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Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):
Order, please!

On behalf of hon. Members I would like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery today the hon. Gilbert Parent, Member of Parliament for Welland - St. Catharines - Thorold.

I would also like to welcome to the public galleries seventy Level 11 students from O'Donnell High School, Mount Pearl, accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Sutton, Mr. Sauve and Mr. Mooney.

Also we would like to welcome a group of thirty-three students from Queen Elizabeth High School, in Foxtrap, accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Lloyd Johnson, Mr. Heber Best and student teacher, Margaret Walsh.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter). I am wondering if the Minister could inform the House whether he or any of his officials have met with National Sea Products pertaining to a plant closure in the Province by National Sea?

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

MR. W. CARTER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, between four o'clock and six o'clock, the Premier and I and our officials met with officials of the two offshore companies FPI and NSP, at which time we discussed possible plant closures in the Province. In the case of FPI there is nothing definite yet as to exactly what plants they are going to close, it will depend largely, I guess, on the total allowable catch and the allocation. In the case of National Sea Products the discussion was more definite. Under certain circumstances we know that there will be one plant closed in the Province, and I expect there will be an announcement made by that company sometime in the near future to that effect.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for his answer. Of course, we understand, as well, that definite plans cannot be made by Fishery Products International until the total allowable catch is set for 1990. Having said that, we all know that the maximum the TAC will be in 1990 is 190,000 metric tons. We are hoping that it is going to be 190,000, and certainly would hope that it will not be any less. In light of obviously admitting to the House today that he has knowledge of what National Sea plant will be closing in the Province, will the Minister not extend the courtesy of informing the House, and consequently the employees of National Sea Products wherever, Burgeo or St. John's, and the people of the Province, what plant will close?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

No, Mr. Speaker. I think the people who are employed in that particular plant deserve the right to hear it from their employer rather than on the evening news.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Premier tabled the report by Mr. Justice Mahoney in the House of Assembly, accompanied by a statement on the results of his investigation into the actions of the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, I refer the Premier to page 16 of that particular report, and it clearly shows that within two weeks of being sworn into Cabinet, the Minister of Social Services had arranged a meeting between himself, the Minister of Fisheries, the Minister of Social Services' brother, a lawyer and a naval architect. That is according to the statements made on page 16 of the report. The Premier will know, also on page 16 of the report, that just one week before the Government took office the Minister of Social Services, as he is now, made a statement to an employee of the Fisheries Loan Board that in a week's time, when the new Government took over, he would see to it that matters were straightened out at the Fisheries Loan Board, if he got the appointment he was looking for.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker I am quoting from Mr. Justice Mahoney. I cannot say if it is wrong or right. This is what is in the report on page 16.

Now I want to ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that, according to Mr. Justice Mahoney, only two weeks after the Government was sworn in the Minister of Social Services arranged this meeting with the Minister of Fisheries, with the Minister of Social Services' brother, legal counsel and naval architect, is the Premier concerned that the Minister of Social Services was in fact moving quickly to ensure that matters were straightened out at the Fisheries Loan Board?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I know what the report says. The Leader of the Opposition has quoted it reasonably accurately. The report says that the Minister says, and this is what they quoted, an individual is quoted as saying - Mr. Justice Mahoney does not know whether he said it or not, but this is the comment that an individual reported to Mr. Justice Mahoney, that the Minister said something to the effect, "Well, next week, when we form the Government, if I get the job I expect, things will be straightened out around here."

I think later in the Report, I do not know exactly where it is, Mr. Justice Mahoney commented on the comment itself and said that he could understand that the Minister

might make such a comment in the exuberance of the moment. We found out that a great deal of things needed to be straightened out. We have not yet straightened out everything. We have a lot more straightening out to do. We have done some, so it is not unusual that the Minister should make that kind of a comment.

However, I can assure the House and the Leader of the Opposition, as Mr. Justice Mahoney has found, that nothing the Minister has said or done has had any bearing on the way the Fisheries Loan Board operates. The Minister has not been asked for his comment on it, and I do not intend to ask him now.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we know from Mr. Justice Mahoney's Report that the Minister of Fisheries acknowledged that there were meetings arranged on May 17 and May 18 to talk about matters related to the M.V. Shelby Ann.

Also, on page 18 of Mr. Justice Mahoney's Report, he acknowledges that the Minister of Social Services attended a meeting on June 5 with the Minister of Justice, again with the Minister of Social Services' brother in attendance and a lawyer, to discuss problems with the Shelby Ann and the proposed claim against the Fisheries Loan Board. Now that was the second meeting in three weeks, Mr. Speaker, arranged by the hon. Minister.

Is the Premier not now convinced that his Minister of Social Services was moving indeed very, very quickly to try to straighten

out matters between his brother and the Fisheries Loan Board?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I do not have the statement I issued to the House. I will get it. But here is the position on it. Judge Mahoney said this: "It may have been ill-advised or imprudent of John Efford, as Minister, to have taken such an active role on his behalf, particularly after receiving advice from the Department of Justice on June 5 and June 7. However, that is not a matter to be dealt with by me. It does not come within my terms of reference." Well, I do not necessarily agree with the Judge that it did not come within the terms of reference. I think that perhaps it did. Nevertheless, here is my response to it - I tabled it in the House and I will repeat it now - I have no hesitation in dealing with it and saying that such actions do not conform to a standard of behaviour for Ministers that is acceptable to this Administration. I have stated clearly what the position is with respect to it, and I do not need to go beyond that, I do not think.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Despite the advice from the Minister of Justice, that Loan Board had no liability to Harold Efford for the problems related to the vessel. Two days later, on June 7, the Minister of Social Services appeared at another

meeting, again in the Department of Fisheries, and only left, Mr. Speaker, when he was advised to leave, and this is on Page 7 of Mr. Justice Mahoney's Report - he only left when he was advised to leave - by legal counsel representing the Fisheries Loan Board, from the Department of Justice.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is wrong.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I cannot determine whether it is right or wrong. I am quoting from the document the Premier tabled in the House, submitted to the Premier by Mr. Justice Mahoney.

What I want to ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is this: The Premier says it was not proper conduct for a Minister. I want to ask the Premier how he can say it was not proper conduct for a Minister, it is not proper conduct for future Ministers, it is not proper conduct for tomorrow, and accept it as proper conduct for today, and accept the Minister back into his Cabinet?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

It is fairly simple, Mr. Speaker. First, I straighten out the inaccuracy in what the Leader of the Opposition has said. The meeting he talked about on June 7 was not arranged by the Minister.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I did not say so. I said he turned up at the meeting.

PREMIER WELLS:

He turned up at the request of Mr. Petten, who specifically requested

that he attend the meeting. He was there, and when he received the advice, he left the meeting after a few minutes.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why then? Because he was told by the lawyer?

PREMIER WELLS:

He was requested to attend the meeting by the very man who made the complaint, so he left the meeting and that was the end of it. Now, Mr. Justice Mahoney dealt with all of it. He spelled it all out. I tabled all the information, the full report in the House, and I acted on the basis of the information that is in the report. I expressed clearly my position and the Government's position with respect to that kind of conduct, and stated clearly that such actions do not conform to a standard of behaviour for Ministers that is acceptable in this Administration. Then I went on to say, I explained why, and I do not need to repeat that, I spelled out why it is, it is in the report. I am, however, cognizant of the specific findings of Mr. Justice Mahoney, that the Minister of Social Services, and here I quote Mr. Justice Mahoney, "had not completely shed his previous role as an action-oriented Opposition M.H.A." Secondly, "Moreover, I have found no evidence of any attempt by John Efford to obtain preferential treatment for his brother in this matter." Thirdly, "Nothing John Efford said or did, as a Minister of the Crown, throughout this affair constituted an impropriety." So, in those circumstances, in all of the circumstances, all of which have been made public, I have asked Mr. Efford to resume his duties as Minister of Social Services.

In the meantime, however, I have also said that he and all other Ministers are fairly warned that such actions on behalf of any constituent, related or otherwise, in the matter of a claim of a constituent against the Crown or any agency of the Crown is totally unacceptable and, in future, will result in a request for an immediate resignation. Now, maybe he would like me to tear off the Minister's toes, but, I mean, I have explained what we have done. If the Leader of the Opposition does not like it, I can understand his expressing an opinion. But what we have done and the reason for it has been explained in detail to the House and to the public. I do not see what asking the questions adds to what has already been said.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

It might never be apparent to the Premier why we ask questions, but it is our responsibility to ask them, and there are a thousand and one questions in this document that the Premier tabled in this House on Monday.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me go on in this sequence. During the summer months, the Deputy Minister of Justice recalls that this Minister, the Minister of Social Services, brought up the subject of his brother's claim on two or three occasions. I refer the Premier to Page 19 of Mr. Justice Mahoney's Report. And the Minister would explain to the Deputy Minister of Justice the nature of the claim against his

brother and express the opinion that the Department of Justice was somehow or another interfering in the claim not proceeding.

Is the Premier not concerned, Mr. Speaker, with the continued persistence of the Minister of Social Services in pursuing this matter with Ministers of the Crown, but more particularly with the Deputy Minister of Justice?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. That is precisely why I said I have no hesitation in dealing with it and saying that such actions do not conform to a standard of behaviour that is acceptable to this Administration. That is why I said so. Yes, I am concerned about it. It is not an acceptable standard of behaviour and I have told the Minister and, in saying so, he and all other Ministers are fairly warned that that will not be tolerated. Now, this is the first occasion since the new Administration formed office that any Member has done any act that has been questionable.

Now do you in those circumstances say chop off his head right away and have nothing more to do with them? I do not think that that is necessarily the right course of action; you disclose the whole thing to the public and I am prepared to let the public of this Province judge the propriety of the actions of the Minister, and the Government subsequent to the actions of the Minister in dealing with this matter. Yes, I am concerned, that is why I said so in the statement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the matter is raised again by Mr. Justice Mahoney on page 20 of his report, when he reports that the Deputy Minister of Justice, on October 24, received a visit from the Minister of Social Services wanting to discuss a couple of matters with him. Mr. Justice Mahoney in his document, on page 20, details what the couple of matters are, but then goes on to say that the vast majority of the time was taken up by that Minister discussing with the Deputy Minister of Justice again the matter related to the claim before the Fisheries Loan Board.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is almost six months -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I could not care what the Minister thinks, same question or not. This is almost six months and there has been persistent, constant interference, certainly on a weekly basis, day after day, week after week, by this Minister, now with the Deputy Minister of Justice. Does the Premier think that is the appropriate action for a Minister six months into his job? I mean, we could all forgive it after, perhaps, the first two or three weeks, month, two months, but this is six months into his job as a Minister.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Let me correct the misstatements again, Mr. Speaker. He said, 'Day after day, almost on a weekly basis - almost on a weekly basis - the Deputy Minister of Justice, almost on a weekly basis over six months. In any six months there is twenty-six weeks, okay? Now the Deputy Minister of Justice said, 'on two or three occasions over the course of the summer.' Then he refers to October 24. Now that is weekly basis over six months. So, let us get the exaggeration out of the way first and let us deal with the issue. It has been all spelled out and I stated clearly that this is an unacceptable standard of behaviour for this Administration, and we took the action we did because I had doubts about it and I wanted to find out exactly what occurred. I found out exactly what occurred. I have Mr. Justice Mahoney's report on the detail. And I spelled out for the House and the people of this Province exactly what our judgment of the matter is and what we are doing in this particular instance.

Now I am prepared to take the political responsibility for making that decision. That is my decision, and I and nobody else in this House or this Province has political responsibility for it. I have to take it. It may, in the judgment of the Leader of the Opposition, be not the correct action to take and he can express that opinion if he likes. I can say to him I think the action we have taken in the circumstances is the correct action. It does not agree that such actions are appropriate. I have said so, I have written it, I have tabled it, and I said it a dozen times: Such

actions do not conform to a standard of behaviour for Ministers that is acceptable to this Administration. Now even if he asks the question in respect of every single incident or day on the five or six or seven occasions when it occurred, the answer is still the same: Such actions are not acceptable.

In the circumstances, I have asked the Minister to resume his responsibility in the manner in which I have outlined. That is the full story.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the Premier can try to twist statements and words all he wishes to skate around this very difficult subject for him politically.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I just want to bring to the attention of the Leader of the Opposition that he is not supposed to debate the answers of the Premier, but get on to the question. I realize, also, that I have been allowing some lengthy answers, but it has been the sort of repetition of the questions. So if the hon. gentleman would get to his question. I realize this is an important topic, and I have been giving a lot of leeway.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate Your Honour's indulgence in view of what I think

is the gravity of the subject, anyway.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Premier this: On October 26, the Deputy Minister of Justice again was advised that the Minister of Social Services wanted to set up another meeting with him, with his brother and with a lawyer, and the Deputy Minister of Justice cancelled that meeting. Then on the 27, the next day, the Deputy Minister of Justice informed the Premier's Office of the interference of the Minister of Social Services. That is on page 27 of the document.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

I do not know if the Minister read it or not, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. RIDEOUT:

I do not know if he read it, but that is Mr. Justice Mahoney's words on page 27 of the document.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it so happened that coincidentally that same morning, according to this document, the letter appeared from Mr. Petten. Now, what I want to ask the Premier is this: Was it the letter from Mr. Petten that triggered the Premier to ask for this investigation, or was it, in fact, the information passed that same morning to the Premier's office from the Deputy Minister of Justice about the continued interference of the Minister of Social Services with the Department of Justice? What triggered the Premier to call the investigation?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, let me correct a misstatement again in the Leader of the Opposition's statement. Mr. Justice Mahoney did not find that on the 27th the Minister of Social Services asked to have a meeting set up. On the 27th, or the 26th, the Minister of Social Services, I am advised, was, in fact, out of the Province. The office of the Minister made the request without any knowledge of the Minister on the 27th.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

If hon. Members want to laugh like a group of hyenas and try and give credibility to their position by ridicule in that way, it adds no credibility. Just be accurate. I am quite prepared to deal with the accurate facts, so I am setting the accurate facts of the matter. Now, what triggered the necessity was the letter from Mr. Petten. That is what triggered the necessity for the action. That is what caused me to take action, it was in response to receipt this letter from Mr. Petten making these allegations. I made some preliminary inquiries myself and I discovered, partly from the comments of the Deputy Minister of Justice that had been passed through the chief of staff, that these requests for meetings had been made, or the representations had been made. So, Mr. Speaker, we made the decision immediately to speak to the Minister concerned about it. When I confronted the Minister with these matters, he requested that he be relieved of the responsibility while this matter was investigated. I

responded to his request, appointed a judge, and got a full statement of the facts, not muddled or affected by anybody. I got a judge to do an assessment of it and I have acted on it, having disclosed all the facts as found.

Now, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition does not like the discipline, and proper, and frank, and honest and straightforward way that the Government has dealt with the matter, it causes them difficulty. But I have no reason to be anything less than completely confident that we did the right thing in the matter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Cover-up. Cover-up.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Guilty as you know what.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Environment and Lands about the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited newsprint mill in Corner Brook. As the Minister is aware, over the last three years or so, since Corner Brook Pulp and Paper has been burning wood chips and bark for fuel, the mill has been emitting black, sooty particles as well as invisible fumes, and these air emissions have been bothersome and annoying to residents of Corner Brook, particularly in the summertime.

Mr. Speaker, as I know the Minister is also aware, the company has committed itself formally in writing to carrying out extensive improvements in the mill to cut down on these air emissions. The company has committed itself to installing a new boiler. However, the company, for the second or third time, has just failed to meet one of the deadlines in the written compliance schedule. I would like to ask the Minister what he and his Department intend to do about this situation.

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

MR. KELLAND:
I would like to thank the hon. Member for the somewhat lengthy question, Mr. Speaker. It is a well-known fact, reported on in the media, that the company did not comply with the deadline of letting the contract by the end of November, but have assured this department they will by the end of December.

This, however, does not in any way change our position with respect to completion of the boiler project by September 30, 1991.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker, there has developed a pattern of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited failing to meet deadlines in legal agreements the company has entered into with the Government. The company has just missed a deadline. The Minister is now saying he is confident the company will comply by the end of this month. I would like to ask

the Minister what he is going to do if the company fails to comply by the end of this month.

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

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker, that is a bit hypothetical. I will have to wait and see whether or not they comply.

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

Would the Minister tell me what his policy is now on interfering with companies who put in tenders on projects and who do not have their provincial overhead allowance number?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, I think that is a sort of weird question, really. The policy is established for how we are to deal with companies, and it is covered under the Public Tender Act. I will table the Act for the Member tomorrow.

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

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

It might be a weird question for the Minister, but it is well known that on one occasion the hon. the

Minister interfered with a tender from a constituent of his and overruled the staff in his department and gave out a tender to a company which did not have the POA number.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to ask the Minister is, there has been a tender requested for a project at the School for the Deaf, a ditching project, and the contractor who was the lowest bidder has informed me that he has, on several occasions, tried to get a meeting with the Minister and his staff to give his case to the Minister to have the tender awarded to him. His was the lowest tender, but he did not have a POA number. Since the Minister has overruled his staff on one occasion before, this contractor would like to have occasion to talk to the Minister to see if he could present his case.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with talking to the gentleman. However, I must inform the House that the policy that is outlined in the Public Tender Act governing the POA is the only one I can work within.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I probably would not have raised this matter except that the person who is about to receive the tender also has a discrepancy in his tender proposal. It seems that the tender will be awarded to the number two person on the list, but

there are discrepancies in both tenders. Both discrepancies are fairly minor ones, and if the second person can be considered with a discrepancy, I do not see why the first person cannot also be considered with a slight discrepancy, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know of the incident the hon. Member is referring to, but I will certainly investigate it and I will table the answer tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

This is a final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to inform the hon. Minister I was informed he was aware of it. I talked to his staff on this matter, and so has the contractor. But to inform the hon. Minister, the contract is a ditching contract for the School for the Deaf, and the contractor's name is Rideout Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

I am not aware of it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It has nothing to do with him.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Nothing to do with him, no.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I just note a bit of a discrepancy. I recognized the hon. Member for a question, but I did not hear a question. I remind hon. Members they are supposed to ask a question, and no comment.

One minute. The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Will the Minister undertake to look into this matter on behalf of the contractor mentioned to see that justice is done on this occasion, and will he meet with the contractor, as the contractor has requested on several occasions, and he cannot get near the Minister?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

I have already answered that several times, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West. Barely a minute.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

Can I ask the Minister whether or not he has made a request to the Federal Government to cancel the road to Petit Forte? If so, what do they anticipate they will do with the funds in that allocation for the road?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

No decision has been made on that yet, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I am not asking if a decision has been made, I am asking him if there has been a request made to the Federal Government to cancel the road going to Petit Forte and spend the funds elsewhere? That is the question.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

No decision has been made on that yet, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question Period has expired.

MR. TOBIN:

You have requested it, Sir, to spend in the Premier's District.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Answers to Questions
for which Notice has been Given

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member for Kilbride (Mr. Aylward) asked me the question, 'I would ask the hon. Minister if he could explain to the House the Department's policy on the use of Department of Transportation equipment and staff on private property and municipal property throughout the Province?'

Here is the answer: During normal operations Department of Work, Services and Transportation staff and equipment will not do work on private or municipal property. There are occasions when work is performed in these areas under the following conditions: 1. During surveys for purposes relative to public works. 2. In case of emergencies such as floods, etc., the Regional Director will use his own judgement to decide if immediate entry is to be made. 3. Where an easement or agreement is obtained to enter on property to alleviate a highway drainage problem. 4. Department of Works, Services and Transportation equipment may be hired to private individuals, school boards, churches, charitable organizations, Federal and Provincial Government Departments, Crown Corporations, Community and Town Councils, and contractors engaged by the Department, under the following conditions: (a) When no other suitable equipment is available within a reasonable distance from the work site. (b) At current rates set by the Department's Equipment Rental Rate Schedule including actual labour costs and appropriate payroll burden and administration charges. (c) Upon prior arrangement by work order or written request. 5. Snow clearing and ice control is provided on: - (a) Accesses or driveways to schools located outside municipal boundaries. (b) Roads outside municipal boundaries which serve two or more permanent residents and which are built to a standard specified by the Department. (c) Roads in Community Councils subject to written request from Council. (d) Roads to cemeteries located outside municipal boundaries where interment is to be made.

6. As a general rule, Department equipment is not hired to private individuals except in extenuating circumstances where private contractors are not available within a reasonable distance, for example, in Coastal Labrador communities.

MR. SPEAKER:

The comment on that particular answer for Questions for Notice Given, the Chair did not get the question. I assumed it was asked in Oral Question Period.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It was asked yesterday (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:

Okay. I wanted to comment that that is certainly the kind of question that ought to have gone on the Order Paper as a written question. Since I did not hear the question, the length of the answer by the Minister surely indicated that it ought to have been a written question.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

Mr. Speaker, I have in my possession today a petition from the residents of the community of Gaultois, and I would like to read the prayer of the petition. Before I read the prayer of the petition, I want to inform the House that the petition itself is not on House of Assembly stationery, but is one that was printed for a petition to the House of Commons and a separate petition has already been sent to the hon. Roger Simmons to be

presented in that particular institution.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

Since the hon. gentlemen mentioned that, His Honour has seen the petition and it does not meet the strict requirements of petition by the House, but, again, everything is genuine about the petitioners, the signatures are genuine, it is simply that they did not have the right prayer and they sent a telegram to the hon. Member today pointing out how they were not provided with the right prayer, so it can only be done by leave since it does not meet the requirements.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:
Yes, Mr. Speaker, really what counts is the intent of the people who presented the petition. We are quite willing to, by leave, listen to the petition.

MR. SPEAKER:
By leave.

The hon. the Member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the Government House Leader.

The prayer of the petition states, WHEREAS the citizens of Gaultois are concerned about the possible closure of our fish plant by Fishery Products International, and WHEREAS we feel that we have suffered enough cutbacks to our plant's operations already, and WHEREAS the closure of our fish plant would lead to the death of our community, THEREFORE the

undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to prevent our plant from being closed by Fishery Products International.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by 346 residents of that particular town. It is with pride but it is also with concern that I present this particular petition on behalf of this historic community. Mr. Speaker, this community of Gaultois once was the headquarters for Thomas L. Garland and Sons, one of the largest retail and wholesale distributors in the Fortune Bay and Hermitage area. With its long-standing history not only in the retail trade but also in the fish business, this particular plant also, Mr. Speaker, was formerly owned by the Lake Group of Companies, and within the last number of years has been taken over and it survived the restructuring in 1981. This particular plant, as I said earlier, is the lifeblood of that particular community.

The people from that area have seen that plant in Gaultois go from a twelve month operation, Mr. Speaker, to about a fourteen or fifteen week operation. The people from that community recognize, and in their discussions with the President of Fishery Products International, that plant in Gaultois can never operate in its present condition.

There are two management positions, Mr. Speaker, in the area. One in Harbour Breton and one in Gaultois. There are two of everything and the council in their visit to Fishery Products International a few days ago asked them to relieve the plant, if you wish, of that managerial position

because it was a liability to the company. They felt that it could very well be served as a satellite of the Harbour Breton plant, take the managerial position out of it, take the meal plant out of the plant, but leave the rank-and-file person there. Leave the jobs in the community.

Because, Mr. Speaker, the community of Gaultois will not survive if this particular plant moves out. Particularly, because the community of Gaultois is an island and the terrain is rugged. There are no vegetation for agricultural prospects, Mr. Speaker. The community with its longevity with its history, with its historic value will not be able to survive and what you will have, Mr. Speaker, is a community that has traditionally been dependent upon the fishery will be wiped from the map of this particular Province.

So it is with the concern that I have for these people, and concern for the community, to alleviate the devastation that is about to occur if the plant would close.

So really, what these people are asking today, Mr. Speaker, is that the community not be allowed to dehydrate, not allow it to shrivel up, not allow it to dry up, not allow it to completely obliterate, if you wish, from the map of this Province. So it is with that concern, and concern not only of myself, but of people in that area, they would humbly pray that this petition would be presented in this House, and has been presented and that all Members of the House would support this particular petition to ensure the future of the community of Gaultois, but more important than that ensure the future of the

people there who have been dependent upon this particular mode of employment and a way of life for the last 200 years.

So, Mr. Speaker, today it is with pride as I have said but it is also with concern that I present this particular petition to the House of Assembly on behalf of the residents of the Town of Gaultois.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the petition so ably presented by my friend across the way and I can tell him now that certainly on this side of the House there is absolutely no question as to the hon. Member's sincerity and his deep concern for the people who live in Gaultois. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we share those concerns and like the hon. Member we have grave doubts as to what is going to happen to the fishing industry on that part of the Newfoundland Coast.

I understand that the owners of FPI, the company that operates the plant in Gaultois, have had meetings, I believe, with the council and others in that community, and have pretty well told them exactly what the situation is and maybe what they should expect. And I think the president of FPI has made it known to the residents that no final decision has yet been made as to exactly what the future holds for the Gaultois plants.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we all know that we are facing a severe crisis in the fishing industry. And I think it would be sticking our heads in the sand were we to pretend that all of the Newfoundland plants can operate, given the fact that the quotas will be very substantially reduced for the 1990 fishery.

But certainly like the hon. Member we can only hope that a solution will be found and that maybe ways and means will be found by the company and by the Federal Government who, I should remind the House, is responsible for the allocation of quotas and for the management of the resource. We can only hope that ways and means will be found to avert maybe a closure, although that might not be a simple thing to do, but certainly we hope that happens. But, Mr. Speaker, again being quite honest and being quite practical and realistic if in fact it is found that it is necessary that the plant be closed, then certainly I can give the hon. Member an assurance and the people of Gaultois, that we on this side and this Government will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the impact on the people concerned will be lessened to as great an extent as possible.

But again, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the hon. Member. I know he is sincere in what he says. And I can only assure him that we share his concern and that if in fact it is found necessary that the Gaultois plant must close or be scaled down considerably, then he can assure his constituents on our behalf that we will do all we can to ensure that the impact will be made as painless as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to support the people of Gaultois in their resolve to have their fish plant continue in their town. And I would like to commend and congratulate my colleague for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Langdon) for so ably and so seriously and sincerely presenting the case on their behalf. And there is no question, as he has alluded to, and both the Minister of Fisheries, that for Gaultois there is no other future except the fishery. And I would just like to remind the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter) again in his comments that when he continuously and consistently talks about it being a Federal Government problem, that Gaultois is a community in Newfoundland and Labrador, and that he is Minister of Fisheries for Newfoundland and Labrador and that the Provincial Government can prevent a plant closure in Gaultois if they have the will to do so. They can prevent plant closures in any of the Fishery Products International plants in this Province, if they have the will and desire to do so. All they have to do is object to Fishery Products International closing any fish plant, make a referral to a reputable chartered accountants firm in this Province, if there will be losses incurred as a result of the continuation of the Gaultois fish plant, then the Provincial Government will pick up the tab for the losses and the

people of Gaultois will continue to work.

So it is not good enough for the Minister of Fisheries again today to stand in this House of Assembly and to slough the problem off on the Federal Government. We know there is a very serious resource problem in all of our fish stocks around our shores. If we properly manage those fish stocks, if we take remedial action now, which we will take by reducing the Total Allowable Catch in 1990, those fish stocks will rebuild and replenish and, consequently, in future years, as the stocks rebuild and replenish, then there will be more fish allocations for Fishery Products International and National Sea. More fish will be able to be landed in Gaultois. The people will work for longer periods of time per year, make more money, and go on about making a living and being comfortable where they have always lived and worked, in their own town of Gaultois. Now, that is the crux of this particular fisheries crisis. If you shut Gaultois down, there will be no tomorrow. If it takes a few million dollars a year for the Provincial Government to keep the people of Gaultois working in Gaultois, so what! At least you have a future. And I ask the question, Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber, what are Governments for? When just three or four days ago, we saw the Minister of Finance brag in this House of Assembly that there is a \$51 million or \$52 million surplus in current account in this Province, what would \$2 million or \$3 million mean to the Treasury, if it means keeping 300 or 400 jobs in Gaultois until our fish stocks rebuild and they get five and six and eight and ten months work a year?

Mr. Speaker, that is the key to this whole problem. But the Provincial Government is not willing to put one cent into the problem facing the fishery in this Province. If they were, they could keep all plants open and the people could work where they have lived for years and their futures would be secure.

Mr. Speaker, on this side, we totally support the people of Gaultois in a resolve to keep their fish plant open. We only beg the Provincial Government, the Government first responsible, to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, to the people of Gaultois, to put in a few million dollars so that those people can stay where they have their homes and their families, making a meaningful living. And, as the fish stocks rebuild, they will make a better living and be happy where they are.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

O O O

MR. RIDEOUT:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

On a point of order, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, before getting to Orders of the Day, I want to raise a point of order. I want to say quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am reluctant to raise it. In fact I had been hoping I would not have to raise it. But I have to, Mr. Speaker.

I have noticed over the last -

gosh, almost since this session began, I guess, certainly over the last four or five weeks, that consistently, when the hon. the Member for Humber East (Ms Verge) is on her feet asking a question or participating in debate, coming from this corner of the House - and I do not know if Your Honour has picked it up yet, but I can pick it up here quite clearly; I am sure that people in the gallery next to the rail down there can pick it up quite clearly. I am reluctant to name the Member, although I think I know who the Member is after today's performance. Suffice it to say at this moment, coming from that corner of the House is nothing only a weening, wailing, sexist-oriented noise. Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am very reluctant to raise this, but I am getting more and more upset about it every day and I think practically every Member in this House hears it. Certainly, the snickers that go on, the catcalls that go on when that hon. Member is doing what she was elected here to do, get up and ask questions or participate in debate, does not do anything, in my view, to add to the decorum of this House, in fact, it very, very largely detracts from the decorum of this House.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I have been noticing this now for weeks on end. I have been reluctant to raise it, hoping that Your Honour, since you reminded us the other day that you had good hearing ability, might eventually pick it up. But today it was so noticeable, I could hear it quite clearly up here. I have noticed it day after day when that hon. Member is on her feet, and I think, Mr. Speaker, not for the sake of the hon. Member, as much,

but out of respect for the constituents who elected her to this House, out of respect for each other in this House, I think it should stop. Now, there is nodding going on down in the other corner and I know that hon. Members know what I am talking about is correct. It should stop. A stop should be put to it once and for all, and I hope that, having raised it now, I will never have to raise it again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I agree with the hon. the Leader of the Opposition that there are, at times, comments back and forth and sounds, and so on, in the House that are not, in the parliamentary tradition, proper. I agree wholeheartedly. I did not hear the comments the hon. gentleman is referring to, maybe because I do have a hearing impediment, unlike Your Honour. I did not hear the comments. I have heard many other comments from both sides of the House. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that perhaps we have to be a little more careful and control ourselves a little more, and not go beyond the normal kind of repartee that will take place from time to time, and to control ourselves and try not to go beyond normally accepted practice in the House.

So in that sense I agree. I would

like to say to the Leader of the Opposition that there are things on both sides happening. And it is not one instance and I know the hon. gentleman is referring to one particular instance that is of particular concern to him and I appreciate that. But there are other things that have been going on here on both sides that perhaps we had better reconsider.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the point of order. And I can only make the comment that I made the other day, I hope that it was in public, it might have been in private, but in any event I make it, I just wonder if there is something wrong with this Chair, some disease that is transferable to Speakers because I have indicated that I do have tremendous good ears, but I must say I did not hear any of the comments to which the Leader of the Opposition is referring. But I will say this, the Chair would regard them very, very seriously had I heard them - and I will say this to the hon. Leader of the Opposition - if he hears them again the Chair would appreciate his standing on a point of order at the time it is made and see if we cannot see if Hansard is recording these things, but the Chair is very, very strict about parliamentary language as everybody ought to know. And to confer with the Government House Leader, I was going to make a comment on another matter in the House today and for that very reason I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition brought that up and, suffice it to say, the Chair will not tolerate any remarks made by any Members, as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, and that the Chair does consider that type of remark to be most unparliamentary and would consider

the type of order a valid point of order, and had the Chair heard it naturally would do something about it, but I can only take the Leader of the Opposition's word for it and ask hon. Members to refrain from doing this, if they have been doing it.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

I want to do a couple of first readings, Your Honour.

Motion 1.

Motion the hon. the Minister of Justice to introduce a bill entitled, "An Act To Revise The Law Respecting Securities," carried. (Bill No. 55).

On motion, Bill No. 55 read a first time, ordered read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:

Motion 2, Your Honour.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice to introduce a bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Human Rights Code, 1988," carried. (Bill No. 56).

On motion, Bill No. 56 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On these two Bills that just

received first reading both of which are important Justice Bills, I would like to ask the Government House Leader (Mr. Baker) whether he intends to follow the plans that he initiated for the Health Legislative Review Committees, and have both of these Bills referred to the Social Legislative Review Committee chaired by the Member from Carbonear.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:
Your Honor, I would like to reserve an answer to the question, there seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding in the House as to exactly what process is supposed to occur with committees. This has only come to light in the last few days, and I really want to get this straightened out first before I know what to do. So, I think this is going to have to wait until we come to some kind of an agreement as to what the committees are doing. I have been befuddled, Your Honor, in the last few days by what is going on.

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is regrettable that the Member for Carbonear who chairs the Social Legislative Review Committee is not here now, but I believe he would not hesitate to agree with me when I say that that committee

has worked extremely well. We have not been given all that much legislation to consider yet, but we stand ready to receive these Bills. And both the Securities Bill and the Human Rights Code amendments Bill warrant detailed consideration by the Committees, and perhaps in the discretion of the Committee should be considered at public meetings because both of these Bills effect a great number of interest groups in the Province. And I simply refer the Government House Leader to his own words printed in Hansard for June, 30, "I will now do that, Your Honour, and move that as legislation becomes available it be referred to the appropriate committee." I am simply asking the Government House Leader to keep his word, and in the case of these two important Justice Bills which have been given first reading hear today by all Members, that he act immediately to refer those Bills to the Social Legislative Review Committee.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker, this is what befuddles me. A lot of Bills have gone to the Committee so far, to the three Committees. A lot of them have been dealt with. As a matter of fact, in a couple of cases there have been some changes made as a result of input from the Committee, okay. Never once has there been required in the House, because it is not a form of parliament, never once has there been required a formal referral of Bills to committee. It is a simple matter, when the Bills are

printed they are immediately given to the committee Chairman or whatever, and the committees do whatever they are supposed to do with them. There has never been a formal referral, and this kind of request befuddles me.

Also, there has been a great deal of dissent and difference of opinion, Your Honor, as you well know, over how the committees are to function. And right now, it seems to me, that the process really has broken down, and I am very anxious to get it started again. The original understanding the Member knows full well of what the committees were, has been followed, and it has always been clear to everybody concerned that there is no commitment that Bills have to be totally dealt with and back from the committee before they can be introduced in the House. This has been very clear to everybody, but all of a sudden the Opposition seems to indicate that, 'no, that is not true.' So, my problem with it is that the Bills, as soon as they are printed, will be distributed to every Member of the House, the committees will have them. But we need, at some point, to straighten out this matter, that is a very important one, and I believe will prevent the committees from functioning, and prevent this House from functioning, Your Honor, if things get tied up that way.

So, all I am saying to the hon. Member is, give us a couple of days. The intent certainly was that these Bills would immediately go to the committees, and obviously we have a lot of legislation there, and a lot more to come in in the next short while. And it is going to be some time before we even get to these

Bills in terms of the House. There is a lot of time available, I am hoping that the process will work, but in the last few days Your Honour I have my doubts.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair, is a little bit befuddled here as to what we are doing, because we are just reading motions. I am not sure other than by leave of the House that this particular debate should be going on. I want to make sure that hon. Members understand because we are doing Motions, but if hon. Members agree that they want to spend a few moments on this then the Chair will acquiesce, or maybe we could go on and wait until the regular Orders are called when there is more leeway. It is up to the hon. Member for Humber East, I do not know how much longer this is going to continue.

So the Chair is anxious to get on to the right procedure, but if Members just want to hear another submission by the Member for Humber East that is just fine.

The Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I will just be another minute.

I believe I heard from the Government House Leader, but I would like him to clarify this, in the case of the two Justice Bills just referred to, he is not intending to attempt to have them passed by the House quickly. He is planning to allow quite a bit of time, which presumably will make provision for a full Legislative Review Committee consideration. That is all I was asking for.

My final comment is that the

Social Committee has worked well. The breakdown to which he refers that has upset many of us is centered on one Bill, Bill 40, which the Government House Leader himself will admit has not been handled in the way that the proposed legislation be handled when he initiated the Review Committees.

MR. BAKER:
Motion 3.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Urban and Rural Planning Act," carried. (Bill No. 51)

On motion, Bill No. 51, "An Act To Amend The Urban and Rural Planning Act" read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:
Order 11.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting The Economic Recovery Commission " (Bill No. 40).

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the short time that I had available to me on Tuesday I made a few preliminary remarks on Bill 40, "An Act Respecting The Economic Recovery Commission."

I believe we saw it again this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, while we were doing first readings. It is vitally important, I think, and I am not going to concentrate much

on it now, but I think it is vitally important for us to have some firm understanding if the committee process is going to work properly. It is vitally important for us to have some firm understanding. Maybe it was too much to expect, Mr. Speaker, that we could let this process, over any long period of time at least, kind of run ad hoc. Because once you are running something ad hoc then it only takes for one side or the other to kind of get their nose out of joint and then the thing seems to get off the rails. I would not want to see the Legislative Review Committee process get off the rails.

As I said on Tuesday when I last spoke in this debate, I think it is a good process and we should try to keep it on the rails. But when you do not have any firm understandings, when you do not have any guidelines, when you are trying to explore and run the affair on an ad hoc basis then I think you will without doubt, and perhaps of necessity have some breakdowns, and we have seen those breakdowns occur on a number of occasions now, but particularly as it relates to Bill No. 40 respecting the Economic Recovery Commission.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes that I have left to me in second reading on this particular bill, I want to try to see if we are going to get some sense from the Government of what this Economic Recovery Commission is all about. I ended up I believe on Tuesday by indicating that it seemed to me, not that I have any monopoly on wisdom in this particular matter, but it seemed to me that the mandate to develop the resources of the Province is vested with the elected

Government. That has been the case in certainty forty-odd years of our history since Confederation. And it was the case, as I understand it, of most democratically elected governments in the British Parliamentary System as we know it. This Government has chosen to undertake a different approach. And as my colleague for Humber Valley (Mr. Woodford) said, it will remain to be seen whether the approach works or not. We first of all hope the approach will be successful. But we are now six or seven months into the Economic Recovery Commission being set up. This is the legislation setting it up, but in fact it is up. The Commissioners have been appointed. They were appointed in June. The Advisory Board has been appointed. That was appointed in June. And they have taken some time to get their office space and to get their shop set up. But they have now, in fact, been set up.

So as we get into another three or four months, Mr. Speaker, or certainly when we come back in session in the New Year we will be expecting to hear from the Government of the Province, report cards on what this Commission is achieving. Now it is not too much to expect that after a year or so in operation the Commission will be able to report. It will be able to give the people of this Province some positive indication whether or not they are achieving the objectives that have been set down for them in this particular bill. I think the objectives are nothing more or nothing less than what, by and large, ought to be the objectives and the mandate of the Department of Development. I said that as well a couple of days ago.

MR. EFFORD:

You are not Premier.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I am very well aware of that because if I was the hon. the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Efford) would not be in the Cabinet. That would be a fact. But I am very much aware of that, and, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. gentleman - and I do not mind him butting in once and a while - but I would not want him to make a total fool of himself, because he is leaning out over his desk like this, which kind of gives the indication, Mr. Speaker, that he is going to be nattering away for the next fifteen or twenty minutes.

So I do not mind the occasional interruption or the occasional barb. In fact, I enjoy it. But if he is going to get in a mode that is going to set him up to be a rocket launcher, launching across the House every time I say a word or so, then I am going to have to invoke the protection of Your Honour because I mean I am totally defenceless, Mr. Speaker, when up against the artillery of the hon. gentleman. I am totally defenceless. I cannot cope with it. I will be flattened on the floor of the House and I would not want to voluntarily see that happen.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You could get in a fist fight and (inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

That is the second time that happened.

MR. W. CARTER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

That is right. You know, you

would think the hon. gentleman would be smiling, Mr. Speaker, and saying how delighted they were that the event happened. Now I could have waited until sometime in April coming, so the hon. gentlemen would have lost seven or eight months of ministerial pay. They would still be over here moaning and groaning. You think they would be giving me a clap on the back and saying thanks very much old man, I know you do not like it, but we are really delighted you did it. So you cannot have it both ways, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:
But to come back to what I was saying, Mr. Speaker,

AN HON. MEMBER:
There is no trouble to know that Clyde is gone.

MR. RIDEOUT:
No, it is no trouble to know. The Minister of Social Services (Mr. Efford) is right out there, leaned out now, ready to go.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:
Anyway, Mr. Speaker, it would be normal that the mandate of this Commission would be the mandate of the Department of Development. But be that as it may, the Government have decided to set up the Commission. Now, Mr. Speaker, what is the Commission going to do? We have heard from the Premier and the Government and we see embodied in this Bill what the Government sets out as the principles and the mandate of the Commission.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:
Did I hear it again?

Mr. Speaker heard the point of order that I raised just after Question Period. Keep your ears open.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Do not blame me.

MR. RIDEOUT:
I did not blame you the last time. I said I was prepared to name the Member, and the next time I rise on a point of order, I tell the House now, I will name the Member. But I was first of all trying to be a bit courteous and give the Member a chance to know I am concerned about it so that I would not have to publicly name the Member. But the second time, I will.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Chairperson of this Commission has made it a point to go around this Province saying that the Commission will not be and does not intend to be a funding agency. I notice the Minister of Development is waving that phrase in his head, but certainly, if he has been reported correctly, Dr. House has been reported as saying the agency does not intend to be a funding agency.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. House has made it known in various speeches around the Province that the agency sees itself as being the facilitator, as being the initiator, of trying to initiate development opportunities all around Newfoundland and Labrador by stimulating other people to invest, by stimulating rural development, by bringing to fruition development ideas in

Newfoundland and Labrador. He has indicated clearly that it will not necessarily be the role of his Commission to provide funding for any of those developments. Oh, yes, he has indicated that there is a Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation pool of funding, he has indicated there is the Rural Development pool of funding, he has indicated there are other provincial sources and, of course, he has indicated that there are a number of federal sources that can be tapped. But, listening to what the gentleman says, it seems very clear that the Economic Recovery Commission will steer people towards those sources of funding, but not itself be a funding agency.

Now, I do not know if that is the case or not. Certainly, that is the impression that I and others have gathered by reading speeches that Dr. House has made around the Province.

Maybe the Minister of Development, when he speaks, might be able to tell us clearly whether or not -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

I would not set up the Commission. I had no intention of setting up the Commission, because that is the role of Government.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the Minister of Development might be able to tell us whether or not there will be, whether it is envisioned by Government that there is going to be a pool of funding that the Economic Recovery Commission will be able to utilize for capital purposes; not for administrative purposes, we know that. That will be voted by this

House to administer the affairs of the Commission. But will there be a pool of funding that the Government will identify and have at the disposal of the Economic Recovery Commission, to fund projects that the Commission thinks are worth funding for job development opportunities in rural Newfoundland, or anywhere in Newfoundland and Labrador? That has not yet been made clear.

Now, if the Commission is not going to have any source of funding available to it, then I really believe that this high-power Commission, so-called, will have lost almost from the beginning, any significant opportunity it may have had to create development opportunities in this Province. I mean, most people in this Province know what programs are available through NLDC now. Most people who want to know, know what program funding is available through rural development now. You do not need a \$3 million commission to make that available to the people of this Province, Mr. Speaker.

So, if there is not going to be a capital pool of funding for this Commission, then what is it really going to do? Is it just going to disseminate information? Well, there is already a process through NLDC in all the regional offices around this Province to disseminate information. It might need to be improved. It might need to be enhanced but the process is there, Mr. Speaker. I think what we are lacking here at the moment is any clear indication of whether or not there is going to be a capital pool of funding. That will be important. How are farmers going to develop the agricultural potential of this Province? How are tourism

developers going to further develop tourism potential? How is small business going to develop potential opportunities throughout this Province unless there is a new pool of capital for investment purposes? A lot of it is going to have to continue to be high risk capital, Mr. Speaker. The chartered banks will lend according to their guidelines and to their programs. FDBB will lend according to its, and NLDC according to its guidelines and programs, but, I suspect, that there is going to continue to be a need for high risk capital in this Province because some of those ventures are going to continue to be risky, going to continue to be high risk, and I cannot see for the life of me, quite frankly, how this Commission can operate and be effective without some significant pool of capital available to it. And, that is the thing that concerns me about the indications that the Chairman has given so far. He talks about existing Government programs. He talks about existing funding that will be made available. If this Commission does not have funding sources available to it I cannot see how it will do anything more than what another Government tried to do through the Action Committee, I believe it was called, back in the latter part of the 70s. If it is only going to steer people, direct people, help people fill out applications, and provide that kind of service and that kind of advice then I cannot see where there is going to be a significant difference. That is a question that I have not heard asked yet. It is certainly a question that I have not heard answered. I know the Bill is basically principles and mandate and I do not expect there will be a lot of detail in it, but, I

think, it would be important, if we are going to get a closer grip on what the Government really entails this Commission to do, if that kind of question were to be answered.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. FUREY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So far in this debate we have heard from the Premier of the Province who is normally allowed under the rules, I believe, an hour to speak, but it was clearly just an hour of total disruption and completely abusive by the opposite side, raising on a great many spurious points of order to disrupt the Premier's train of thought, to disrupt the arguments that he wanted to lay out, to disrupt the truth that he wanted to present to the House, of the economic circumstances that this Province finds itself in after seventeen years of Conservative Government, Mr. Speaker. He just wanted to lay that out to show basically how the economy has performed for the last seventeen years, but he was disrupted. I do not think that too many Newfoundlanders need to be told, over and over again, just how this economy has performed under this Administration for the past seventeen years so I am not going to get into that.

Let me start by saying there is a fundamental rule of physics, a basic law in the principle of physics. Anybody who studied physics knows that there is a fundamental rule that for every action there must be a reaction

and what this Government has put in place, and acted very sensibly, we think, a Recovery Commission to address the very despicable way this economy has been allowed to fall into shambles for the past 17 years, and so we have acted. So what has the Opposition done so far, Mr. Speaker? Under that principle of physics which you transfer to politics, they have merely reacted. And what has been their reaction to date? Their reaction has been negative, negative, negative. It has just been a collection of anti's, a coalition of negatives, they are against everything.

Mr. Speaker, that is with one exception. Amongst that crowd across the way there was one shining example of a good speech given yesterday, a terrific speech, Mr. Speaker, an honest, straightforward, honest-to-God good speech, and it was presented by the Member for Humber Valley (Mr. Woodford) and I would like to congratulate him on his honesty.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

I have known the Member for a while, Mr. Speaker, and he has always been very straightforward, very up front. He was that way when he sat in the Government back benches here for four years, when I sat on the other side as an Opposition Member, and believe me, Mr. Speaker, in his short time in the Cabinet, and in his dealings with the Sprung issue, he was that way as well.

And what did he say yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that causes me to rise in my place and say that amongst that coalition of anti's over there, amongst that group of negatives,

those that are against, the reactive crowd, react negatively, against everything, what did he say yesterday that draws praise from this Member and this Minister? Dealing with the resolution on unemployment, here is what he said, and I quote from Hansard L20, December 6th: 'Getting back to the resolution, Mr. Speaker, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a high unemployment rate.' He said, 'That is no secret. We do.' and he said, 'We have had it for some time. We have now, and I suppose we will have it for some time, until there are some remedies.' Now, I congratulate the Member on that up-front, honest admission, that we truly do, and have had for some time, some very deep and disturbing unemployment rates in this Province, 'and we will,' he said, 'until such time as we come up with remedies.'

Now, if we take the hon. Member's honest and logical statement to its logical conclusion, we can only read into that he accepts that this Government has laid out a case for recovery and that he stands behind the principles of this Bill, which is just enabling legislation to allow us to set up this Recovery Commission as a remedy to the problems that he enunciated yesterday, that we found in the past 17 years.

Mr. Speaker, he went on to say, and I quote again. "Everybody tried." He was really saying everybody tried to correct the unemployment problems. He said, "I do not care what Party you are in or what Administration you serve under, it is not an easy job, as Members opposite are soon going to find out." And we are finding out, Mr. Speaker. "They have been in for six months and,

as I have said before, the jury is out. But the jury is out, and I am one Member here," he the Member for Humber Valley, "and I am sure everybody else is with me, who will say I hope whatever you do works."

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, we thank the hon. Member sitting in Opposition. Number one we thank him for identifying, for being really personable enough to stand in his place and with dignity and honesty say, there has been a problem for 17 years. We thank him, Mr. Speaker, for saying he hopes that our remedies will work and that we ought to find remedies for the economic circumstances that this Province found itself in, and we thank him for being honest enough to say and to admit that he hopes, as do every Member on this Government side, that what we do works. Because it is all for the benefit of all of us, and for the Province as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, he went on to say, "The new Government, and rightly so," he said, "is trying something new." Now, what was he alluding to, Mr. Speaker, if not the Economic Recovery Commission? Has there ever been an Economic Recovery Commission before? No. Has the economy ever been in the shambles before that we see it in now? No. So what he was really saying is that the new Government, and rightly so, is trying something new, and that something new is an Economic Recovery Commission. So, in total, Mr. Speaker, we on this side accept his honorable comments, and thank him for saying that we are on the right track, trying something new

to remedy the mistakes of the past.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me read another statement, and we will see if any Members on the opposite side disagree with this statement. I hope they will listen carefully to it, particularly the Member for Green Bay (Mr. Hewlett). 'My Government is aware of the potential of imminent oil and gas developments to enhance employment in this Province. At the same time, we remain extremely concerned over the level of unemployment in all areas of the Province and, in particular, over the extremely high unemployment rate of young people. We are very much aware of the serious effects that prolonged unemployment have on individuals as well as on the underutilization of productive human resources which this represents. Government wishes to ensure that the jobs arising from offshore development are distributed throughout the Province as equitably as possible. For these reasons, I am appointing a Commission of five highly qualified Newfoundlanders to hold an inquiry into employment prospects and the problem of unemployment.'

Now that was a statement tabled in this House January 14, 1985 by the former Premier, Premier Peckford, I am sure on the advice of his Chief of Staff, the current Member for Green Bay.

So what we saw was a Government saying there is a massive problem, but get out there and find out the real roots, the real causes of this problem. So, Mr. Speaker, they set up this Commission of five highly qualified Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Who were they? Well, the Premier went on to say, 'The Chairman will

be one Dr. Douglas House.'

AN HON. MEMBER:

Now!

MR. FUREY:

Well, he was highly qualified, respected by the previous Government then, but my God, we cannot get a decent, sane, sensible, positive word from the coalition of antis for Dr. House, which gives credibility to my argument that we simply have a collection of antis, a coalition of negatives. They are always against when it is opportune to be against. When it was opportune to be highly qualified and decent and dignified he was that then, but now it is opportunistic to say House is no good, Dr. House is not going to do anything, this Commission is a waste of time.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me go on to the Premier of the day, Mr. Peckford's next commissioners. He was delighted at that time to appoint Mr. Harold Lundrigan, a prominent Newfoundland businessman and Chairman of the Economic Council of Newfoundland. So, Mr. Speaker, we have just confirmed that your appointments to look at the problem, Dr. House and Mr. Lundrigan, were the right appointments. Why are you so against that which you were for four short years ago? - It does not make sense. It does not add up. They just want to be against for the sake of being against.

Now let me say this: This new Government took the advice of the previous Government and named as our Economic Commission Chairman, guess who? Dr. Doug House. And we named as Chairman of the Advisory Board to the Economic Recovery Commission, guess who? Mr. Harold Lundrigan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. FUREY:

So, Mr. Speaker, what we are saying -

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are not reading that right.

MR. FUREY:

I am reading it right, believe me.

So what we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is what was right then is right now.

However, what we are saying also is it is not enough to just discover the problem, it is not enough to just go around Newfoundland and Labrador and lay out what they believe are the root causes of a very sad and tragic set of economic circumstances all over this Province, particularly in rural Newfoundland. That is not enough. We want to take from the work of the Commission of the past, the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, and build upon it. We want to move forward with these recommendations that have not been acted upon, and this is what we are saying in this Bill: Enable us to allow this Commission to carry on its work.

Now I admit that in the Opposition of the day we asked some pointed questions. The Leader of the day, Mr. Barry, asked the Premier (Mr. Peckford) whether this Commission would be a waste of time. He did. I freely admit that. Let me read the response of the Premier of the day from Hansard L817, May 23, 1985. He said, 'Mr. Speaker, I think it is a bit early to judge the effectiveness of the Royal Commission that has been established to look at employment and unemployment in our

Province.' I think Premier Peckford was right. It was too early to prejudge, or to judge at all, the effectiveness of the Royal Commission, and I say to the Opposition the words that were correct for Premier Peckford are also correct for the Conservative Party. Do not prejudge the effectiveness of the Economic Recovery Commission until it has the chance to get up on its feet and to start conducting its work for real, which is to correct jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the debate that has happened so far from the opposite side, if you can call it debate, there were a number of questions raised. I think there have been two, three, or four so far, and I think I managed maybe to jot down maybe five issues. The first was, why is the Premier the one who is being reported to by the Economic Recovery Commission? Why did this Government choose to have this high-powered Commission report to the Premier?

Well, I suppose, we should let the hon. Members in on a secret. The Premier is a Minister too. He happens to be the First Minister, the lead Minister, whom this side is very proud of. What we wanted to do was give it top billing. You give something top billing by making it report to the top person. When the Economic Recovery Commission reports to the Premier, guess what? The Premier reports to the Cabinet, all other Ministers, and not only that, then we report to the people through this Legislature. So, in answer to that very simple question, why is he reporting to the Premier? Because we give it the highest priority, unlike previous Governments, who ducked their

heads in the sand. Do you recall this in Opposition? 'What unemployment rate? There is no unemployment rate. Everything is wonderful! The Private Sector Program is going to cure everything.' Is that not why the fluid unemployment rate from 1985 - 1989 went from somewhere between 14 per cent and 23 per cent, up and down? And that is not counting the hidden unemployed, those who have given up looking for work; that is not counting youth unemployment, that went as staggeringly as high as 45 per cent at some points, when we sat over there. So, yes, we want an Economic Recovery Commission, but we want to tell the people that in order to get on the economic road to recovery, you have to get on the road to reality and face the facts as they are.

So we gave it the highest billing, Mr. Speaker. We said it would report to the Premier and through the Premier to the Cabinet and through the Cabinet to the Province through the Legislature. A very simple answer.

Now they asked a second question: How much is this Economic Recovery Commission going to cost us? They were tossing around figures of \$3 million, because I think we had budgeted initially \$3 million. I think the lions share of that has been turned back to Government and to various departments. I think by the end of the fiscal year they will have spent less than \$1 million. But if you want to use dollars and cents as a yardstick to measure our Commission, we do not mind. Let us use dollars and cents. Let us take the \$3 million spent on the Royal Commission for Employment and Unemployment and add it to the \$22 million spent on Sprung, for \$25 million total,

over five years that this Commission ought to be doing its work and moving forward, that is about \$5 million a year. If you want to use economics and dollars and cents as a yardstick, write those numbers down and allow us to have \$5 million a year with no criticism and we will be happy.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition brought up the next point, and he wanted to know who has this Economic Commission consulted with? Have they talked to anybody since they have been established? Well, Your Honour, with the indulgence of the House, let me just name a few. In the last three months Commissioners have spoken to the Grand Falls Central Community College System, they have talked to senior people at ACOA, they have talked to the Department of Employment and Labour Relations, the Department of Social Services, the central zone of the Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Development Corporation, they have talked to the Faculty of Business at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, they have spoken to the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, they have had consultations with the Science and Technology Advisory Council to Government, and they have talked to Treasury Board.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. FUREY:
I can imagine what they have talked to you about.

They talked to the Newfoundland and Labrador Rural Development Council Board of Directors. They have consulted these people. They have spoken with the

Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat, they have spoken to the Conne River Indian Band Council, the Association of Professional Engineers, the Federal Business Development Bank senior management, the Division of Extension Services at Memorial University, the Division of Extension Services at Goose Bay, Labrador, the Eastern Community College system in Clarendville, the Seabright Corporation at Memorial, the Newfoundland Slate Operation, the Department of Economics at Memorial, the Women's Policy Office. Do you want me to go on and on, Your Honour? Who have they consulted with?

AN HON. MEMBER:
All the councils.

MR. FUREY:
With whom have they consulted?

MS DUFF:
(Inaudible).

MR. FLIGHT:
Yes.

MR. FUREY:
That is right. And they are going back and consulting with a great plethora of individuals.

MS DUFF:
(Inaudible).

MR. FUREY:
I am answering the question. The hon. the Member for St. John's East may not like the answer. If she does not, she can leave. But her Leader asked the question and I am giving the answer. Who have they consulted with in three short months? A great many people all over Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, with their heads held high, not stuck in the sand like the previous Government had done.

MS DUFF:
(Inaudible).

MR. FUREY:
Sure. No problem.

So, I think that addresses consultation. There have literally been hundreds of groups that the various Commissioners have talked with, consulted with, spoken with and dialogued with right across this Province, in every single part of the Province, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the last point I can draw from the very vacuous debate coming from the opposite side, the last point I could pull from that vacuum of words, was -

MR. EFFORD:
Is that all the Leader said over there?

MR. FUREY:
The putative Leader. I do not know if anybody else on the other side has spoken. There is supposed to have been a revolution between the ears, not a vacuum between the ears, but not much has come.

His fourth point was, will there be annual reports? Will this Commission report to the Premier and to the Cabinet and to the people through this Legislature? Now, if they had read the Bill, had taken time at all to look, they would see that there is a clause there, near the end of the Bill, I believe - I have not read it for a while - but near the end of the Bill, I think there is a reporting provision. Here it is, Clause 18. Clause 18 says, 'The Chairperson shall, within three months after the end of each fiscal year, submit to the Premier a report on the activities of the

Commission for that fiscal year, including the financial statements of the Commission and the Auditor General's Report on them.' Subsection (2) of Clause 18 says, 'The Premier shall present the report and statement submitted under Subsection 1 to the Assembly within thirty days after receiving them.' Now, that is a pretty simple, straightforward answer.

Unlike the previous Government, when they hired Peter Lougheed and company to advise the Government - I believe somebody on our side, in the Opposition of the day, asked the question, Will there be reports? Premier Peckford, during that time said there would be quarterly reports on the progress of Mr. Lougheed's advice to the Government because the ordinary - what was the expression for lawyers of the day by the Minister of Finance?

AN HON. MEMBER:
Garden variety.

MR. FUREY:
The garden variety lawyers in Newfoundland could not attend to offshore business and advise.

So, he asked would we report? Yes, we would report. Not only will we say we will report, we are enshrining it in legislation, in law to ensure that we report, unlike the previous Government.

Now, the hon. the Minister of Social Services can correct me. How many reports did we receive from Mr. Lougheed's firm which spent over \$400,000 of Newfoundland taxpayers' dollars over a period of three years, which would have been - what? - twelve quarters.

MR. EFFORD:

Twelve quarters.

MR. FUREY:

We were supposed to get quarterly reports. How many did you see?

MR. EFFORD:

Not one.

MR. FUREY:

Not one. I did not see any either. There was not one quarterly report from Mr. Loughheed and company for that expenditure of taxpayers' money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I guess I addressed the points that came from the other side. I could only write down three, because that is all I could pull out of the arguments that were being brought forward.

But, the real truth of the matter is, for any Member, especially the Member for Humber Valley, who should be leading the charge on that side, given his speech the other day that we are on the right track, anyone who wants to examine the heart of this Bill can examine it in Clause 7, which is the purposes of the Commission. Now, Mr. Speaker, can anybody on that side be against Clause 7 (a)? - to identify and implement programs and other measures that will contribute to the continuing and stable reduction in the chronically high unemployment rate in the Province. Is anybody on that side against that? Because if they are, they should stand up in debate and tell us that they are against us putting in place a team of competent, bright Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to help us battle a deeply disturbing high unemployment rate in this Province. I do not think anybody on the other side, at least anybody in their right mind,

would stand to be against that.

If you read through Clause 7 (a) and (b), and subsections (a) to (1) in Clause 8 of this Bill, who can be against those things, as well, which are really saying that we want this Commission to harness all of the wealth of opportunities that are out there, to catalogue and identify opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians all over the Province? Not just catalogue and identify these opportunities, Mr. Speaker, but to make them known to the people, to show the people what is available out there.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, their mandate is to harness all the financial opportunities that are there for businesses which are currently in operation and want to expand and create new jobs, and people who want to start new businesses. There are so many programs, FBDB, ACOA that has a shotgun program all over the place, NLDC, support through rural development authorities for businesses. What we are saying is it is time to streamline these financial activities and to make them more athletic and responsive to the needs of the people out there, particularly in rural Newfoundland. We want to harness all of that together, decentralize it, and deliver it to the regions. Mr. Speaker, who can be against that? That is the fundamental principle of the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, this legislation is enabling legislation to enable us, through law, through this Parliament to allow this Commission to go out there into the field and do its work. Mr. Speaker, if those Commissioners were good enough to identify the problem for the

previous Government, they are good enough to this Government to solve the problem and help us solve it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would agree with the Minister of Development and my colleague, the Member for Humber Valley, in saying that the purposes for the Economic Recovery Commission set out in this Bill are good purposes. They are goals that we can all support. However, Mr. Speaker, I find serious fault with the model proposed, the vehicle proposed for achieving those ends. The Economic Recovery Commission is set up in such a way as to aggravate duplication of Provincial and Federal Government agencies trying to foster the economy. It is set up in such a way as to confuse the public as well as to demoralize the permanent Public Service. The Economic Recovery Commission mandate is essentially the thrust of what had been the purpose of the Department of Development, which the Minister presides over. And, finally, Mr. Speaker, the model set out in this Bill for the Economic Recovery Commission does not provide an acceptable level of accountability of the Commission, to which such important powers are given, to the people of the Province through the Cabinet, or through the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by addressing briefly the name of this agency, Economic Recovery

Commission. That name connotes that at one time in the past this Province had an economy that was healthy and robust, and that we deteriorated, became sick and that, Mr. Speaker, now we are in need of healing and recovery.

Mr. Speaker, any objective review of our economic history will show that our Province has never had a healthy economy. One milestone is April 1, 1949. When we became a part of Canada, when we joined the Canadian Confederation, at that time hopes were elevated, there were expressions of wonderful optimism about what our joining Canada would do in terms of improving our economy and uplifting the standard of living of the people of the Province. The results, Mr. Speaker, I think we would all agree, have been most disappointing.

At that point of our entry into Confederation, there were huge discrepancies between our economy, between the per capita earned income within Newfoundland and Labrador and that economic measure for the rest of Canada. There were huge discrepancies between the standard of living of people here and of people elsewhere in Canada. Over the years since, Mr. Speaker, over the forty years since, those gaps really have not been closed. There has been an overall improvement in the economy of Canada and in the standard of living of citizens of Canada, but the relative position of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians has not improved significantly. The high hopes of Joseph R. Smallwood and others who touted Confederation with Canada, really have never been realized.

Mr. Speaker, various approaches had been tried by the Liberal

Government headed by Smallwood, and by the three PC Administrations. Over the last couple of years of PC Government there were some improvements, and I would refer Members to the economic statistics printed at the beginning of the present Government's Budget Estimates, this document bound in red that I hold before you. Those statistics compared the economic performance of the Province in 1987 with 1988, and showed that there were strides made. The statistics include a 6.9 per cent growth in the Gross Domestic Product of the Province, a 7.9 per cent increase in total personal income, a 7.9 per cent growth in per capita personal income, an 8.4 per cent drop in the unemployment rate, an 18.1 per cent increase in dwelling starts, an 11 per cent increase in retail trade, and a 13.8 per cent increase in sales of new motor vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, it will be interesting to look at the comparable statement of statistics for the difference in the economic performance in this Province between 1988 and 1989 or between 1989 and 1990. It will be interesting for us, a year from now or two years from now, to compare the performance of the Province's economy under the present Liberal Administration with what happened in the last couple of years of P.C. Government.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am trying to make is that economic advances are a matter of evolution. And it is not apt to use the word 'recovery' in the title of this agency, which seems to be the new Government's primary vehicle for advancing our economy.

AN HON. MEMBER:

There is nothing wrong with (inaudible).

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, if there is any truth at all to the notion that once we were healthy then we got sick and now the Liberal Government, under the great healer Clyde K. Wells who is going to restore us to full health, then, Mr. Speaker, it has to be acknowledged that in the seven months that the new Government has been in office the sickness has been seriously aggravated. I recite the gloom of the ERCO closure at Long Harbour with a loss of some 400 jobs, of the scale-down in operations of the Marystown shipyard with several hundred layoffs, the announcement made by the Premier in the House last week that Abitibi-Price are closing a paper machine at the Grand Falls mill and laying off 250 full time mill workers. And, Mr. Speaker, I refer to the revelations day by day that our fishery is going to have to be downsized significantly with a loss of jobs estimated at 5-6 thousand.

I do not take any joy in reciting those statistics, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell Members opposite that last week when the Premier announced the Abitibi-Price decision to close the paper machine at Grand Falls, I was very, very sad. I remember how I felt when Bowater in Corner Brook announced its decision to shut number 7 paper machine, and I remember how I felt when Bowater announced that it was getting out of Corner Brook altogether and there was no prospect of any successor. And the citizens of Corner Brook had to deal with the possibility that the largest employer in western Newfoundland would shut for good. But

thankfully, Mr. Speaker, that did not come to pass, and with the intervention and aggressive leadership of the P.C. Government headed by Premier Peckford, we were able to attract Kruger to invest in the mill and to carry out a \$250 million modernization program.

Mr. Speaker, I will go on to comment on the administrative structure for the Commission that is provided for in this Bill. I have already made the point that in my view the name is inappropriate. The whole notion that there needs to be an economic recovery or that there can be an economic recovery is false. There needs to be economic improvement, there needs to be economic growth, there needs to be evolutionary improvement. I made the points that the structure accentuates the already present duplication of Provincial and Federal Government agencies, departments and programs that are supposed to be improving our economy. The Minister of Development made the same point, except he indicated that this Bill is going to lead to streamlining. I would suggest that it has the opposite effect, Mr. Speaker. The Economic Recovery Commission duplicates most of the original mandate of the Department of Development. The Economic Recovery Commission duplicates the role of the Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation. NLDC is set up as a financing agency to foster business investments and growth in our Province. Strangely enough the power given to the Economic Recovery Commission in this Bill include the ability to lend money, and to grant money. Now why, Mr. Speaker, would the Economic Recovery Commission be given this kind of a direct delivery purpose

when there is already the Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation of the Provincial Government?

The Minister of Development mentioned the World Development Authority which is another Provincial Government agency that is now a part of his Department, and I suggest that is about all he has left of the original Department of Development. And then there are Federal Agencies that he referred to, ACOA, and FBDB. What I cannot understand, Mr. Speaker, is why the Premier and the Government did not combine the goals and purposes and powers that through this Bill it is attempting to give a brand new agency. Why it did not combine all of that and give it to the already existing Department of Development. Why did not the Government attempt to invigorate and make more athletic, to use the word of the Minister of Development, the already existing Department of Development? So, Mr. Speaker, this Economic Recovery Commission Structure set out in the Bill is going to add to the duplication.

My second point, Mr. Speaker, is that it is going to lead to confusion. The public already has a hard time working their way through the maze of Government agencies that are supposed to be giving advice and giving financial assistance to simulate business activity, well this is just another part of a maze.

A third point, Mr. Speaker, is that the Economic Recovery Commission, the way it is being set up is going to have a demoralizing effect on the permanent public service. How must the Deputy Minister of

Development and the ADMs in the Department of Development and the Directors in the Department of Development feel watching the Government basically ignore them, snub them, and give the important part of their mandate to another agency. It must be terribly demoralizing, Mr. Speaker.

And a fourth point, Mr. Speaker, is that this structure does not provide for an acceptable degree of accountability. And the lines of accountability -

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. L. Snow):
Order, please!

I have to interrupt the hon. Member for a moment. It is 4:00 o'clock on Thursday afternoon and I want to announce the questions for the Late Show.

Question No. 1 is directed to the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations. I wish to give notice of my dissatisfaction with the answers provided to my question re the employment programs regarding UI. And it is the hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

Question No. 2 is directed to the Premier. I am not satisfied with the answer received on my request to the layoffs of the Canadian Airlines and the disruption of the airline service. And it is the hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

And Question No. 3, I am not satisfied with the answer from the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation on the Petit Forte Road. I would like to ask it on the Late Show and that is the hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

The hon. the Member for Humber

East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This Bill sets up lines of authority and mechanisms for accountability that are not clear and are, as I said before, insufficient. The Bill says that the Commission shall report to the Premier. Further over, Mr. Speaker, the bill provides for the Cabinet appointing an Economic Recovery Advisory Board. But it does not explain what connection, if any, the Board is support to have to the Commission.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the bill says that the Board shall provide advice to the Government and to the Commission, but it does not specify what Minister the Board should address its advice to. And then surprisingly, Mr. Speaker, after having provided for the Commission reporting to the Premier the bill goes on to say that each year the Commission shall submit its Budget to the Minister of Development.

I predict, Mr. Speaker, that these confusing provisions for relationships among the Commission, the Advisory Board, the Premier, the Minister of Development and the Department of Development are going to lead to confusion, to a morale problem on the part of the permanent public service, and ultimately to insufficient accountability to the public for the considerable trust and investment of public funds that is being put into the Commission.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most disappointing aspects of the structure of this Commission, although it is not specifically

provided for in the act, perhaps it is by inference, is that the Commission has wiped out the Board of Directors of Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation.

The Bill does not dissolve the Development Corporation. The Development Corporation legislation is still on our books. So there continues to be a separate crown corporation called Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation. However, Mr. Speaker, the Economic Recovery Bill we are now considering says that the Commission shall now direct the activities of the Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation. Before this Bill was tabled in the House last week, the Government disbanded the Board of Directors of Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I thought from what has been said by Members on both sides that we all agree that we cannot waste any talent, we cannot spare any effort to improve the economy of our Province. Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation, of all the agencies of the Government trying to help the Newfoundland and Labrador economy was notably successful. I think if any of us were to ask any fair minded and well informed business person in our Province we would get that kind of commentary on the output of Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, the Board of Directors of that Corporation comprise experienced business people. Business people with proven records of success, business people who volunteered to serve on that Board and guided the policies and programs of the

Development Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, what I cannot understand quite frankly and what I am quite disappointed in is that the Government shoved these people aside. Not only did the Government disband that Board of experienced and accomplished business people, but it did not substitute for them anyone with comparable experience or talent. What has been substituted is the Recovery Commission. And that leads me, Mr. Speaker, to the composition of the Commission. The Commission is headed by Dr. Doug House and includes others with a similar background.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Dr. House and the others main claim to fame is in the halls of the university, in the academic world. He is a sociologist, and a couple of the other members of the Commission are also sociologists. Dr. House and Wayne Humphries, and I believe a couple of others now on the Commission were involved in the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, which was much maligned by the Liberals when it was announced back in the winter of 1985, but which I think proved to Members of all Parties in the Province that it was a worthwhile exercise.

The point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is that the contribution that Dr. Doug House and Wayne Humphries had to make to economic improvement in our Province, they made through their work on the Royal Commission. Their contribution is documented in their Report.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would really question their capabilities and that of the other members of the Commission to actually implement

the worthy recommendations of the Report. Mr. Speaker, none of them have hands-on business experience.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MS VERGE:

Yes, the Government in the face of that reality disbanded the Board of Directors of Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation .

Mr. Speaker, before I close I would like to repeat a prediction that I made last spring and that was quoted in the St. John's Evening Telegram.

My prediction, Mr. Speaker, is that one of the measures for improving our economy, that the new Government and the Economic Recovery Commission will make in the coming months, will be a reinstatement of the Private Sector Employment Program with some fine-tuning and a new name, and with much ado about Liberal innovation. Mr. Speaker, the Private Sector Employment Program, which was praised by the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, was administered by the PC Government for the last two years, and in my experience it was the best Government employment generation program. It was well received by the private sector, and justifying the Government's decision to drop it, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Employment said that it was riddled with patronage. That was untrue and has never been substantiated. Yesterday, the Premier dropped that excuse but gave a new one, namely that one business person in Humber East said it was unnecessary. Mr. Speaker, it may well be that some of the businesses that benefitted did not need it but the answer is surely

to find-tune the program, to change the criteria but to continue to operate it, because from what I saw the vast majority of businesses who participated, who after all had to contribute at least as much funding as the Government provided in the way of wage subsidies, really did do new things and add new jobs thanks to that program.

Mr. Speaker, my final comment will be, that because of the misguided approach of the Government in even talking about recovery, because of the Premier's proclamation that recovery and nirvana can be achieved in seven to ten years, because of the flaws in the administrative structure of this agency, because it aggravates the present duplication, because it is having a demoralizing effect on the permanent public service, because it is not designed to be properly accountable, Mr. Speaker, this Economic Recovery Commission, the acronym of which is ERC, will provide new reasons, over the years, for Clyde's IRK, I-R-K, as performed by Rick Boland in Review 89 to act up.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RAMSAY:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to speak in support of Bill No. 40, the Bill which will undertake to legislate the Economic Recovery Commission into existence. I cannot stand without having to try to, as we often hear, to put straight some of the statements made by Members opposite which have no basis in reality whatsoever. They are misleading, they are very

selective in their choices as to what they want to talk about, and how they want to put it. Granted, I suppose, if one would say that often enough people would believe it. The Members opposite managed to be elected several times on the basis of offering the public large projects which did not have a real basis in reality on the information that they even had. It was hypocrisy, it was a definite desire to be re-elected and then say, oops, we did not have an agreement, these are the things. It is the same thing when we are bringing in a Bill on the Economic Recovery Commission which will put in place the majority of the recommendations, I would say, according, of course, the fact that the report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment was begun in 1985 and we now have a case where here we are, four years later, soon to be five years later, implementing some of these recommendations. The time span has changed and therefore some of the recommendations, I am sure, in today's business atmosphere will change. Some of the things that the hon. Member said, first and foremost be careful not to assess blame on them for the past performance of their Government. Well, I think, we can look at our seating positions here in this Chamber and see that maybe not necessarily blame, but there is a realization of why we are here and Members opposite are sitting where they are. There are several things that we look at in economic development today, and Port aux Basques, I often use it as an example, because Port aux Basques Mr. Speaker, about ten years ago, started to lose jobs. We started to be, possibly, a case in point that the rest of the Province can look at if we are successful in

getting a lot of the employment opportunities we hope to be able to create there in the next little while.

Well, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Province could certainly look to the other end of the Province to get rid of this overpass syndrome, which I am sure we all know, exists. It has existed in the past and possibly the political reality of it is that it may continue to exist in some form in the future because of the central aspect of the Avalon Peninsula holding the majority of the general urban population of the Province.

If you look to the other end of the Province, the Port aux Basques area, you have the closest place in the Province to the North American market. So, are we, by virtue of having the capital city on this end of the Province, close to Europe. The reason it was established in the first place, was its proximity to the Old Country, where most of our forefathers came from. We could look out to Port aux Basques and say, alright, we are going to change things now. We are going to start creating some new industry, because the other industries have left.

We had the thing in Grand Falls recently, and I am sure they could certainly take a lesson from the people who have learned the hard way to try to manage to hold the population together, a population that has possibly only been held together because of the unemployment insurance system and some of the programs that were implemented by the Provincial Government. Now, you give credit where credit is due. If it puts money into the economy, then fine,

but if it is ever manipulated, things like the Private Sector Employment Program, which were abused, and I have no doubt in saying they were abused, Mr. Speaker. And I can identify cases, if hon. Members opposite would like to see them, of this particular abuse. I will, in future, bring that to this Chamber.

MS DUFF:

Do you have any of them there?

MR. RAMSAY:

No, no, I do not have them right here now, but we are working on them, Mr. Speaker. And these things were abused. And you say we should keep it going as is. Well, that is what got us where we are now, Mr. Speaker. We keep going as is, and we keep using these programs and doing things as they are.

MS DUFF:

Doug House thought they were great.

MR. RAMSAY:

Doug House did not necessarily think they were great. I am sure he did not think anything was beyond improvement, which is what it seems you say, 'Oh, it needs a little bit of polishing here and there.' Well, fine, let us go back to the drawing board and see if we can do this right, as opposed to continuing to do it wrong and still trying to analyze why we are doing it wrong. Let us take it apart, see what is going on with it and then try to figure out how to do it right, and then we will do it right, Mr. Speaker.

Is Newfoundland the neophyte, I suppose you could say, when it comes to the world market? Here we are, a small Province with a population possibly smaller than the size of most North American

cities, and we are going to try to compete in the world market, with all of the problems associated with our geography. How can we do that? Well, it is not going to be easy. It is not going to just happen because Government - Governments change regularly every four years. If the Administration does not change, some of the individuals change, Department heads change, policies and directions change.

MS VERGE:

It will change in the next four.

MR. RAMSAY:

It will not be changing the next time. Some people may change. There will be more over here, I would say.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

AN HON. MEMBER:

We need a quorum call, Mr. Speaker.

Quorum

MR. SPEAKER:

We have a quorum.

The hon. the Member for LaPoile.

MR. RAMSAY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To continue, a few things that I was having to say concerned the previous policies of the previous Government who were content to study the problems as they apply to employment and unemployment, Mr. Speaker. Well, we are not content just to sit back and study. We are planning and we will, through the Economic Recovery Commission, implement, and that is the key word, we are

active. We are not going to just sit back and passively study something and say, 'Well, there is the problem.' And I am sure some Members opposite will say, 'Well, we did introduce some of the recommendations of the Commission.' That is fine, but in general the overall approach was a band-aid approach, as I am sure we have often heard here.

What would we think of our Province of Newfoundland and Labrador without any change? Can you imagine now that we just studied it, put it on the shelf and said, 'Now in the future let us look and see what we have managed to do without any implementation, without any action.' Without that, Mr. Speaker, I would say that Newfoundland and Labrador's population would be quite a bit less than 550,000 or whatever it is now. How many of us would be here in a number of years? The high unemployment figures that they speak of and the manipulation in the past of the statistics and the statistics as it applied to unemployment in the Province, they automatically would take the lowest possible way of saying, okay, we really do not have high unemployment. We will overlook that and we will put this on top of that. We will make sure that it looks good because we can go out and we can say boy, the employment picture is up by 2 per cent, we are doing good in this Government. Well, that is not the way we plan to do this. We want to make sure that the public knows exactly what it is and including the discouraged workers as well the true unemployment picture, and that is the honesty of Government that heretofore in the past has not been seen in the last seventeen years or so. People

will see it just the way it is.

We have to know where we were to find out where we are going. We have to have a reference point and with that reference point I am certain that we can move on from there and implement these things and I am hopeful. I am sure there are possibly going to be some failures. We will involve ourselves in some businesses through the Economic Recovery Commission through an NLDC, through the Community Diversification Corporation, through the rural development movement. We will involve ourselves in a lot that will not succeed. But if we involve ourselves in enough things, and we are not so caught up in Government policy, we would then be able to have at least some success from the various opportunities that we availed of.

Now, I often hear Members opposite saying, well, you are the Government now. You are the Government now. They are always saying that. Well, I would say they are very thankful that we are the Government now, because of the tough job we have. Then they will be able to sit back in comfort and say, well, we are the Opposition. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to read to you a quote on how the Opposition operated. It is a quote from the Evening Telegram, Wednesday, Dec. 6th, page 13. It is in an article about Newfoundland business, and they talk about accountability for the Economic Recovery Commission. The questions were levied against the former Government to try to find out where the public money was going at the time, and this gentleman writes: "It was not the first time the public's questions went unanswered at the Green

House. For two years, Premier Brian Peckford played the village idiot, shaking cucumbers at cameras and assuring skeptical reporters that all was well with Pa and Dawn Sprung, and everything was rosy down on the farm."

AN HON. MEMBER:
Who wrote that?

MR. RAMSAY:
It is written by a reporter named Craig Westcott.

"The difference between the two operations is like that between east and west Berlin before the wall came down." Well, the wall is now down and people can go through. As the hon. the Member for Humber Valley mentioned before, he mentioned that the difference now is that it is not secretive, and it should not be. The Member for Humber East says it does not provide an acceptable level of accountability to the Cabinet and to the public. Well, it is utter hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker, for her to say that in light of the past Government, which she supported, and its policies on public information about it. The Public Accounts Committee was basically shut down at the time, prevented from getting information, and the Auditor General still has not gotten to the bottom of it. So I do not know how one can get up and talk about accountability, when they represented the previous Government which was not accountable to the people, and the people will decide.

There was another thing I wanted to talk about. She mentioned about the statistics in the Budget Speech, Mr. Speaker. She claims that these statistic point out that they were doing well, and

that the sales of vehicles and the sales of certain products were because of former Government policies. Well, I would suggest that that is not the case. Those sales figures and whatever, had to do with the world market. The outside influences from advertising and whatever come in from the rest of this country or whatever, and therefore we start to sell cars; as the sales go up everywhere else in the world, the sales go up here. We are no different from the rest of the country, Mr. Speaker.

There is one thing I would like to offer. The Economic Recovery Commission has been very involved, not only in meeting groups, they have been involved actively with the Port aux Basques Development Community, they are trying to help establish businesses there. And they were responsible, I would have to say, along with the Minister of Development and his staff, for seeing to it that the Grove Communication set up here in Newfoundland and not in Ohio, as they were planning.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

I have to interrupt the hon. Member because it is now 4:30 and we are ready to move into the Late Show.

MR. RAMSAY:
I will clue it up, Mr. Speaker. By leave, just for a minute?

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. RAMSAY:
I have one quote I want to give.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By leave.

MR. SPEAKER:
By leave.

MR. RAMSAY:
Mr. Speaker, I want to support wholeheartedly Bill 40, but the comfort of the Opposition in opposing everything, I think that comfort can be found in a quote by Robert Browning which states, 'What I aspired to be and was not, comforts me.' Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker, over the last month or so, we as an Opposition have been continuously asking Government, and asking the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations what plans her Government has, what plans she has to create employment opportunities for the people in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we have not been able to get a satisfactory answer from the Minister of Employment, and we have not been able to get a satisfactory answer from any Minister of the Government. The Minister of Labour refuses to answer these very, very important questions, Mr. Speaker, and I believe she is refusing to answer those questions with very, very good reason.

The simple fact of the matter is, the Government does not have any plans for employment programs in the Province, and it does not have any plans for employment programs to help the people who, for one

reason or another, through no fault of their own, will not be able to qualify for unemployment insurance, and will not be able to qualify for the Fishery Response Program this winter.

The Government is caught up in Bill No. 40, which has, according to the Premier, a ten year mandate before it produces jobs. We have been asking the Minister to give us some indication of what immediate plans she has to create employment in Newfoundland. We also have the Minister of Labour, of course, flying off to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, last week to meet with her Federal counterpart. She came back empty handed. And when she is asked to give an account of her meetings with the Federal Employment Minister, all she will tell us is that, well, it was not that type of meeting; they never got into discussing employment programs.

I asked the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations if she was aware of a very, very important group of people out there who are presently on unemployment insurance and who are receiving less than sixty dollars a week on UI. These people, Mr. Speaker, cannot, at the moment, avail of the old Federal programs that they had, under Section 25, to top up unemployment insurance, because that money has been depleted, it has dried up. I asked the Minister if she made the Federal Minister of Employment aware of that, that we do have people who are presently receiving starvation UI, and she told us that she did not make the Minister aware of that either.

I also asked the Minister if she was now prepared, since she came back from Ottawa empty handed,

without any commitment from the Federal Government on the creation of employment programs, if she was now prepared to reinstate the Private Sector Employment Program. We never got an answer from the Minister on that either, and she continues to evade that particular question.

What it boils down to, Mr. Speaker, is this Government has a very, very serious credibility problem. You have to ask how any Minister of Employment or any Government could go to the Federal Government in Ottawa asking them to come up with employment programs, asking them to come up with changes to the UI system, while at the same time, we have a Provincial Government who cancels out its own very, very important employment program.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That was not ours.

MR. DOYLE:

What we see there, Mr. Speaker, is a very serious credibility problem. And I think the Member just put his finger on it. He said, 'It was not ours.' And that was the reason the Private Sector Employment Program was cancelled, because it was not an idea, it was not a brainchild of the present Administration. Mr. Speaker, we are hearing through officials within the Department of Employment and Labour Relations that the Government was in the process of bringing back that program, they realized the mistake they had made, but because the Opposition and the Board of Trade called for reinstatement of the program, the Government, for that reason, did not reinstate it. Mr. Speaker, one would hardly expect the Government to reinstate the program, anyway.

Even the Minister of Employment did not understand what the program was about. You had the press interviewing the Minister one day, and I believe one of the reasons she gave for cancelling out the program was because all welfare recipients were employed on the program. Those were the words of the Ministers. 'The program employed welfare recipients.' Even the Minister did not know what the program was about. She was getting it confused, obviously, with the Community Development Program, which is sponsored through the Department of Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, this is the Minister the Province is depending upon to create employment opportunities. The Private Sector Employment Program was a very good program. The Board of Trade, as I said, called upon the Government to reinstate that Program. It was a Program that provided over 3,000 jobs. I believe one of the reasons the Government gave for cancelling out the Program, as well, was that it was laced with politics, which was absolutely, totally untrue, completely false. That Program, as all Members are aware, was not laced with politics at all. It was approved on a first-come-first-served basis.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Who got to know first?

MR. DOYLE:

It does not matter who got to know first. Everybody who applied for the Program and had an application in there had their application approved. It was approved on a first-come-first-served basis.

The question still remains, Mr. Speaker, what plans do Government have outside their long-term

plans, the ten year mandate they have which they say will create employment in ten years from now? What immediate plans do they have -

MR. SPEAKER:

I would ask the hon. Member to conclude his question.

MR. DOYLE:

- for employment programs in the Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, as Acting House Leader I would like to call upon the Acting Minister, in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What a silly, stupid argument the hon. Member for Harbour Main has just put forward. What a silly, convoluted, stupid argument.

The reason the Program was cancelled, Mr. Speaker, was because it was not a vehicle for creating any kind of long-term jobs. That particular Program was a vehicle by which Corporations and Law Firms and other groups in this Province would hire people they would have had to hire on their own anyway. It was a wage-subsidy program for people who could afford to pay the full wage bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that, in effect,

was what the Program was. And let me tell the hon. Member something else, when he suggested it was done on a political basis. Well, Mr. Speaker, would the Member want to guess how many people were hired in the total District of Windsor - Buchans under that particular Program? How many people were hired? In the great historic District of Windsor - Buchans there were two jobs, Mr. Speaker, and they want to put that off as a job creation program in the private sector. It was purely a case of corporate welfare. We were aiding and abetting what the great David Lewis would have called corporate welfare.

Mr. Speaker, as for the hon. Member referring to the hon. Minister making the statement - and they keep saying this - let them to go to welfare, again what nonsense! What would the hon. Member for Fogo tell a constituent of his if the constituent had run out of UIC and had no other visible means of income? What would the hon. Member for Fogo tell his constituent? He would probably not only advise him to go to welfare, he probably would take him by the hand and bring him to welfare. What else would he do? Yet he sits there so sanctimonious, Mr. Speaker, and self-righteous saying the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations said everybody who does not get UIC or runs out should go on welfare. What a sanctimonious, self-righteous, hypocritical attitude.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as for what this Government will do for job creation, the hon. Member will know that everything is under review, thank God! Thank God all the programs created by the previous Administration are under

review. The hon. Member will know that some days ago the Premier indicated that if Opposition can take the Private Sector Employment Program and improve it so that it does what it was intended to do, create short-term meaningful jobs that will guarantee that the people who work in them continue on in those jobs, then we will look at that. But we are waiting for the hon. the Member for Harbour Main, and we will wait until the cows come home before the hon. the Member for Harbour Main will do anything with this program except play politics, Mr. Speaker, and we are not interested in having politics played with the unemployed in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, let me stand shoulder to shoulder with the hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, and if any constituent of mine, for whatever reason, approaches me and suggests he is about to run out of UIC, with no other visible means of income, then I will suggest that they do, indeed, the only thing left for them to do, and that is apply to Social Services.

MR. TOBIN:

Go on welfare (inaudible).

MR. FLIGHT:

I do not like it, and it will not be so in five or six years, when we replace those silly, stupid programs the former Government implemented with good, meaningful long-term employment for the people of this Province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I was not satisfied with the answers I received from the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation and, in particular, Mr. Speaker, the answer I received from the Premier. I was hoping the Premier would be here to respond, but the Premier has asked the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation to respond.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said in response to my question, 'I am satisfied that both Ministers have the matter fully in hand.' Mr. Speaker, I am very confident the Premier was satisfied in assuming the Ministers had everything in hand.

Now, is the hon. the Minister sure of what he said yesterday in the House, when he gave me the answer to the question, that Canadian Airlines advised him that they had no intention of taking the 737 Aircraft off the Labrador run? I say to the hon. the Minister, and to every individual Member in this House, that within six months from this day, the 737 will have a reduced service to Happy Valley - Goose Bay and to Wabush. And I say to the hon. the Minister, and he can mark it down, that six months from today, the 7th day of December, you will see a reduction in the 737 service. I say to the hon. the Minister he should take my advice and find out for sure.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell the hon. House something else. I do not know if the Minister realizes it

or not, but I think the Minister of Environment and Lands realizes it, and I am sure my hon. colleagues from Eagle River and Labrador West recognize it. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that Canadian Airlines have adopted a new policy towards Labrador? Canadian Airlines have instituted in the last five or six weeks, a first and second class service. They have the 737 aircraft divided with a partition down the center of the passenger area, and they have the freight in front, going first-class, and the passengers going second-class.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is what Canadian Airlines have done with their flights in Labrador. It was never done before Mr. Speaker, not by Canadian Airlines.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes, it was.

MR. WARREN:

On an emergency basis only.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) Halifax freighter.

MR. WARREN:

No, I am saying from St. John's to Goose Bay to Wabush now have a two tier service, first class for freight and second class for passengers.

MR. KELLAND:

What is happening is (inaudible) placed in the aircraft -

MR. WARREN:

Let me say to the hon. gentleman for Naskaupi (Mr. Kelland) that every time I travel on a 737 I request a seat from one to five. I always request a seat from one to five.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are freight then.

MR. WARREN:

Now, I say to the hon. gentleman, that whether I am freight or not, Mr. Speaker, those seats are there from 1 to 5 and I always prefer to sit in the front of the aircraft.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell the hon. gentleman that those planes have been going to Labrador, to Happy Valley - Goose Bay, and to Wabush, with freight in the belly where the freight was suppose to go. Freight is suppose to go in the belly part of the plane, and now they are putting their freight and the passengers on the same level and all is there is a partition. Furthermore I would suggest that Canadian Airlines maybe breaking some safety regulations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, no. Oh, no.

MR. WARREN:

Oh, no, because you say, no. The Premier said the Minister of Social Services never broke the law in his life.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I ask the hon. Member to conclude his question.

MR. WARREN:

Oh, Mr. Speaker, I was just getting wound up again.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would ask the Minister if he has a report from the Minister of Labour on the first part of the question, how many Canadian Airline employees will be laid-off as a result of the plans by Canadian Airlines to lay off 1900 people across Canada?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, I gave the hon. Member the answer to the question with the information that was provided to me by Canadian Airlines. There is no way that I can be a soothsayer and look into the future to know what Canadian Airlines are going to do in six months time. I say the Member has asked his question and now he can send it down to his District and they will know he worked all week.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. MURPHY:

Let us hear it. Now we are going to hear it.

MR. TOBIN:

The Member for St. John's South, Mr. Speaker, is the person who should be asking questions in this House particularly with four and five of his constituents threw out of work.

MR. MURPHY:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, today we had an admission from the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter) and the Premier that Newfoundland was in trouble. We know there is going to be four to five fish plants closed down in rural Newfoundland which basically means that there is a blatant attempt by the Wells Administration to resettle rural Newfoundland. That resettlement, Mr. Speaker, is coming in the form

of a total destruction of communities, particularly isolated communities -

MR. WALSH:

What is the question?

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I think that Your Honour gave information -

MR. WALSH:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order.

MR. WALSH:

Mr. Speaker, I seem to detect that the question coming forward from the hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) seems to be somewhat different from the one that I heard at four o'clock. And I am not quite sure what it may be.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How long will I talk?

MR. WALSH:

The question seems to be very different from what was proposed. Actually the question seems to be even going to the wrong Minister. And I understand that we would like to have whoever is going to answer the question to be here in the House, Mr. Speaker. I think maybe you should call for a recess, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair is trying to find what the question was. I take it it is - 'I am not satisfied with the answer from the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation on the Petit Forte Road.'

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, Petit Forte is an isolated community in rural Newfoundland, and that there is a blatant attempt, Mr. Speaker, by this Administration to destroy rural Newfoundland. That leadership has been exhibited, number one, first and foremost by the Premier of this Province in the plant closures that have been acknowledged today by the Premier and the Minister of Fisheries, and by the actions of the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WALSH:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order.

Order, please!

MR. WALSH:

Mr. Speaker, once again I stand on a point of order. I am not sure where the road to Petit Forte and a question to the Minister of Transportation gets tied-in with the fish plants or the alleged fish plants that the hon. Member is referring to in saying that the Premier is trying to destroy rural Newfoundland by closing fish plants. And the Minister of Fisheries has announced today that we are closing - none of that, closing fish plants. That did not happen in the House, Mr. Speaker. I am not quite sure how we can even in the wildest imagination I see no way that the hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) can entertwine and weave -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! I have heard

enough on the point of order. This is only a short period and I will listen to the hon. Member for Burin - Placentia West. Sometimes it is very difficult to tie together things, but I will listen to the hon. Member to see how he is doing it.

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I apologize to the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island (Mr. Walsh). Most of us have realized that he does have difficulty in understanding, and if I was a bit confusing above the Members head, I will apologize to him for that. And I will not be as confusing to him in the future, and I will ask my colleagues to be likewise.

Mr. Speaker, Petit Forte is a community that is on the brink, Mr. Speaker, of becoming part of freedom from isolation as I have said so often. I stand in this House to defend the rights of the people of Petit Forte who live without a road. I honestly believe, as I did when there was an agreement signed to provide them with the road, that they were entitled to that road being constructed. In the past week since the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation has made his infamous statement that it is just not right to put a road to Petit Forte. The people down there have become confused, they have sent telegrams to almost everyone including several Members opposite, as I understand. They have requested the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation for a meeting, and I ask the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation this evening if he

will go to Petit Forte and meet with the residents within the very near future. I beg the Minister of Transportation to go to Petit Forte and discuss the issue with the people. The question I asked the Minister today, and the question is very simple. Has the Provincial Government requested the Federal Government to cancel the road to Petit Forte? Mr. Speaker, no decision has been made, is not the answer. The decision has been -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. gentleman's time is up.

MR. TOBIN:
Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I ask the Minister if he would tell us if the request has gone to the Federal Government from the Provincial Government, and we need not confirm that there have been projects identified in this Province to be done from the money that is going to be saved on the road to Petit Forte.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister for Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:
I would like to clarify one part, if I could, Mr. Speaker, before I start it off. And the Member did not ask me to go to Petit Forte to a meeting today. He did not ask me today previously, that is right, you certainly did not. And as I told him, or I will tell him, that last week I guess I told him that as far as I was concerned,

the road to Petit Forte is perfect. There is nothing wrong with the road to Petit Forte. But, what is wrong is the agreement that was signed by the previous Government, that once the road was put through to Petit Forte, then you were saddling the Government of Newfoundland forever with a fee to take over the ferry service between Petit Forte and South East Bight and to take over a half completed road which would have to be paved immediately we took it over, now that is what is wrong. So when I said, and I say again, Mr. Speaker in this House, that I feel that the Province of Newfoundland again came off second best in their dealing with Ottawa. Presently, Ottawa are paying \$550,000 a year to provide second-class service to Petit Forte by a ferry service that goes from Argentia across the Bay and is not adequate and is not used by anyone. He has signed an Agreement to put in a road and committing the Newfoundland Government to spend about \$400,000 a year to provide the service which the feds are giving up, which is wrong, Mr. Speaker.

I say to the Member that this Government will do nothing to downgrade any service to Petit Forte. The thing that we intend to do is to improve the service to Petit Forte and that is ours. I feel that it is wrong to transfer the Federal Government expense to the Province of Newfoundland and that is what is wrong. I intend to talk to the Federal Minister of Transportation about it, tell him that I am concerned, that it is a bad deal for Newfoundland and that is the thing that I am concerned about. As the Minister responsible for transportation in this Province I have to maintain that it was a bad deal for

Newfoundland and I have to look into it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The Acting Government House Leader, the hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. FUREY:
I move adjournment until tomorrow, Friday, at 9:00 a.m.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, at 9:00 a.m.

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Answers to Questions

tabled

December 7, 1989

USE OF DEPARTMENT OF WORKS, SERVICES & TRANSPORTATION
EQUIPMENT AND STAFF ON PRIVATE AND MUNICIPAL PROPERTY

During normal operations Department of Works, Services & Transportation staff and equipment will not do work on private or municipal property. There are occasions when work is performed in these areas under the following conditions:

1. During surveys for purposes relative to Public Works.
2. In cases of emergencies such as floods, etc., the Regional Director will use his own judgement to decide if immediate entry is to be made.
3. Where an easement or agreement is obtained to enter on property to alleviate a highway drainage problem.
4. Department of Works, Services and Transportation equipment may be hired to private individuals, school boards, churches, charitable organizations, Federal and Provincial Government Departments and Crown Corporations, Community and Town Councils, and contractors engaged by the Department, under the following conditions:
 - (a) When no other suitable equipment is available within a reasonable distance from the work site.
 - (b) At current rates set by the Department's Equipment Rental Rate Schedule including actual labour costs and appropriate payroll burden and administration charges.
 - (c) Upon prior arrangement by work order or written request.
5. Snowclearing and ice control is provided on:-
 - (a) Accesses or driveways to schools located outside municipal boundaries.
 - (b) Roads outside municipal boundaries which serve two or more permanent residents and which are built to a standard specified by the Department.
 - (c) Roads in Community Councils subject to written requests from Council.
 - (d) Roads to cemeteries located outside municipal boundaries when interment is to be made.
6. As a general rule, Department equipment is not hired to private individuals except in extenuating circumstances where private contractors are not available within a reasonable distance, i.e., in coastal Labrador communities.