and Level II, students from the Jack Walsh High School in Western Bay, accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Ralph Jerrett, Mr. Peter Snow, and Mr. Paul Stevenson.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I would like to now address a matter that arose in Question Period at its appropriate place and His Honor wants to read to hon. Members some rules from Beauchesne regarding questions.

I would like to read from Beauchesne, 6th Edition, 409 (2) "The question must be brief. A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence. A long preamble on a long question takes an unfair share of time and provokes the same sort of reply. A supplementary question should need no preamble."

His Honor did not make the rules. His Honor is doing his best to call them. His Honor has sat in this House for a number of years and I have on occasion been called to order more than once in my preamble, which I always accepted, and went to the question.

And I will challenge anybody to look into the Hansard and find out that His Honour has not been more than fair in allowing preambles. I would suggest that I have allowed more preambles than any previous Speaker, and that is a result of my experience, because I believe that decorum is more important than how long a person takes answering a question. But the job of His Honour is to call the rules. I did not make them.

Now, if hon. Members want to eliminate having a preamble, then hon. Members should get together and change the rules. As I have said, this particular Chair has been more than tolerant with preambles. Maybe that is part of the problem. Maybe the Chair should not allow any preamble at all, but I have tried to accommodate the styles of hon. Members, and the Chair does not appreciate, when reminding hon. Members to get into the question, the kind of thing that happened today. The Chair will not tolerate it and does not tolerate it.

I want to say that our own rules say that the Speaker's rules are final with respect to Question Period and that is for good reason. As a matter of fact, the Speaker's ruling ought to be final in much more than Question Period, and is, in many other Houses throughout Canada.

Now, the Member, when I asked that

he get to the question, said that he was on to a new question. Maybe the Chair did not use the right selection of words, but the Chair is subject to human error from time to time, as well. Maybe I got the Member a little aggravated when I suggested that he, the hon. Member, was playing with the Chair. I apologize if it was the wrong choice of words. But the point of the matter is that a Member cannot skirt around the rules by suggesting that he is asking a new question.

Now, what is a new question? I assume that a new question at least ought to be on a new topic and, in my rule and in my association with the House, most generally, a new question was directed to another Minister. But I suggest that the hon. Member did not ask a new question, that the question was the same question on the same topic, what was happening to Abitibi-Price, and addressed to the same Minister. And the House has to be firm in that respect.

I want hon. Members to understand, as I have said before, that when the Chair asks a Member to get to the question, we cannot say it is a new question unless, indeed, it is a new question. Hon. Members would appreciate that it is difficult for the Chair to decide when the Minister gets up and starts responding to the question, what the question is going to be, whether indeed it is going to be new, and I am willing to listen. I listened, and, as I said, the question was not, indeed, a new one, in the opinion of the Chair it was a supplementary question.

Again, I ask for hon. Members' co-operation, again suggesting to you that I have been very lenient with respect to the preamble.

And, with the hon. Member speaking today, I was more than lenient and, indeed, allowed him to ask a question for which he did not want

My final comment to Members is that when a Member asks a question, the Member asking the question, under the rules of the House, is not entitled to comment upon the answer. The Member is supposed to get into the question. I have noticed some Members developing the habit, the same as if it were a Ministerial Statement, making a comment and then making another comment before proceeding to the question.

So I want to make sure that hon. Members understand and I just want to say that the Chair felt, indeed, today that the hon. Member did, indeed, ask a supplementary question, and I simply ask for the co-operation of hon. Members in the future.

MR. HEWLETT:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Green Bay on a point of order.

MR. HEWLETT:

It is probably appropriate that I mention this matter at this particular time.

On October 19 I asked the question, how much hydro power could you generate if you dammed Meech Lake, and I guess the answer is none.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Again, there is no point of order. Again I implore upon hon. Members, please, when we get on

points of order, let us ensure that they are serious points of order, otherwise where does the Chair stop? When a Member gets up on a point of order, obviously the Chair will have to recognize the Member.

MR. HEWLETT:

I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

Orders of the Day

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, Motion 1.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice to introduce a bill entitled, "An Act To Revise The Law Respecting The Provincial Court," carried. (Bill No. 49).

On motion, Bill No. 49 read a first time, ordered read a second time, on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:

Motion 2.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Development to introduce a bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Co-Operative Societies Act," carried. (Bill No. 50).

On motion, Bill No. 50 read a first time, ordered read a second time, on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:

Motion 3.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy to introduce a bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Electrical Power Control Act," carried. (Bill No. 54).

On motion, Bill No. 54 read a first time, ordered read a second time, on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:
Motion 4.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act Respecting A Pension Plan For Certain Employees In The Province," carried. (Bill No. 52)

On motion, Bill No. 52, read a first time, ordered read a second time, on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:
Motion 5.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Revise And Consolidate The Law Respecting The Crown Lands, Public Lands And Other Lands Of The Province," carried. (Bill No. 53)

On motion, Bill No. 53, read a first time, ordered read a second time, on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:
Order 17.

Motion, second reading of a Bill, "An Act To Amend The Fisheries Loan Act," (Bill No. 37).

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

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, this Bill will amend The Fisheries Loan Act. And while it will not in any way affect the status of the Board for the purpose of administering loans under the Act, in accordance with the recent reorganization of the Public Service and, of course, the Loan Board, the administrative structure of the Board would be changed to provide for the appointment of a managing director of the Board.

Let me explain for a moment, Mr. Speaker, what that is all about. Prior to the reorganization to which I just referred, the Chairman of the Fisheries Loan Board was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Board. He was a full-time Chairman who not only presided over meetings of the Board, but also administered the Board.

In recent months, Mr. Speaker, we found it necessary to make certain changes to the Board to make it more effective and to be better able to respond to the needs of the fishermen of our Province and be better able to carry out its mandate.

We decided we would take the Chairman of the Board as it was then constituted, and appoint him as an Assistant Deputy Minister of Fisheries and enable him to continue to act, to chair meetings of the Board.

It was then decided that we would seek permission to appoint a managing director or chief executive officer, whatever title you want to put on that person, who would then be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Board, reporting to the Chairman who, in turn, rather than report to the Minister as was the case previously, would then report to the Deputy Minister of Fisheries.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, this amendment to The Fisheries Loan Act will not take away from the operation of the Board, will not reduce its authority or its ability to respond to the needs of the fishermen of our Province who, quite frequently, have occasion to seek financial help from the

Board. But, in our view and that of the people within the Public Service who are charged with the responsibility for restructuring and maybe introducing measures that will make the Public Service more responsive to the needs of the people, in their view the proposed structure will certainly do that in terms of the Fisheries Loan Board.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of that Board now will report directly to the Deputy Minister rather than to the Minister, and, of course, it will be managed by the Managing Director rather than the Chairman.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Is there a quorum in the House?

MR. SPEAKER:

A quorum call.

Call in the Members.

May I have the count please?

Quorum present.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 37, "An Act To Amend The Fisheries Loan Act," you would not know, listening to the few brief words from the Minister, that this was a morning muffin. Mr. Speaker, this is a major piece of legislation. The Minister over the last several of months, Mr. Speaker, has imposed major surgery on the Fisheries Loan Board.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He has corrected it.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. thruster wants to say something, he should go back to his seat. Then we might listen to what he might have to say.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I would asked the hon. Leader of the Opposition to - I have noticed in the last couple of days that hon. Members from both sides of the House have been guilty of making remarks while not in their seats, and I would ask hon. Members please to refrain from doing so. Hon. Members know they are not supposed to make remarks unless they are sitting in their own seats.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Even then it is out of order, but it is doubly out of order when the Member is not in his seat.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister gave very little information on this particular amendment that he has brought in here this morning, very little. But the Minister, over the last several months, Mr. Speaker, has done a major reorganization at the Fisheries Loan Board. You now have a situation where you do not have a full-time Chairman of the Fisheries Loan Board anymore, you have a person who is now the Assistant Deputy Minister in the Department of Fisheries who Chairs the meetings of the Loan Board, you have a situation where you

have a Managing Director, whose job it is to run the day-to-day affairs of the Board. Mr. Speaker, that Loan Board is a major Crown Corporation. I suppose it is one of the most significant of all Crown Corporations, The Fisheries Loan Board. It has a loan portfolio, I do not know, I do not remember, but it is certainly forty or fifty million dollars. It deals with thousands of fishermen a year, and now you have an Administrative structure where the person responsible for that Board is also an Assistant Deputy Minister in the Department. It is unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, what that Minister has done.

It also needs to be said today, and it is time for the Minister to tell the House, what is happening with the Fisheries Loan Board and bank loan guarantees. Is it a fact, Mr. Speaker, that the Chartered Banks of this Province, particularly the Bank of Nova Scotia which has the vast - oh, ninety-odd per cent, well over ninety per cent of the loan guarantees that the Province has out through the Fisheries Loan Board, is it a fact that the Bank of Nova Scotia for the last several months has not been approving any loan guarantees through the Fisheries Loan Board? Is that a fact? We have been hearing that, Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing from fishermen who have excellent credit -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:
Two, in the last six or seven months.

We have been hearing from fishermen, who have excellent

credit in this Province at the Bank, who cannot get Bank approval because the Bank of Nova Scotia is no longer happy with the Provincial Government and the Fisheries Loan Board Bank Loan Guarantee Program. The Minister gets up and introduces an "Act To Amend The Fisheries Loan Act" and does not say a word, does not tell us a word about what is happening with the day-to-day activities of the Fisheries Loan Board. Or is it because of the secret agenda of this Government that the Minister shakes his head at - he just got back from Ottawa; never had a Ministerial Statement this morning telling us what he talked about up there. Is it because there is a secret agenda by this Government to take people out of the Fishery and one of the ways they are going to do that is by making it more difficult for people to get financing through the Fisheries Loan Board? And the Minister we have today is the same gentleman who was over here only a year or so ago talking about making it easier for fishermen to get financing. This Minister, in five or six, or six or seven months in office, has made it more difficult - more difficult - for fisherman to get financing. He was over here talking about the fact that you should have financing for gear, you should have financing for mussel farms, you should have financing for aquaculture. All of that should be under The Fisheries Loan Act, he used to tell us when he was over here.

The gentleman cannot shake his head, Mr. Speaker, it is in Hansard. I have gone back and looked at it. When the hon. gentleman was over here, he was proposing those kinds of measures. Now he is over there as a Minister, particularly Minister

of Fisheries, and he is making it more and more difficult. Every single day he is making it more difficult for fishermen in this Province to obtain financing through the Fisheries Loan Board.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

You missed the dinner last week, did you?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, I should have come down. It was a good night.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

I missed one, too.

MR. RIDEOUT:

We did not have to pay \$150 for it either, Mr. Speaker, it was free.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

What do you mean, former? There are a lot of people who feel they have to keep both sides of the coin greased these days, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

They have to kowtow to the Liberals.

MR. RIDEOUT:

They have to kowtow to the Liberals, because they are actually being called up and told if they do not, what the result of if they do not will be, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECKER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Here he goes! There he goes, the Minister of Health who does not even have the good sense to stand up in the House when he is asked a serious question and answer it

without playing politics with it. He does not have the good sense to do it, Mr. Speaker. One of these days he is going to learn.

MR. DECKER:

I have not had a serious question from you fellows yet.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Is that right? I wonder did the Member for St. John's East hear that?

MS DUFF:

No, I did not.

MR. RIDEOUT:

He has not had a serious question from us yet. From 'you fellas' - you fellas!

The Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker, has been in the House quite a while. He must know that fellas, or ladies, or whatever, there is no such thing in this Chamber. It is an hon. Member, Mr. Speaker, whether the Minister likes it or not.

MR. DECKER:

That is like heaven: They all shall be one.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I can see, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister is reverting to his former occupation. He should have stayed at it. I can see why he got defrocked. And he will be defrocked again, Mr. Speaker. He will be defrocked again, I can assure the hon. gentleman of that.

Now, to get back to The Fisheries Loan Act. The Minister of Fisheries has embarked on a plan, and he is doing it through the Fisheries Loan Board; he is doing it through every means he can in his Department. He even has the brass face, Mr. Speaker, to stand

up in this House and admit it. You do not do it up in the scrum, up in the gallery. You watch the gentleman on television and you would not say what his agenda is. But he will do it in this House. He will do it through little amendments like this. The hon. gentleman, who published a document - one of my colleagues had it there the other day - 'Fish is the Future', back in the 1970s -

MR. R. AYLWARD:

The new trend is fish is the future for few.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Right. When he was Minister of Fisheries back in the 1970s, the gentleman who encouraged hundreds and thousands of Newfoundlanders to get into the fishery, is now the same gentleman who has embarked on a plan to downsize the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. Those people he brought into it, Mr. Speaker, he is now trying to kick out of it. Those people he encouraged to come for the one dollar boats, 'the Carter boats' they called them out in Twillingate and LaScie and Fleur de Lys and those places, 'the dollar boats', he is now freezing those people out of the fishery. That is exactly what he is doing, Mr. Speaker. And he comes in here this morning trying to sneak through in a minute or so, "An Act To Amend The Fisheries Loan Act", which is a major plank in his platform and in his plan for downsizing the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Minister that he had better come here with some explanations of what he is doing to that Fisheries Loan Board. He has made the Fisheries Loan Board a mockery. It was set up to be independent

and it should be. Now, the Minister has made the Chairman of that Board an Assistant Deputy Minister in the Department, who goes down once every three or four weeks, whenever they meet, and Chairs the Loan Board meeting. In other words, Mr. Speaker, a management person not an independent person, a management person, -an Assistant Deputy Minister who is at the beck and call of the Minister: 'Now, my friend, you go down to the Loan Board and you get this done this way.' An assistant Deputy Minister in the Department.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) wrong with it.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, there is something wrong with it, for a Board that is supposed to be independent.

Mr. Speaker, we saw before a major reorganization of the Fisheries Loan Board as a result of incompetence. And do you know who the Minister was then? The same gentleman who is the Minister today.

MR. GRIMES:

I find that hard to believe.

MR. RIDEOUT:

You do? The hon. gentleman from Exploits finds a lot hard to believe, Mr. Speaker. But the fact of the matter is, the Fisheries Loan Board was bungled and badly managed in the 1970's because of political interference. And now it is happening again, because the Minister has now made the Chairman of the Fisheries Loan Board an Assistant Deputy Minister in the Department of Fisheries.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

I wonder is it the hour of the morning, or has the hon. gentleman actually lost every marble that he ever had? if he had one. Or is the hon. gentleman on an overdose of stunned pills this morning, Mr. Speaker? What is wrong with the hon. gentleman? Did you read the piece of legislation? I do not believe the hon. gentleman read it. Because one of the things that has happened here is that the reports now, instead of going to the Minister, go to the Deputy Minister. Did the hon. gentleman read the piece of legislation? Did you read the legislation?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

You did? You read the legislation.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) trying to learn it.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Well, for sure you are on stunned pills, if you have not caught the significance of this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, to get back to the Minister, I am more interested in not being sidetracked by rabbits when I am shooting at elephants, when I am shooting moose. The Minister is the moose here this morning.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Your predecessor was the rabbit man.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I am the moose man. Two moose this year, Mr. Speaker, bit the dust. If there is anybody over there who wants a fry, come talk

to me outside.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Is it tough?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Not half as tough as the moose opposite.

Mr. Speaker, we need an accounting in this House from the Minister on the Fisheries Loan Board. I know for a fact, and the Minister can shake his head and bite his lip, do what he likes, I know for a fact that fishermen in this Province with good credit today are finding it very, very difficult, almost impossible, to get loans through the chartered banks under the Loan Board bank loan guarantee program. Why? Why is that so, Mr. Speaker? The banks are not worried about a Government guarantee, are they? Are the banks worried about a Government guarantee? I mean, the bank of Nova Scotia has \$26 - \$28 million out through the Fisheries Loan Board under Government guarantee. Why is it that in the last 6 or 7 months there have only been two loans approved? We know why it is, Mr. Speaker. It is because this Government has sent the signal through the Fisheries Loan Board through to the banks that you are not to approve any more loans to build boats, because there is already too much harvesting capacity in the fishery and our program is to downsize and downgrade the fishery, and to take people out of the fishery. That is the plan by the Government, Mr. Speaker, and that has gone through to the banks. And the banks are turning down people, not because of credit worthiness, but because they know the Government is reneging and hauling back on the loan guarantee.

The Minister of Finance may not know that. Although it is the Minister of Finance who actually signs the loan guarantee, it is the Minister of Fisheries, through the Fisheries Loan Board, who has sent that signal, particularly to the Bank of Nova Scotia, because ninety-odd per cent of the fisheries loans are with the Bank of Nova Scotia; they are the banks which are in most of the rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador. I do not know if the Minister knows that, but they are more prominent out there than the Royal Bank or the Bank of Montreal or the Canadian Imperial Bank, they are out in rural Newfoundland and that is why they have ninety-odd per cent of the fisheries loans. That is why they have it. And the fact of the matter is, they are not approving any loans now because the Minister has told the Bank, through the Fisheries Loan Board, that we do not want to see any more harvesting capacity put in place.

DR. KITCHEN:
I signed one the other day.

MR. RIDEOUT:
That is not wrong.

DR. KITCHEN:
No, I signed one the other day.

MR. RIDEOUT:
There are two loans. Will the Minister tell the House if there has only been two loans approved so far in the last five or six months, Bank loans that is, not those under fifty thousand. Only two.

DR. KITCHEN:
No, that is wrong.

MR. RIDEOUT:
How many?

DR. KITCHEN:
Dozens.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Dozens? Dozens in the last five or six months. Loans over \$50,000?

DR. KITCHEN:
Yes.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Up to \$1 million?

AN HON. MEMBER:
Over.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Up to \$1 million, through the Fisheries Loan Board, dozens? Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Minister of Finance that he is wrong. He is wrong. Because I know every loan that has been approved, and I do not have a brother working in the Fisheries Loan Board. I know every loan that has been approved through the Bank of Nova Scotia since this Government took office.

DR. KITCHEN:
The Bank of Nova Scotia?

MR. RIDEOUT:
Yes. And ninety-odd per cent of the loans through the Fisheries Loan Board go to the Bank of Nova Scotia. I know every one of them, Mr. Speaker, and I know how many have been turned down, not because

DR. KITCHEN:
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:
I do know that.

DR. KITCHEN:
I do not.

MR. RIDEOUT:
You do not know that. Well, the

Minister should know that. He is the guarantor.

DR. KITCHEN:

I know what has been approved.

MR. RIDEOUT:

They are being turned down because the Fisheries Loan Board has sent the signal to the Bank on behalf of the Government that we want to take people out of the industry. That is why they are being turned down.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) the way you see it (inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

No? It is fact.

Has the Minister sat down with the Bankers Association since he became Minister and talked to them about upping the aggregate guarantee? Does the Minister know how the program works? Do you know how the program works? The Minister, therefore, if he knows how the program works, knows that the banks have reached the limit of their aggregate. The Minister knows that, does he? And he knows the banks are worried because they have reached the limit of the aggregate and, therefore, it is now incumbent on the Government, if they want to send a signal that they want to finance more harvesting capacity, to up the aggregate. So, has the Minister done that, sat down with the bankers and worked out the deal to up the aggregate for the loan guarantees to the chartered banks?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

He has not done that. He has not sat down with the Bankers

Association. Really, there is only one bank to sit down with. Because ninety-odd per cent of it, as I said, is through the Bank of Nova Scotia anyway, there is only one bank to sit down with. If the Bank of Nova Scotia agrees, you have no worries about the Bank of Montreal or the Royal Bank, because they are minor players in this particular program, important players but minor compared to the Bank of Nova Scotia. So if you get the Bank of Nova Scotia's agreement, the fishermen are okay. But that is not happening, Mr. Speaker. And what the bankers are telling me, and what the bankers are telling their Branch Managers in rural Newfoundland, is that it is their reading, it is their clear understanding from this Government that this Government does not want to finance any more capacity in the fishery. That is what the chief executives down in Scotia Square are telling their branch managers in Flowers Cove, that is what they are telling their branch managers in St. Anthony, that is what they are telling their branch managers in Baie Verte, that the word from this Government is that the Government does not want to finance any more capacity in the fishery, except - not in the 45 - 55 foot category - except anything up around 64 feet 11 inches. The Government is interested in that, and that is the loans that the Minister has signed. The Minister has not signed a loan guarantee for a 45 footer since he became Minister.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What?

MR. RIDEOUT:

He has not signed a loan guarantee for a 45 foot vessel since he became Minister, and the Minister

knows that. Now he has signed a dozen or so for 64, 11s, because the Government wants to take people from the inshore fishery and put them on the Virgin Rocks, and that, Mr. Speaker, has been articulated to the Bank of Nova Scotia, in particular.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Is this the middle distance fleet you are talking about now?

MR. RIDEOUT:

No, no. There is nothing wrong with the mid-distance fleet, Mr. Speaker. Not a thing. Even the Member from Port de Grave will admit that, outside the curtain. I mean, what would St. Anthony do without the middle distance boats these days? They were dedicated for resource short plants. Is there something wrong with that?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Nothing wrong with that!

AN HON. MEMBER:

I am just wondering if that was (inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

The Minister knows what they were dedicated for. He is playing the devil's advocate as usual, but he knows.

MR. FUREY:

You are not calling me (inaudible) are you?

MR. RIDEOUT:

No, I said the devil's advocate. That is worse than being the devil.

If you bring back 200,000 pounds of turbot from 2GH and put it into St. Anthony, the Minister is against that. If you bring it

back and put it into Twillingate, the Minister is against that, as Minister of Development. You do not want those jobs.

MR. FUREY:

(Inaudible) agrees with me (inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, I am sure he does.

But I just told the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, what has happened with the Fisheries Loan Board and those bank loan guarantees. The Government has sent a clear signal through the Minister of Fisheries, although the Minister of Finance signs the guarantees, but through the Minister of Fisheries and the Minister's Department there has been a clear signal sent to the banking community in this Province that there is only a certain category of vessels that this Government is willing to finance, and they are not the 45-55 foot category, they are the big ones, 64 feet 11 inches. You cannot go over that, you see, because if you go over 64 feet 11 inches, you are then in the offshore category and you have to have a permit from Ottawa to go out and fish. But as long as you stay 64 feet 11 inches, you are okay, you can fish out of the inshore allowance. They call them 64, 11s, but I think you can actually go to 64 feet 11.999 inches as long as it is not 65 feet; as long as it is that teensy-weensy bit below 65 feet, you are okay.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Well, you know, the Member for Port de Grave was here. The hon. gentleman was not here, but I

remember the gentleman from Port de Grave telling us a few years ago about the fellow who had to cut an inch or so off of the stem, because when they measured her from the counter to the top of the stem, she was an inch or so over 65 feet. So he got her under 65 feet by chopping an inch or so off of the stem of the boat. Now, when we brought in the Sjoaer from Norway, the middle distance boat, in order to beat the Canadian customs, we had to enlarge on the stem, so it depends on what you are talking about.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a major piece of legislation. There is major direction of Government policy embodied in this legislation. And what I am scared of, Mr. Speaker, and what I am hearing from the fishermen of this Province, is that the Minister is sending the wrong signals; he is sending the wrong signals to the banking community, he is sending the wrong signals to the Executive of the Fisheries Loan Board.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister put in place a Fishing Industry Advisory Council; it had its first meeting one day this week, I believe, a very noble effort, and I applaud the Minister for it. Excellent move. But do you know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister touts that Council as representing the fishing industry of Newfoundland and Labrador? The fishery in its totality is represented by that Council, so says the Minister. Now is it not passing strange that there is not a representative of the Canadian Sealers Association on that Council? Is it not passing strange? Does the seal live on the land? Is it a fish? Does it eat fish? Does it destroy fish? Is it part of the fishing industry?

MR. WARREN:

Nobody from the North Coast of Labrador.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Nobody from the North Coast of Labrador on the Council, and the Minister goes around touting this -

MR. W. CARTER:

What about Bill (Inaudible)?

MR. RIDEOUT:

A very fine gentleman. The Torngat Co-op, I believe he is with, is it?

The Minister has nobody on that Council from the Canadian Sealers Association.

MR. W. CARTER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Why did the Minister not put them on?

MR. W. CARTER:

Why did you not appoint the Board when you were Minister?

MR. RIDEOUT:

I had your Fishing Industry Advisory Board.

MR. W. CARTER:

That was some good too, was it not?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Well, you set it up.

MR. W. CARTER:

I did not set it up.

MR. RIDEOUT:

The Minister brought in the Act in 1975.

MR. W. CARTER:

I amended the Act, but (inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

No, you brought in the Act.

MR. W. CARTER:
I inherited that Act.

MR. RIDEOUT:
No, you brought in the Act. In 1975 the Minister brought in the Act.

MR. W. CARTER:
(Inaudible) I abolished it.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Right. And that is what I told the Minister the other day when he abolished it. He brought it in and he abolished it. That was the Fishing Industry Advisory Board.

MR. W. CARTER:
I did not bring in that Board.

MR. RIDEOUT:
The Minister brought in the Act.

MR. W. CARTER:
I did not.

MS VERGE:
Who do you think brought it in?

MR. RIDEOUT:
You brought in the Act.

MR. W. CARTER:
No. (Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:
No, no. The Minister brought in the original act. My God! I am after telling the Minister. I thought he would have checked it out by now. I tell you why I know the Minister brought it in, because when the Minister talked to me about abolishing it -

MR. W. CARTER:
(Inaudible) when I became Minister.

MR. RIDEOUT:
No, it was not.

MR. W. CARTER:
It was.

MR. RIDEOUT:
It came into existence after the 1973 strike.

MR. W. CARTER:
I did not become Minister until 1975.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Right. And that is when you brought in the Act. It was part of the deal to settle the strike, that a Fishing Industry Advisory Board would be set up.

MR. W. CARTER:
No. You are wrong.

MR. RIDEOUT:
No, And I know why I am not wrong. Because when the Minister was after me to abolish it I had it checked out, and I remember saying to the Minister in the House, 'What do you want me to do, abolish your Act?' Right?

MR. W. CARTER:
(Inaudible).

MR. FUREY:
You were being the devil's advocate then.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Yes. I was being the devil's advocate, yes. It might be so, but I am 99.9 per cent certain.

MR. W. CARTER:
I know you are wrong.

MR. RIDEOUT:
I have been known to be wrong before, and I do not mind admitting when I am wrong, Mr. Speaker. My research shows that the Minister brought in the Act and he abolished the act. As long as he brought those functions into

this Department - I said, quite frankly, I was proposing to do the same thing, to bring those functions into the Department. I think that was the right and proper way to go.

MR. W. CARTER:

The Board was established in 1974.

MR. RIDEOUT:

In 1975.

MR. W. CARTER:

No, 1974.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, when I sit down I have to run out and get the revised Statutes of Newfoundland and look at them. Then I will have to come back and tell the Minister in Third Reading. When they get into Committee of the Whole on this bill, I will have to have the Act in front of me, I suppose. That is the only way to do it, have the Act in front of me, because the Minister is not a believer. I can see he is not a believer. He is not a believer in the fishing industry. As much as he tries to portray that he is a believer, he is not. He is a believer in a 10,000 person professional fishery. He is a believer in that, Mr. Speaker, but the people out there are getting the message. Our office is starting to be flooded with letters and phone calls. There are bags of mail, Mr. Speaker, coming in about what the Minister is trying to do to the fishery.

If the Minister ever saw a riot in rural Newfoundland, he is going to have one on his hands when his Premier and Ottawa announce their plan. He is going to have one on his hands then, because he is going to have 12,000 or 14,000 part-time fishermen beating on his

door, he is going to have plant workers beating on his door, he is going to have fishermen who cannot get loans through the Fisheries Loan Board beating on his door. The Minister, Mr. Speaker, is going to have the Member for St. John's South beating on his door when NatSea announces the closure of the Southside plant.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are some glad you are over there and not over here.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Oh, does the member not know that yet?

AN HON. MEMBER:

The Member for St. John's South and the Member for Harbour Grace and Eagle River.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) already got a (inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Is that right? They are still clinging to hope. But the Minister knows. The Minister has not told the Member. National Sea has been down and briefed the Minister. Is the member not aware of that? NatSea has been down and briefed the Minister. FPI has been in and briefed the Minister. I have said it here in Question Period, and gentlemen on the other side are howling at me when I say it, but I know for a fact that National Sea has been down and told the Minister what will happen under a TAC of 235,000 tons, what will happen under a TAC of 190,000 tons, what will happen under a TAC of 125,000 tons. I know Vic Young has been in and told the Minister that. And when you ask those questions in this House, then you are some how or another accused of playing politics. It is not right

for the Opposition to question those matters, and it is obvious, Mr. Speaker, from listening to my friend from St. John's South, that the Minister has not even told his backbenchers what those scenarios are.

Well, we know. Come over after I take my place and I will tell the hon. gentlemen what National Sea told the Government, and I will tell the hon. gentleman what FPI has told the Government. I have good sources. You do not be Minister of Fisheries for four and a half years, despite the Premier's assertions of having a brother in certain places, and not have contacts in the industry, and not have contacts in Ottawa, and not have contacts in Newfoundland, and not have contacts in the Union. Or you might even have contacts in the Government caucus. You might even be wearing contact lenses.

But, Mr. Speaker, you have those contacts and one of those days -

MR. HOGAN:
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:
No. The hon. Member for Placentia is not going to be here long enough, I do not think. But if you are here long enough to develop those little connections, they serve you in good stead, Mr. Speaker.

I remember the former Member for Fortune - Hermitage, Roger Simmons, and the former Member for Bell Island, Mr. Neary, telling us about the plain brown envelopes that would come under their door when they were in Opposition. Well, Mr. Speaker, the same thing is happening again. The plain brown envelopes - no money - but

a lot of information on the inside. No Christmas gifts, no graft and corruption, but a lot of information. Even Orders in Council, Mr. Speaker, can turn up in the Opposition Office in a plain brown envelope.

AN HON. MEMBER:
I do not believe that.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Well, you had better believe it. Ask the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation. And I do not have a brother in every Department. No, I do not. But those plain brown envelopes have a way of turning up under our door and you can do what you like.

Last June, the Premier was so fanatical and paranoid he was talking about moles in the Government. Now, you can go around looking for moles all you like, there are 3,500 moles out there, Mr. Speaker, whatever the employment of the Civil Service is. You cannot seal it off, you cannot close it off.

Yes, I would say to my friend from St. John's South, we have good contacts. The Minister has been told what I am telling the hon. gentleman, but he has not told you. So I will tell you, come over and have a coffee in the common room and I will tell you what has been told to the Minister. And I will tell you what the Minister has taken to Cabinet as part of the proposed restructuring of the Newfoundland fishery. I will tell you that, some of which I have already told the House, Mr. Speaker.

But I can give the hon. gentleman the fine details of what the Newfoundland Cabinet have approved in principle, not from Ottawa

sources, but from Newfoundland sources. Because you see, Mr. Speaker, here is where it all falls down. They have consulted with the Newfoundland industry, they have consulted with the Fishermen's Union, a fair number of people in the bureaucracy know, and out of all of that you cannot keep a secret. It is impossible.

So, there is no good in going looking for moles or brothers or sisters or mothers-in-law, you have told too many. Too many people know, and out of all of that the Opposition knows. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, what we have said in this House is a fact and the hon. gentleman from St. John's South may as well know it is fact. He has bad news coming, unfortunately, and it is bad news for Newfoundland and Labrador.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:
No, if the TAC is anything under 235.

MR. MURPHY:
If it under 235?

MR. RIDEOUT:
Yes, if it is under 235.

The general consensus in the industry is that it will be 190. Now, I would suspect that it is going to be less than 190. I would not be a bit surprised if it is less than 190, but it is certainly going to be less than 235. So, therefore, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of bad news on the horizon, a lot of bad news embodied in this little amendment. This little amendment is bad news for the fishermen of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Minister can shake his head all he

likes, Mr. Speaker. There is bad news for the financing activities of the Loan Board, bad, bad news! Talk to any of the banks and they will tell you. There is bad, bad news, Mr. Speaker, for the management of the Loan Board, with the Chairman of the Loan Board now being an Assistant Deputy Minister in the Department of Fisheries, directly under the thumb of the Minister to carry out the Minister's wishes, particularly a Minister whose wishes we have seen carried out before in terms of the Fisheries Loan Board.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

I have recognized the hon. the Member for Stephenville.

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

I just want a couple of minutes in this debate on the Bill brought forward by the Minister of Fisheries.

It is interesting to listen to the Leader of the Opposition and to the Opposition talk about all the problems in the Fishery. The only problem I have is I have not been able to figure out yet how we have made such a mess of it in the seven or eight months we have been here. I really cannot understand that. I do not know if it is possible. If you tried hard, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you

could make the mess of it that they describe, in that short period of time. I think it would be practically impossible to do so.

There are major problems in the fishery, Mr. Speaker, major problems all over the Province. There have been for quite some time. And there are no easy answers, no easy process, no simplified answer to the whole thing, but it is going to take dealing with it and going at it seriously to try to resolve the matter. But to just shove it over to the Provincial Department of Fisheries and say, 'Well, you are responsible for the whole thing,' I think is somewhat unfair. I mean, we will accept some responsibility as the Provincial Government, but I think, to the extent it has been described by the Leader of the Opposition, there is a little bit of hyperbole involved in his description.

I want to just touch on a couple of things basically, Mr. Speaker, one concerning the Loan Board. I have, for two years, been attempting to get a fibreglass boat builder. He has been interested in coming into Stephenville, moving over from Nova Scotia, and he produces boats anywhere from 35 or 40 feet to 60-odd, anywhere from the 40 foot to 55 foot range, fibreglass boats. His boat is a very good boat and has interested a number of Newfoundland fishermen. At this time, it interests a great number of Newfoundland fishermen. He has been two years in the process of trying to move over and we are still trying to work out something to see if we can get him over here. But I do not find that the friction is coming from the Fisheries Loan Board in Newfoundland, what I find is that

it is coming from ACOA, Mr. Speaker, which absolutely amazes me - well, not really, I suppose, because they have not been exactly that co-operative in our region of Bay St. George, and it is most unfortunate. But it is not the Fisheries Loan Board that is holding up this fibreglass boat building industry, which could be established in Stephenville.

This boat builder built a boat for a Newfoundland fisherman last year with the approval of the Provincial Government, over in Nova Scotia, using Newfoundland Fisheries Loan Board money, the only boat builder ever to do that outside this Province. The reason he did that was that there was nobody building those types of boats in this Province and he was allowed to do that for a Newfoundland fisherman, and the fisherman went over and was able to get his boat from Nova Scotia.

So, this Nova Scotia boat builder wants to move to Newfoundland to build boats over here. He has a big market. He has identified a number of fishermen who are very interested. But the problem he has is not the Fisheries Loan Board, and it is not the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries or the Newfoundland Government, it is the federal ACOA people who are saying, 'Well, we are not sure about this and we are not sure about that, and we will have to have another market study,' and so on and so forth. So I think certain people in ACOA, involved with the fisheries side, have a certain agenda which I think maybe is to downsize the fishery. But I think we should lay some of the responsibility where the responsibility should rest, and that is a problem. I am sure the Federal Government is

telling ACOA, 'Lay off on giving out loans to boat builders,' or 'Lay off on giving loans to anything related to the fishery right now.' That is the last thing we should be doing.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) the fisheries.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Oh, yes.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) over here.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Exactly. I mean, we want to see the fishery get better. We do not want to see it get worse, we want to see it get better. We want to see everybody involved. But we are not the culprits here, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to resolve the problem, and we should put the blame where it lies. The Federal Government, through its federal DFO and mismanagement and its instructions to ACOA right now, are not permitting an expansion of other secondary industries in the fishing industry, which could help expand the base of the fishing industry in this Province.

I have experienced a wicked amount of frustration over the last two years in trying to get this legitimate boat builder into Newfoundland. It is most unfortunate that right now everything is being supported by the Province and by the Loan Board. ACOA is down there saying, 'Well, we are not sure what we are going to do, we do not know if he has a market,' and he has a list of about fifteen to twenty fishermen who want to get boats built. He would be building for the next three years in a row, but they are not sure he has a market. It poisons me, to tell

you the truth, when we can have another secondary industry in this Province and be expanding it. You know, you do not set up ten boat builders when there is only room for five, but when there is room for five and you only have one or two, then you expand the industry. I think that ACOA should heed the calls of this Province and the calls of the needs of this Province when it comes to the fishing industry.

So it is not the Loan Board, I do not think, that is the problem, Mr. Speaker. This Provincial Government is trying to make some changes and we are going to go through those changes. We are going to make a scattered mistake here and there, but we are trying to work it out.

One of the other things I want to touch on while I am at this, Mr. Speaker, is the over-the-side sales in the last couple of years in the Bay St. George - Port au Port Peninsula area. Russian trawlers have been in the Bay St. George area and it has been like a city on the water with the lights, the fishing boats, the big trawlers and factory freezer trawlers out there.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Side by each.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
And they are side by each, as they say, side by each. They are out there. There were about three of them last Spring. They are just cleaning her, Mr. Speaker, the herring stocks in Bay St. George. I am calling the DFO people - this was last year and the year before - and they are saying that this is surplus stock, underutilized species that are sitting there that we will give to

the Russians because our fishermen do not catch that stock.

We have one fish plant in Stephenville now that is going into receivership, probably it has gone. We have another one in Piccadilly, and we do not know what is going to happen to that. We have all this fish around us and yet the Russians are there getting an over-the-side sales deal, processing the fish right out in the bay and then sending it away. We are getting no benefit from that at all.

So I have a problem with that part of the fishing industry, with that being allowed to happen, not seeing the benefit of that fish going to our shore plants in Bay St. George and in Western Newfoundland. I think there is a problem.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) catch it.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
They could catch it. Yes, they can catch it.

AN HON. MEMBER:
You are not set up for it.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Well, we did not get set up for it. If the fish is there and it is surplus stock and we can give it to another market, I am all for it. That is fine. I have no problem with that. It is hard to explain to Bay St. George residents, when you see those boats out there taking all that stock and nobody monitoring it. I mean, hardly anybody is monitoring what they are doing out there. I asked DFO about it and they said 'Oh, we send out somebody once in a while'. I mean, they have cleaned out stocks elsewhere in

this Province. I think we should be monitoring what is going on.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Yes, some were, but not very much. He could hardly get any of it last year.

But one of the suggestions that have been made on that, Mr. Speaker, is that a trigger committee which has been set up for the Newfoundland region be expanded for all of Newfoundland. Because right now the West Coast is included in the Gulf region, and basically we have no say in what DFO does with allocations of over-the-side sales and everything else. Whereas over here on this side of the Province we do, and we can have some input.

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Your Premier does not want any say in it.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Hold on now. Oh, yes we do. We have a proposal for a Canada - Newfoundland Fisheries Board which would see us have input into all kinds of decisions. An excellent suggestion made by this Government, by the way, and I am sure that we will see it come to fruition. That is not a problem there. Now we are trying to get some action on that to see if that can happen, but that is an identified problem and that affects the fishery in Bay St. George, Port au Port, and it affects the fishing industry and it affects the fishermen. When it comes to the Fisheries Loan Board activity and trying to stimulate the industry and give out loans, it also affects that.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that is an identified problem that we have to deal with, one that has been left with us. Again it is one that I do not think was seriously dealt with before, but it has to be dealt with now, and I hope to see something come out of it which is positive.

On the Fisheries Loan Board side, as you said, Mr. Speaker, our Fisheries Loan Board is making some adjustments but I do not think it is the Fisheries Loan Board that is at fault, nor the Provincial Government. It is the Federal Government who certainly mismanaged the resource and they have to take almost all of the blame, as far as I am concerned. But if we can get more input into the process, which we have asked to do, and get part of that decision-making process through a board of management which would be a joint board, I think we would see some changes and a positive effect.

I do not think we should be blamed, Mr. Speaker, for all the problems that exist in the fishing industry. I mean, we will accept our share of the blame, but other people should do the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I would like to say a few words about this Bill and I begin by making a suggestion to the Minister, since we are on the Fisheries Loan Board, and make a recommendation for change to it.

I speak on behalf of the

fisherpeople in Davis Inlet, the Indian population of Davis Inlet. In fact, this last number of years there have only been one or two Indian families fishing. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that they cannot qualify for a loan through the Fisheries Loan Board because of their income. The Band Council recently suggested that where they have some funds under the Federal/Provincial Native People's Agreement, they wish to submit an application to the Minister's Department to purchase up to six or eight - the Indian fishing boat is a freighter canoe. It is not an ordinary speed boat, which most Labrador fishermen use, it is a freighter canoe. Each one of those boats would probably cost anywhere from \$1,500 to \$2,500, depending on where you buy them. So they were going to approach the Loan Board with a combined application from the Band Council to purchase those freighters so that they will involve a number of the Indian fishermen in fishing, in particular, char and salmon.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the area within Davis Inlet, a radius of 10 miles of the Davis Inlet, is one of the better char and fishing areas left in Labrador, due to the fact - probably it was a blessing in disguise - that in the last ten years there were very few Indians fishing in this area, and consequently the stock did rebuild substantially. I understand this is a prime area, and if the Band Council has shown the foresight and the initiative to make this kind of request, I would suggest to the Minister that he do everything in his power to seriously consider the request.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me go to other the sections I wish to refer to. I am interested that the

Member for Eagle River had -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Now, be sensible.

MR. WARREN:

Yes, I am going to be sensible. The Member for Eagle River has reminded the Minister of Fisheries to make a comment, and I have no doubt it will be a good comment.

Now, the Member from Eagle River, in the past - and I think he still believes in this, and this is not criticism in anyway - has said, and I think it was only this past summer, that he is concerned - I am too, by the way - that there are so many large vessels from the Island portion of the Province going up to Labrador every year to fish extensively, and the fisherpersons in those areas who cannot afford to have large boats, come off with the short end of the stick. And I think the hon. gentleman has said this quite fairly. Now, I also agree with this. We can talk about the Loan Board since whenever it was in use. The Loan board, to me, does not address the fisherman on an equal basis compared to their income, compared to the way and geography of their living. And I would say to the Minister that the fishermen in Nain or the fishermen in Pinsent's Arm, their financial capabilities in a lot of cases are not as adequate as other fishermen on the Island portion of the Province.

I think you have to look at the seriousness of those fishermen who want to get into larger boats, but who do not have the financial wherewithall to do so. I say to the Minister of Fisheries that he should seriously look at the applications coming out of the Labrador coast, and recognize what

the Minister said a couple of days ago, and what he said yesterday in the Late Show: Those nearest to the resource should be the first to benefit. But those nearest to the resource cannot benefit if they are curtailed by Government by stopping them from getting loans to obtain larger vessels so they can prosecute the fishery. That is one of the major problems on the Labrador coast.

Now we are building two new fish plants in Nain/Makkovik worth, I think, about close to \$6 million. Next year, when those plants are finished - the next two years - you are going to see something like you saw in Makkovik four years ago, when there were 67 long liners from around the Island stationed and fishing in the Makkovik area. And where did most the fish go? To over-the-side sales the union had set up out in the Harbour in Makkovik. And here was a small fisherman in his 18 or 16 or 15 foot speed boat, which was all he could afford, getting probably about 100 pounds of fish a day. This has to change.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I was disappointed with the Member from Eagle River. The hon. Member did not realize at the time he had made a mistake, but the Minister of Fisheries should have realized it.

MR. MURPHY:

He should have run (inaudible).

MR. WARREN:

No, Mr. Speaker, there was a press statement from the Member for Eagle River approximately a month ago, on behalf of the Minister of Fisheries, and the press statement said, 'I am quite pleased to announce on behalf of the Minister of Fisheries that Mr. Walsh is the

first Labradorian appointed to the Fisheries Loan Board.' Now I believe the hon. Member said that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DUMARESQUE:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Eagle River, on a point of order.

MR. DUMARESQUE:

Mr. Speaker, since the Member referred to a press statement I put out, I would just like to, for the record, indicate that that particular press release specifically said that to my knowledge Mr. Walsh was the first Labradorian to be put on to the Fisheries Loan Board, and since we checked the record, since the new restructuring of the Loan Board in 1980, that is indeed a fact.

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no point of order, I guess, it was a point of clarification.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again I say to the hon. Member he did not check out his facts. And furthermore, what is so surprising is that when I was working with the Department of Fisheries in Labrador and my hon. friend, the Minister of Fisheries then, this hon. gentleman who advised the hon. the Member for Eagle River to make this statement, already back in 1977, or 1978, appointed two full-blooded Labradorians to the Fisheries Loan Board - two - and I will give the hon. gentleman the names of the two individuals: Their names are Mr. Clark from

Charlottetown, and Mr. Toby Anderson from Makkovik. Those were the two gentlemen the hon. Minister, as Minister of Fisheries, appointed to the Loan Board. And I say to the hon. gentleman, those two people are native Labradorians. And the hon. gentleman went out and said in his press release that he was pleased to announce the first Labradorian to the Loan Board.

Mr. Speaker, I could have gone and made some big press release and said the Minister is wrong, and he misled everybody, but I did not want to do that. But I thought today was the proper time, when we are talking about the Fisheries Loan Bill, for me to bring it to the attention of the hon. House. When we make statements concerning appointments and things like that, we should be correct in what we are saying. Mr. Speaker, this is not a serious criticism of the hon. gentleman, because I think he is fighting for the fisherman along the Labrador Coast.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was going to give up on that subject, but the hon. gentleman is saying 'to his knowledge'. I am saying the Minister of Fisheries must have given you the information, so surely, goodness, you should have checked it with the Minister of Fisheries. That is all I am saying, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. WARREN:

That is the Loan Board, the Members of the Loan Board.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) has to do with the Loan Board?

MR. WARREN:

It has everything in the world to do with the Loan Board.

AN HON. MEMBER:

If we do not get boats, how are we going to get fish?

MR. WARREN:

Ah, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman from LaPoile, he said all I talked about was - I am not supposed to name the hon gentleman - the hon. Member for Eagle River. In the last ten years I would say one of the livliest debates in this House is when two differnt Members from Labrador get up and speak. And this has been happening ever since I have been in, since 1979. It used to be the Member for Eagle River before, and then when I was over here years ago, he was the Minister of Rural Development, Mr. Goudie, so you know there is always this kind of battle -

MR. MURPHY:

(Inaudible).

MR. WARREN:

I did not hear the hon. gentleman.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. WARREN:

No, no, I am listening to the Member for St. John's South.

MR. MURPHY:

Rookie of the year, the Member for Eagle River.

MR. WARREN:

Oh yes! In fact, Mr. Speaker, if we do come up with some kind of award, I would be obliged to get up and speak in support of at least one of the contenders. Definitely! No doubt about that. You know, I would think we could

probably use the Member for St. George's. He could be a contender. He is a rookie. The Member for Harbour Grace, could be a contender; and we have a Member for Fogo. I will tell you this much, I would have trouble comparing the Member for Eagle River and the Member for Fogo. They are very close there. If there was a ballot and you were voting secretly, it would be very close.

MR. PARSONS:

My vote goes to the Member for Harbour Grace.

MR. WARREN:

There is an example now. If there was a vote in this House on the rookie of the year my hon. colleague from St. John's East Extern would be voting for the Member for Harbour Grace. So, therefore, there is a rookie.

MR. FUREY:

(Inaudible) relevant.

MR. WARREN:

I agree with the hon. Minister of Development, it is a little off course. But I would say to the hon. gentleman, when you are swayed by the six musketeers down in the corner -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Rookie of the year is gone. I nominate you for the Lady Bing.

MR. WARREN:

I find you very sarcastic but interesting. I would assure the hon. gentleman, with his comments in the House a few days ago, there would be no such thing as a Lady Bing for the hon. gentleman. I can assure him of that.

Mr. Speaker, I have only a few more minutes and I just want to

say to the Minister, if the Minister missed what I was saying about the large boats on the Island and the small boats on the Labrador Coast -

MR. W. CARTER:
I did get that.

MR. WARREN:
Okay. I would suggest to the Minister that he look very seriously at the applications of the people who submit applications from the small Labrador communities because our fishery now is diminished, and if we are not careful, we are going to see what happened about nine or ten years ago, when the fishery on the Labrador Coast was practically washed out. It was only just in the last few years it has begun to come back. In fact, last year it was not that promising. Although the Black Tickle area and the Makkovik area did have a fairly good fishery, the rest of Labrador had a really bad fishing season last year. I think that can be agreed with.

I want to say in closing, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister has -

AN HON. MEMBER:
By leave!

MR. WARREN:
You want me to keep going?

I would ask the Minister to seriously look at those requests. They are very simple request and all I am doing is what my hon. colleague does time and time again, beg on behalf of those people.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. WARREN:

I am glad the hon. gentleman asked me that, because I have done so, Sir. In fact, I have talked to federal officials and the federal Minister, and let me just tell the hon. gentleman -

MR. GRIMES:
Table that.

MR. WARREN:
Mr. Speaker, I should tell the hon. gentleman from Exploits that one of those days I will table more than a report.

I say to the hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that the shrimp application for the Innu of Davis Inlet is that close, and I would hope that this Government are supporting their application also. Mr. Speaker, it is very, very important that they get support for their application.

I say to the hon. gentleman that I have, in fact, written two letters. I have supported the Innu Development Corporation, which combines Davis Inlet and Sheshatshit, and I have also supported the Davis Inlet one. So, Mr. Speaker, I supported both. Mr. Speaker, just to let the hon. gentleman know where I am coming from, I have supported the requests that I received. I support any application that is going to help the people in my district. I will support any application that will help the people of my district. I am quite pleased that I have done so, because as far as I am concerned the Bart Jacks Innu Corporation, which includes Davis Inlet and Sheshatshit, is part and parcel of the Davis Inlet one, and there are two applications in for the two shrimp licences; the one for Davis Inlet is very, very close to reality.

So I say to the hon. gentlemen, because this is exactly what the hon. gentlemen went up and told the Minister and reminded him about the shrimp licences for Davis Inlet. But I was just a little bit ahead of the hon. gentleman, because the hon. gentleman did not know that I had the second contact with the Minister. And I must say that the hon. gentleman, again, always tries to -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. WARREN:
We are going off course again now, but it still has to tie in with fisheries.

The hon. gentleman says that he does not like Bart Jacks. Now, I shall get the message out to the Indians in Labrador that the hon. gentleman does not want the Bart Jacks or the Innu Corporation to get any development money or any funds for development. That is what the hon. gentleman is saying now.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the the hon. gentleman does not understand the Naskaupi Montagnais Innu operation, okay. I should give him a little lesson: It includes all of the Indians and all of the Sheshatshit, and all of the Indian in Davis Inlet. Bart Jacks is an Inuit. Cajetan is an Inuit too. Now I should tell the hon. gentleman that both of them are Inuit people, okay. Now I say to the hon. gentleman that both of them may have different agendas, but they are there to try to serve the Innu population in the best way they think they can do so.

I say to the hon. gentleman, if he has a mind to support the request

from people in his District, as I am doing in my District. For example Donald Sampson in Port Hope Simpson, who came to your Minister and you in the last two months about a bridge that needs repairs, Where is the money and the support for that bridge? Not next year, when it should be done now. So I say to the hon. gentleman, throw out support to all the people in your District, and in my District too, by the way, because I support people everywhere in Labrador. However, Mr. Speaker, I should say for the record that I know it is a little bit off course but I am only going to take one minute.

Mr. Speaker, there are some issues as it pertains to Labrador that one cannot support. One of the things that I have said publicly that I do not support is the manner and the way that the protestors have protested against NATO going to Labrador.

I do not agree with the way in which the protest was carried out. I do not agree with anybody breaking the law. I disagree with people breaking the law. This is one part I do not agree with. Meanwhile, at the same time, I think this hon. House should recognize the fact that with what is happening over in West Germany and East Germany and Czechoslovakia and Russia and with the Czechoslovakia saying today 'that the walls are coming down' and with all these things happening, it may not be as appetizing and as interesting now as it was four or five years ago. I think we just cannot put all of our eggs in one basket for the economic benefit of Labrador through the NATO base.

Last night I heard on the news,

and I am sure my hon. colleagues heard on the news about a group of concerned citizens in Goose Bay and the noise level. So there are a lot of things to be taken into consideration. However, Mr. Speaker, I am off track again.

Mr. Speaker, you know it is interesting that we are talking about the Fisheries Loan Board. I guess with all boats there are, usually a captain has to charter the right course. I would hope that the Minister will charter a course that will only benefit some fishermen and be a disadvantage to other fishermen. I say to the Minister, with those two new fish plants that will come on stream in Nain and Makkovik within the next four months, I would strongly recommend that the Minister make sure that the fishermen who live in the adjacent areas to those two fish plants are given every opportunity to benefit from the resource that lies just off their shores.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further comments.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

MR. MURPHY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am having difficulty with the comments the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition made this morning in considering this particular Bill, that he would even suggest that this Government move without due care, caution and control in approving monies for all kinds of boats, left, right and center. That was basically what he said.

Look at the Hon. Member for St. Mary's - The Capes who is in a

very difficult position in his district in Newfoundland. When you consider the amount of trap berths and the amount of space that the inshore fishery has in his district for procuring any fish, he is faced with some of the music the Leader of the Opposition got up with this morning, when he talked about his ins and who he knows and who he does not know with regard to a very serious problem in retrospect to the Fishery Products Plant in Trepassey. It is teeter-tottering, and he well knows it.

The hon. Member for Harbour Main has a fishery in his district now that is also teeter-tottering, and I am not so sure of the history of the fishery by the previous administration and by our so-called friends or somebody's friends in Ottawa, who have over the years thrown out licences and let the people of this Province believe that there was a resource out there that in reality was not there.

So I can understand the caution and the amendment to The Fisheries Loan Act instituted by the Minister of Fisheries in conjunction with the Minister of Finance, that no longer can we take an attitude of building boats, throwing out money for boats to obviously catch fish that are not there.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen an intensification in all kinds of vessels throughout this Province and throughout Labrador to procure that almighty cod that is no longer as stable as it was. We found out very rapidly that some of the other by-catches, some of the other groundfish are disappearing and disappearing

alarmingly. Our friends opposite stand up and say that the banks are very, very cautious of supporting loans to fishermen in this Province. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, so they should be, because the banks are the financial institutes that run this country and they have to be cautious when they see the demise of Fishery Products, not the demise but certainly the turndown in their quotas and their losses, not to speak of the company that owns the fish plant that operates in my district, in St. John's South, that showed a loss of \$13.7 million in the last quarter. If I was in the banking business I would be very skeptical about loaning anybody a ten-cent piece for anything to do with the fishery.

Now, this Act is not before this hon. House because of this Government, this Minister of Fisheries. It is here in realization that we just cannot continue to build boat after fishing boat after fishing boat, the 64, 11s the hon. Leader of the Opposition alluded to that go to the Virgin Rocks now and function on an inshore quota. If you talk to any of these Skippers or any of these crew members from all across this Province, I am sure the hon. Member for Hermitage - Fortune will understand that it is like a community out there. And what was normally a very low catch is now a very acceptable catch, because there are boats on boats. And probably, Mr. Speaker, the people who are most offended are those people who sell the Loran equipment, and those people who sell all of the navigational equipment, because these people realize that their sales will be down. And they have to be down, because the Loran equipment that

goes with all the vessels now is necessary so that they do not run over one of them. It is another city. And the hon. the Member from Mount Pearl I am sure, if he was part of the Government today, would probably be voicing his concerns that there might be another city formed on the water. I have talked to Captain after Captain, not only of small boats, mid-water boats, but of trawlers, and they say that it is totally incredible that there are any fish out there at all. And the hon. gentlemen Opposite stand in their places and criticize the Minister of Fisheries for putting some concern and some better control on support financing to fishermen who want bigger and larger boats. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and to this hon. House that it is time, really time, that we stop bartering back and forth to one another and understand exactly where we are. We are in a very, very precarious position. Our fishing industry is in chaos, and we blame many factors.

If we had a look at CBC this week we saw the two shows associated with the Spanish and the Portuguese, and how they feel about who the real destroyers are of the Newfoundland fishery. And maybe there is some validity in what they say, that we, ourselves, over the last 25, 30 or 40 years, have not paid enough attention to our own depletion of the stock. And now we have the seals and all the other items to worry about. So I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it is time for us all to realize that only together and with common sense can we ensure that 5, 6, or 7 years down the road the graph on the fishery and the graph on the stocks would take an upward turn. By putting more boats on the water, by putting more fishermen

on the water, by putting more nets in the water, by putting in more hand-lines, part-time and other types of fishermen on the water, we will do nothing to revitalize our stocks in any species.

MR. PARSONS:

Well, you are saying 6,000 people should be laid off, 6000 people should go.

MR. MURPHY:

The hon. the Member from St. John's East Extern is suggesting that I am saying that. No, I am not saying that should happen. What I am saying is that we can no longer, at the whim of anybody who has good credit, as the Leader of the Opposition said, rush to the Minister of Fisheries, rush to the Fisheries Loan Board and start building \$700,000 and \$800,000 and \$900,000 vessels to go on the Banks, on the grounds and catch fish that you and I know is not there. It is money ill-invested.

MR. PARSONS:

Right now there are hundreds of people working in plants who, only for the mid-distance fleet, would never be there.

MR. MURPHY:

That has nothing to do with a Fisheries Loan for boats.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes, for boats. They need new boats.

MR. MURPHY:

Mr. Speaker, we could batter this about all day. I say to the hon. the Minister of Fisheries that his decisions are sound, his decisions are solid, and any time that anybody comes to his Department and/or the Fisheries Loan Board, the boat they are fishing out of should be almost sinkable before

he would even think about putting more boats on the waters until our stocks are rebuilt. And just to stand up and say that this particular amendment to this Act is not right and it freezes our fishermen is totally incorrect.

MR. PARSONS:

Do you mean to tell me that with the accidents fishermen have had with bad boats that you say they should be even worse than that before they are allowed to get a new one with help from the Loan Board?

MR. MURPHY:

I suggest to the hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern that the accidents that have taken place on the fishing grounds are not always associated with bad boats.

MR. PARSONS:

What was that one that was lost that time? It should never be if we can do anything about it.

MR. MURPHY:

Time and time again over the years, people with no experience, no great background in the fishery, have come in to both the Federal and Provincial Governments of their day, getting thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars, and two years later, those boats have been sitting on slipways and docks, rotting on the keel.

I would suggest that the hon. Minister and his Department have done well with this new Bill, and I think we all should support it. Thank you.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for St. Mary's
- The Capes.

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I noticed the Minister was getting to his feet to conclude the remarks on the Bill, but I suggest to him, it will be a long time before this Bill passes. We were told that Bill No. 40 comes to the House on Monday and if it does, this Bill, which certainly will not go through today, will be left until well after Christmas when we finish dealing with Bill 40, maybe Christmas Eve when we are enjoying our Christmas turkey around the table here, we can come back for a few minutes and finish off the Bill on the fishery.

I said we would be enjoying our Christmas dinner with a big turkey on the table, but there will be a lot of tables around Newfoundland this year, Mr. Speaker, where there will not be any turkeys, and it will be the tables of the people involved in the fishery.

And when we look at a Bill like this - the Minister spoke this morning briefly on this as if it were not an important Bill. In substance, I suppose, and content it is not overly important, but when you look at what is happening here, where the Minister is making sure that political control can be exerted over the Loan Board, it is of extreme importance. But the big question we should be asking is, 'Is there going to be any need for a Fisheries Loan Board at all?'

The Member for St. John's South, who just spoke and who reminded me of the problem that we are facing in my district, is well aware that he is facing one in his own, probably much more serious. I can

fully appreciate it. I know what the member is going through. But towards the end of his remarks he said that perhaps we should not - in fact he did not say perhaps, he said we should not - put any more boats into the water, which just reconfirms what we have been saying about this Government's philosophy of the fishery, get everyone out of the fishery, force them out. The latest move is, do not let them repair or improve or get new boats. So gradually they will have no other choice but haul them up and leave them on the beach.

I mentioned the fact that we may not need a Fisheries Loan Board. When we look at what is happening in the worst scenario - and hopefully with the pressures that we have been able to put on the Provincial Government and the Government in Ottawa, if they have been listening to us on this side, maybe some changes will be made - if fish plants close in this Province, it means more than having fish plant workers unemployed. It means in several areas the people who fish in those areas will not have markets. It is easy enough to say, 'Oh, there are plants around the Province that are not producing to capacity', 'Plants only work for x number of weeks', 'Fish will be trucked.' See what will happen if plants close. We can go back through history and see what happens in the glut season, when there are all kinds of plants. When we have caplin, nobody wants cod, when cod is plentiful in St. Mary's Bay, it is plentiful in Placentia Bay and Trinity Bay and so on, consequently, nobody is going to want the extra fish there. If we close plants down, we eliminate markets for fishermen. A typical example

occurred up in St. Mary's Bay - and I am sure it did in other areas - a few years ago, when the plants in Riverhead and Admiral's Beach and St. Mary's were out of operation. The fishermen had to give up fishing because they could not sell. So if plants go down fishermen go down, and if they go down, they do not need boats.

Just in our own area alone, Trepassey is on the auction block, three plants belonging to Universal, affecting the immediate area, could also go down. What has the Provincial Government done? What has the Department of Fisheries done to help those? The statement in relation to the deep sea plants from the Premier, the Government official statement, is recorded in Hansard, and from a number of the Members, is that we have too many plants and we should let some of them go down. In relation to the Universal operation, and they are now trying to pull their way out of it by injecting money of their own, despite the dollars they put in originally, they have had absolutely no co-operation from the Government to keep 1,500 jobs alive and a market for every fisherman in St. Mary's Bay and along the Southern Shore, and in the Belleoram area.

We have a statement saying it is going to be harder to get loans from the Loan Board. It has always been fairly difficult. Fishermen just cannot walk in to the Loan Board, despite what people think, and go out with a loan. They have had to have input on their own. They have had to be responsible full-time fishermen. They had to have a good record. And there was nothing wrong with that. Fishermen have to be businessmen just like everybody

else. But times are now hard. This year, in many parts of the Province, we have had one disastrous season. We have long-time full-time legitimate fishermen who, this year, despite their efforts, ended up with one or two stamps. They cannot even get on the Fisheries Response Program as of yet at least, in order to try to make up enough stamps so they will have an income during the winter, as meagre as it will be on UIC. That is the type of year we are having. We have a number of good business people who have operated plants in different parts of the Province, who have had, once again, a terrible season economically, simply because the resource was not there. When you are operating on a piecemeal basis, you still have the same maintenance, basically, and, of course, you end up losing money.

When times are bad, you try to help people. You try to help fishermen, you try to help the operators. What are the operators being told? 'No, it is going to be much harder to get anything out of this Government,' What are the fishermen being told? 'It is going to be harder to get a loan.' What were they told when we asked that some extra help be given by the Province, as it always had been done. Always, in the past, when we had problems in the fishery, when the Federal Government stepped in to help out, the Province always came in with it, or right behind it, and helped the fishermen and plant workers across the Province to make sure they had an income for the winter. What did this Government do? Well, the Minister of Labour Relations and Employment, or Unemployment, maybe we should call it, went on television and said, 'Let them go on welfare.' That is

what she said, 'Let them go on welfare.' That has been this Government's reaction to the poor people in the Province - let them go on welfare. Where are the positives? No help in fishery response, harder to get loans at loan boards, no help for industry, for companies that are in trouble when hundreds, and thousands of jobs are going down the drain, none! not a cent, not a piece of encouragement.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) teachers (inaudible).

MR. HEARN:

The teachers? We will come to the teachers in a few weeks time. We will come to the teachers when we start talking about pensions, because they are also being shafted by the Government. And just wait until we get into that one. If you think we are having fun with the fishery, and that you guys have your head on the block because of your stand on the fishery, wait until we get into the teachers' issue. And when the Minister of Finance has to stand up and be accountable for his actions or lack of actions in relation to the teachers, just wait and see what happens then.

Let us see, if this Minister of Finance and the President of Treasury Board and the Minister of Education will be able to sit down months in advance of the contract running out and sign in a peaceable and amicable way a contract with the teachers of this Province. Let us just wait and see. But in the meantime, that issue we will take care of in the next few weeks. Right now, our concern is the lack of action the Government is taking for the fishery.

A few weeks ago, the Federal Government announced a Fisheries Response Program, the regulations that they brought in much against the advice of our caucus, who had Faxed them a formal reply in relation to the regulations stating that we respect the right to control the hiring. We know you cannot put out programs unless you have rules and regulations for qualifying, but we also know for every rule there has to be an exception, where you have had a disaster. We are not talking about a general fishery, where every year in certain parts of the Province or the country people cannot get enough stamps to qualify for UIC so you try to assist them in their time of need. This year we are talking about a complete and utter failure in several parts of the Province, where people did not even get a minimum number of weeks to qualify. We suggested to them that when you set your minimum regulations, make sure that the flexibility is there to deal with people who have been hit by a disaster, people, getting back to the Bill, who are in a bind, who cannot even go to the Loan Board to get a loan to improve their boats, who cannot get help to repair their nets for next spring, who are there now wondering how they are going to put toys in the stockings and food on the table for Christmas. These people have not made a cent since June.

The hon. Members, most of whom who know nothing about the fishery - the Minister of Finance was speaking over there, interrupting me. He is one who has always stood up for rural Newfoundland. He is familiar with the way of life. And I said the other day when he was not here, if this Government is going to help

anybody in rural Newfoundland, if it is going to keep Newfoundland alive, then the Minister of Finance has to take the lead. Because he is the only one I have ever heard speaking with common sense as it relates to what outport life is really like and how we should preserve it. Nobody else seems to care.

So the Minister of Finance should dance around the Cabinet table and pound on it and make sure that these people realize that there is life outside the Overpass. There are people in this Province who need help from Governments. Governments are not there to help themselves or to help big business, necessarily - it is great to be able to encourage people - they are there for the sake of the people. And now the people of Newfoundland, not just a few, a tremendous number of people in Newfoundland need help and leadership from this Government. What are they getting? They are getting insults. The one statement that has come out, 'No help. Burn your boats, close the plants, go to Toronto; too many people in the fishery.'

MR. W. CARTER:
(Inaudible).

MR. HEARN:
Read Hansard. It is on the record, 'Too many people in the fishery. We must rationalize the fishery; too many fish plants.' When asked, 'What is your alternative?' The answer is, 'Let them go on welfare.'

Mr. Speaker, it is almost 12:00, so I adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the spirit of co-operation that always exists on this side of the House, I point out once again that on Monday we will be debating Bill No. 40, which was distributed today.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House at its rising do adjourn until 2:00 p.m. Monday, and that this House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, at 2:00 p.m.

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