

PRELIMINARY
UNEDITED
TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
FOR THE PERIOD:
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 1979

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) Order, please!

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MR. W. N. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of personal privilege.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of privilege.

MR. W. N. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I raise this point of privilege at the earliest possible opportunity. It concerns a very serious matter which was referred to yesterday by my colleague, the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons). It is only today, Sir, this morning, that I was able to obtain a transcript of certain remarks made at a public inquiry, which I believe, Sir, raised some grave questions, some grave matter of personal privilege involving myself.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a transcript of a portion of evidence given by my executive assistant, Mr. Brian Tobin, at yesterday's hearing.

I am referring to page 209 in the transcript of yesterday's hearing. And Mr. Tobin was being questioned by Counsel for the Commission as to why he did not tell the police that he had been delivering police reports. But that is not the important matter here, Sir; I just use this by way of a preliminary. And he indicated in his evidence that, well, he did not directly know although he could speculate and conjecture on it. And the first answer to a question on page 209 reports Mr. Tobin as saying, "I did not feel it was my place under the circumstances in my position as executive assistant to the Leader of the Opposition to be volunteering anything." And the question from the Counsel at that point is, "So you withheld that information?"

MR. W. N. ROWE: And then Judge Soper, the
Commissioner, Sir, enters into the matter and states:

"Question: In other words, Mr. Tobin, in that
particular aspect, you were conducting your own cover-up
with Mr. Rowe, were you not? Were you not?

"Answer: No, Sir, that particular aspect -

"Question: Yes, but you knew it was a police investigation.

"Answer: I knew the police were asking questions, yes.

"Question: Was that a police investigation?

"Answer: Yes, I assume it was a police investigation.

"Question: And you were refusing to give information.
You did not make a full disclosure, did you? And you and
Mr. Rowe are the people who are talking about cover-ups.

"Answer: Pardon?

MR. W. ROWE: "And Mr. Rowe is the person who has been talking about cover-ups and you were covering up Mr. Rowe, were you not?"

"No, I answered his question. "Question: Well, I understand that - sorry Mr. Woolridge."

Mr. Woolridge is the Counsel.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of this hon. House, I am flabbergasted and at a loss for proper words perhaps to comment on the fact that those statements were made or what to do about it. I believe my rights as a member may be seriously affected in this case, certainly as an individual as well. We have an hon. judge acting as a Commissioner drawing a conclusion before all the evidence is in, a conclusion which is certainly prejudicial to me as a member of this House, certainly indicates a bias of some sort towards me, and I am at a complete loss as to what to do about it at this point in time. It is a very serious matter, Mr. Speaker -

MR. NEARY: Shocking!

MR. W. ROWE: - and I rise now, at the first possible opportunity, to give notice of the fact that I have, I believe, a point of privilege in that my rights as a member of this House have been seriously prejudiced, breached. I intend, Sir, as quickly and as soon as possible to conduct some research into the matter, consult experts on the matter, and at a very early opportunity to raise the matter in the House as a point of privilege to argue a prima facie case, and if permitted, if necessary, to make a proper motion based on the fact that I believe that my rights as a member of this House have been seriously prejudiced, seriously breached by these remarks by the Commissioner before that Royal Commission of Inquiry.

I am sorry I cannot now, Mr. Speaker, I do not have the wherewithal at this point in time to deal with the matter adequately, but I had to raise it at the earliest possible opportunity or lose my right to do so, and I raise it now by way of notice of the fact that I will be raising, am raising and will continue

MR. W. ROWE: to raise, Sir, when I am in a position to do so, a point of personal privilege involving the fact that my rights were prejudicially affected, that there is bias and prejudice perhaps shown with regard to myself as far as that Royal Commission is concerned.

MR. SPEAKER:(Mr. Ottenheimer) As hon. members are aware, when a member rises on a point of privilege, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition stated must be done at the earliest possible opportunity, and obviously that condition is met, and then the second proviso is that the hon. member then does not, as the hon. gentleman did not, argue or speak to a motion but puts

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER):

forward his statement as to in what respect he believes privilege was broken and then the onus is on the Chair to determine whether it is a prima facie case or not. If there is a prima facie case, that means that the motion is given immediate precedence, without notice, without being on the Order Paper. What I now have to do is to determine whether, in one wording it is sometimes put "a prima facie has been established" or another wording, which May prefers, that being, "whether the matter of privilege is so involved as to give priority to a motion resulting therefrom."

I will reserve my decision and will give it as soon as I have given the matter the reflection it requires and the study that it requires, and I will do it as early as I can.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. W.N. ROWE:

On the point of order affecting

that, Mr. Speaker, in case I led the Speaker to misunderstand my position, I am prepared to argue, when I have an opportunity to do so, the prima facie case of breach of privilege on my part. I indicated to Your Honour, that I only recently, a matter of hours, an hour or so was able to look at these remarks. I had an indication that the House may not be sitting after today and if I let the matter go, did my researches and let the matter go on the fact of whether a prima facie case of breach of privilege had in fact been established, as I believe it has been, but if I let the matter go I would not be able to raise the matter ever again. What I would like to do, Your Honour, is to raise the matter by way of notice of the fact that I will be arguing the prima facie case and be drafting up the appropriate resolution at that time. If Your Honour decides otherwise, then I am quite prepared to go ahead. But the point is, Sir, that I have had no opportunity to look into the matter, to amass any argument with regard to the prima facie case involved, and I would think, Sir, that it would be unfair at this moment to decide the matter as to the prima facie case or not. As I said, I am prepared to do so but I would like the opportunity to

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MR. W.N. ROWE: study the matter further and to
amass the arguments which are necessary. My sole purpose today is to
raise the matter at the earliest possible opportunity so that I would
not be deemed to be resting on my rights and never be able to raise
the matter again.

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): Just on a procedural matter
here, my understanding is the hon. gentleman, the Leader of the
Opposition,

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. Ottenheimer): has now done what, irrespective of the period of time or amount of documentation he might have, has now done really everything required to be done by indicating in what way he alleges his privileges have been infringed upon. I will read from page 225 of Beauchesne, "Once the claim of a breach of privilege has been made it is the duty of the Speaker to decide if a prima facie case can be established. The Speaker requires to be satisfied both that privilege appears to be sufficiently involved to justify him in giving such precedence or, as it is sometimes put, that there is a prima facie case that a breach of privilege has been committed, and that the matter has been raised at the earliest opportunity. It has often laid down that the Speaker's function in ruling on a claim of breach of privilege is limited to deciding the formal question whether the case conforms with the conditions which alone entitle it to take precedence over the notices of motion and orders of the day standing on the Order Paper and does not extend to deciding the question of substance whether a breach of privilege has in fact been committed, a question which can only be decided by the House itself."

I point this out to point out that the actual argument, debate leading up to a decision is a matter which comes after a ruling that there has been a prima facie case established. So I really think everything that needs to be done from the hon. Leader of the Opposition's point of view has now been done. I think the matters which remain to be done are for the Chair to give the study and examination and whatever research is required in order then to advise the House whether a prima facie case has been established or not. I, to be perfectly frank, think that it will be difficult to do it today and

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. Ottenheimer): may be unwise to attempt unduly to do it today because it is an extremely important matter and one which I would not be able to perform my duties and obligations to the House if I were to do it without giving it full consideration. Whether I can do that between now and six o'clock I frankly do not know.

MR. W. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the page to convey this to Your Honour, which is the transcript referred to.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, in November of 1978 the receiver for the Come By Chance refinery, Peat, Marwick Limited, received two offers to acquire and reactivate the refinery. After advising the Province of its intention, the receiver accepted the offer of First Arabian Corporation on November 14, 1978, and commenced negotiations with its President, Mr. Roger Tamaraz, with a view to finalizing an agreement of sale by February 15, 1979.

In accordance with the terms of the letter of intent, the receiver agreed to desist from negotiations with any other party with respect to the sale, transfer or other disposition of the refinery. In December, 1978 the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador retained the firm of chartered accountants of Thorne Riddell and Company to assess the proposal of Avalon Refining Company Limited, owned by Mr. John M. Shaheen. The Thorne Riddell report has been received and it concludes, and I quote, "Based upon the review of the substance and reliability of the underlying evidence, in our opinion the Avalon proposal is not feasible."

Senior officials of the Department of Finance and Cabinet have reviewed this report and agreed with its conclusion. At this time I would like to table the Thorne Riddell report and an executive summary of the same.

In addition, there were a number of other aspects of the Avalon proposal which, notwithstanding Thorne Riddell's conclusion, rendered the proposal unacceptable to the Province. In particular, the Avalon proposal was contingent upon the Province of Newfoundland entering into a four year fuel oil purchase contract for approximately \$79 million (Canadian) and guaranteeing \$79 million of Avalon's bank loans. The Province is not willing to assume such a financial burden.

Premier Peckford: In addition, it would be against government policy to enter into a long-term fuel oil purchase contract without the benefit of competitive public tenders.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): Order, please! Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD: One day after the Thorne Riddell report was received, the Province received a telex

PREMIER PECKFORD:

from Mr. Shaheen, of which I will table copies, stating that the proposed fuel oil purchase contract was no longer part of his proposal and that other unspecified arrangements had been made. The substance of these arrangements is unknown at this time. However, the new proposed arrangements are clearly outside the ambit of the original Shaheen proposal as studied by Thorne Riddell. In the interest of insuring that the refinery is brought back on stream as quickly as possible, the Province takes the position that it will not entertain a new proposal from Mr. Shaheen until the FAC, the First Arabian Corporation's proposal has been given a fair hearing. Turning to the FAC proposal, the First Arabian Corporation's proposal, a group of senior officials of the Department of Finance has been actively involved in the discussions and negotiations between the receiver, FAC, Kleinwort, Benson Limited, the Export Credit Guarantee Department of the British Government, UOP Incorporated and the Federal Government with the goal of determining whether the FAC proposal would be acceptable to the Province. The government is pleased with the progress of the negotiations to date and has confidence in the ability of FAC to meet the Province's conditions precedent and to finalize a contract of sale given that, one it is not a requirement of FAC that the Province guarantee or otherwise provide funding for the project; two, the Province has been advised that a chartered bank, after seeing preliminary financial projections, is seriously interested in providing financing; three, the Province has been advised that FAC has reached a preliminary agreement with Ashland Oil Incorporated to operate the refinery and to purchase a substantial portion of the refinery output subject only to negotiating a definitive agreement and approval by the respective boards of directors and governmental authorities. Ashland is one of the largest independent petroleum refiners in the United States and a leading supplier to independent markets. Ashland has approximately

PREMIER PECKFORD: 32,000 employees and assets of approximately \$2.3 billion. In 1978 the sales were around \$5.4 billion. Number four; First Arabian Corporation has agreed to pay the claims of certain local creditors. Each local creditor who has filed a claim will be entitled to receive the full value of his claim up to a maximum of \$100,000 to each to be paid within ninety days after start-up of the refinery.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Local creditors will be defined as individuals resident in Newfoundland and private companies incorporated under the Newfoundland Companies Act, the majority of whose shares are owned by Newfoundland residents. The claims of individuals or companies associated with the two bankrupt companies will not be paid. An independent assessor will be retained to determine the proper amount of each claim. Thus, the Province is happy to encourage FAC and to actively participate in further negotiations toward finalization of a contract of sale and start-up of the refinery. However, the Province must be assured that once the refinery is sold and reactivated that there is no doubt that its operations will be viable and ongoing. Therefore, the Province insists that prior to its approval of the sale of the refinery, the following conditions must be met: one, resolution of all matters being negotiated between FAC and the Province, for example, environmental standards, electrical rates, local taxes, confirmation of title to lands and access to the construction wharf; two, finalization of a binding letter of intent with Ashland Oil Incorporated covering the long-term operation and marketing of a substantial portion of the refinery's production; three, finalization of a reasonable arrangement relating to a crude oil supply for the refinery; four, finalization of a binding letter of intent with a reliable contractor to provide a reasonable assurance of rehabilitation and start up of the refinery; five, demonstration of the financial and operational viability of the refinery, together with assurances that FAC has arranged adequate financing for the project; six, finalization of a payment distribution agreement between and amongst the first mortgagees and the second mortgagee; seven, finalization of an acceptable proposal to the

PREMIER PECKFORD:

local creditors by FAC.

The Province maintains that timing is of essence in this matter. Delays will result in further deterioration of the refinery and increase the costs of maintenance and rehabilitation; thus, we must move quickly but carefully to conclude this matter.

The Province insists that adequate information and documentation on the above matters be made available to the Province at least fifteen days prior to the sale of the refinery. Thus, the Province announces its full support of, and its intention to actively work with FAC toward reactivation of the Come By Chance refinery. It supports FAC's request for an extension of the deadline for signing of the Contract of Sale to June 30, 1979.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I would like to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that government has not accepted the First Arabian proposal. We will continue negotiations until we are satisfied that the conditions outline above are met, otherwise no deal will be made. In effect, what we are doing is rejecting one proposal, for very valid reasons, and engaging in intensive negotiations on the other. However, as Premier of the Province I am confident that the June 30th. deadline can be met thus, notwithstanding the necessity to have the contract of sale approved by the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and FIRA, we can realistically look forward to the rehabilitation of the refinery starting in the Fall of 1979 and the start up of the refinery in the first quarter of 1981. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. W.N. ROWE: It is noteworthy, Sir, that the copy of the Thorne Riddell report was not distributed beforehand and I did not have a copy beforehand from the government to study in order to make any remarks on the matter. The Thorne Riddell report is now becoming available for the first time to the public today, now, and therefore I have had to listen to what the Premier had to say.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of points, without getting into debate which we are not permitted to do during a response to minister's statements but we will get into it later on this afternoon perhaps and certainly at a later date, there are a number of very, very serious questions about this whole matter that have to be resolved yet, a number of loose ends that have to be straightened out. For example, I was under the impression, as I am sure anybody in Newfoundland who was interested in the matter was also under the same impression, that there was a Peat-Marwick and Mitchell report or a Kates, Peat, Marwick report - it was always confusing when it was put out over the air-into the First Arabian Corporation proposal, that

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MR. W.N. ROWE:

there was a report done on that, an analysis done by that company and a report prepared on it, at least that was my understanding of the former Premier's statements on the matter. Kates, Peat, Marwick, of course,

Mr. W. N. Rowe: were employed by Kleinwort, Benson. And in a very premature way Kleinwort, Benson and the receiver accepted the First Arabian Corporation proposal, perhaps even forced the government's hand in the matter. But no one has seen this Kates, Peat, Marwick report or the Peat, Marwick and Mitchell report as the case may be, nobody has seen the report. The Thorne Riddell report was into the Shaheen proposal or the Avalon proposal, only the same company did not analyze the two companies' proposals. At best we have an analysis done by one company of First Arabian's proposal and other company of the Shaheen proposal, which of course is a matter of trying to compare chalk and cheese. There is no basis for a comparison between the two reports because nobody has seen the other report that was done for Kleinwort, Benson of FAC as the Premier now in a very familiar way calls it, the First Arabian Corporation. Nobody has seen it. And I ask the Premier whether in fact there is a report in existence and whether he intends to table that as well, so we can see what the shortcomings, if any, the problems, if any, as perceived by expert investigators of the First Arabian Corporation proposal may be?

Until that is done, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that this House can give a decision one way or the other. Let us have all of the evidence presented on the Table of the House so that every member in this House can study the documents.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. W. N. ROWE : Is there a report or is there not? Or where we misled in this House when we were asking in the House, Mr. Speaker, what the analysis of the First Arabian Corporation proposal was? Where we misled and just led down the garden path to keep us quiet and stop us asking questions -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. N. Rowe: - when they said there was a Kates, Peat, Marwick report?

MR. NEARY: They are dictating to the government Peat, Marwick. They do not know what they are talking about.

MR. W. N. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, that is a serious question.

MR. NEARY: Peat, Marwick runs the Province.

MR. W. N. ROWE: Now dealing with the Premier's statement made earlier this afternoon, here we have a government which for some reason or other comes out at this point in time and makes no final decision. We were all led to believe again during the last weeks and months that today, or very soon, the government would make a final decision.

MR. NEARY: No courage.

MR. W. N. ROWE: And now we see a statement, Mr. Speaker, which, to be most charitable about characterizing it, can only be characterized as wishy-washy,

MR. W. ROWE: lacking in decision, lacking in courage, a government which seems not to have the stomach to come to grips with the matter and make a decision one way or the other. We hear talk of encouraging. We hear talk of one company, the Avalon Company, Mr. Shaheen's company, we hear talk of that being booted out the door and no further negotiations will take place. A very strange attitude for a government which is trying to act in the best interest of the Province to take, to cease and desist all negotiations with a company, a person who has devoted the greater part of his life to the Come By Chance oil refinery, and to encourage and give the impression of accepting a proposal which has about fifteen loose ends in it at this time as the Premier has indicated. Ashland Oil Company apparently gives no firm proposal as to the supply of oil. Is it not owned by the First Arabian?

MR. NEARY: That is right. It is their own company.

MR. W. ROWE: We may have a parent company dealing with a subsidiary company -

MR. NEARY: Right.

MR. W. ROWE: - on one of the most important -

MR. NEARY: And questionable at that.

MR. W. ROWE: - one one of the most important aspects affecting this whole case.

MR. NEARY: They were involved in a little bit of skulduggery a few years back.

MR. W. ROWE: I would say that a guarantee from Ashland to First Arabian Corporation concerning anything would not be an arm's length or acceptable guarantee from the government's point of view.

MR. NEARY: Ashland was the one involved in pay-offs a few years back.

MR. W. ROWE: We have a situation, Mr. Speaker, where at this late date, after months and months and months and months of negotiations, a deadline of February 15th. was given there some time ago - we still have no firm financial arrangements lined up. We still see many conditions which have not yet been met by First Arabian Corporation. The one condition they seem to have met and are prepared to meet is the one which I and my colleagues put to First Arabian Corporation when they sat in my office downstairs some weeks ago and that concerns the local creditors. We said any deal that is acceptable to the Opposition would have to have a proviso to look after the debts of the local creditors. And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Tamraz said there in our office that until he came into the Province and discussed the matter that day he had no notion of the requirement to look after the debts of local creditors. And if we had not raised it publicly and privately with him I would say to this day there would be no condition to look after the local creditors.

MR. SIMMONS: That is right.

MR. FLIGHT: Crosbie is still (inaudible).

MR. W. ROWE: That is what he said. Now, Mr. Speaker, I will draw my remarks to a conclusion because I realize that I am

MR. W. ROWE: somewhat out of order, I am somewhat out of order in pursuing this, We will get a chance to debate it later on, but I did want to make the point, Sir, that the only firm commitment seems to be that and, of course, that is not firm because the Premier requires other guarantees on that as well.

The only question I can ask, Mr. Speaker, by way of summary is: Why have not the conditions been met yet, after months of negotiations, if First Arabian Corporation is serious or are they dangling the government on a string? Why has the Shaheen group been booted out the door unceremoniously, no further negotiations, when we have not seen any report of the First Arabian proposal as done by Peat, Marwick and Mitchell Company which may draw the same kinds of conclusions, Mr. Speaker, as the Thorne Riddell Report is reputed to draw concerning their proposal?

Mr. Speaker, the people of this Province, I do not think, are being dealt with in a straight forward fashion on this matter.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. W. ROWE: I think, Sir, there are some serious questions that arise in the public mind about this whole matter and I think that this statement here today, Sir, by the Premier is merely designed to stop people from getting in an uproar over the government's foot dragging, over the lack of action, the lack of decisiveness, to try to give an indication that the government is doing something about this whole matter of opening the Come by Chance Refinery when in fact, Sir, we are no further ahead today than we were six months ago on the opening of the Come by Chance Refinery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) Hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I have here in front of me a petition signed by 2,650 residents in the electoral district of LaPoile and I want to table it in the House. It has to do with the proposed increase in electricity rates. I will read the prayer of the petition, Mr. Speaker, which I think is self-explanatory, It says: "Whereas Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro have announced their intention of asking a twenty per cent increase in rates for electrical power produced for sale to Newfoundland Light and Power; and whereas Newfoundland Light and Power always pass on to consumers any increase in rates they pay for power; and whereas consumers already feel that the rates for power are already unfair in their basic structure; and whereas both of these corporations already have ample latitude within their budget to absorb higher costs of production given their recent profit margins, we, the undersigned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador, do petition the Newfoundland Government and the Public Utilities Board to deny any request for rate increases by Newfoundland Hydro."

I might point out to the House that the majority of these 2,650 citizens who signed this petition reside in the Channel - Port aux Basque area. There may have been other people from outside Channel Port aux Basque who signed the petition because it was put around in the various stores and supermarkets and the shopping mall and the post offices, I believe, and a couple of other places in Channel-Port aux Basque so people from the Codroy Valley and my hon. friend's district probably signed this petition. I did not have time to go over it, scrutinize it carefully, but I am sure that you could find signatures of people here who reside in my hon. friend's district.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what can I say in support of this petition? What can I say? Everything but everything that can be said about the increase in electricity rates

MR. S. NEARY: has been said in support of other petitions. We must be getting up close now, Mr. Speaker, to a 100,000 signatures, 100,000 people in this Province who are objecting to the increase in electricity rates for the simple reason that people cannot cope with the situation, especially people on fixed incomes like senior citizens and people who have no income or low income. It is a terrible situation, Sir, and we heard the hon. Premier, several times since he won his election, come out and state that he is going to be a man of action, he is going to do things, he wants to keep the House open, he wants to get into the House so he can make decisions and do things for the people of this Province. And here they are faced with increases in electricity rates and what does the hon. gentleman do? The hon. gentleman has already had one vacation; now he is going to take another one.

MR. SPEAKER (Mr Ottenheimer) Order, please. I must point out that the hon. member is getting into the area of debate which is precluded by the rules.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, what I am attempting to say here, and I do not

MR. NEARY: wish to break the rules and embarrass Your Honour, but, Sir, we were told that we were going to have action on the problems that face the people of this Province, that the ordinary people are confronted with in this Province. We are going to have action alright! When are we going to get the action? The action is not down in Florida or down in the Bahamas; the action is here in this House and in this Province - that is where the action is, Sir, and that is where we want to get action. People are completely frustrated, bewildered, discouraged, disillusioned, can not cope with this situation, Mr. Speaker, and yet the government remains silent. One hundred thousand or more citizens have presented petitions to this House and their plea has fallen on deaf ears. My standing here today is as a voice crying in the wilderness. The government have no intention of doing anything about it. "Pack her up now, 'Brian', boy, close her down! Shut her down and take off!" People who live in electrically heated homes cannot pay their bills, they are going in arrears - I talk to people every day - going in arrears, owe several hundred dollars after the Winter in electricity bills that they cannot pay, Mr. Speaker. It is a crying shame, Sir! And as I said before, Mr. Speaker, I am not allowed to debate this issue, but I would say that if the new Premier wants an issue to go to the people on, there is the issue - electricity rates. We, on this side of the House, intend to put a freeze on for five years if we become the government of this Province, as compared to this crowd who are going to sock it to the people. Let her rip, sock it to them, give her all the traffic can bear. And that is not good enough, Mr. Speaker. And if the hon. gentleman wants me to tell the House where the money will

MR. NEARY: come from to put the subsidy on - the hon. gentleman is shaking his head - just give me leave when I am presenting this petition and I will tell the hon. gentleman where to get the money - cut out some of the booze parties and some of the foolishness and extravagance and waste -

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) Order, please!

MR. NEARY: - and helicopters.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I must point out, the hon. gentleman is persisting in getting into debate and the rules require that he confine his remarks to the prayer of the petition.

MR. NEARY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I cannot help, Mr. Speaker, getting emotional about this issue. We have been three years now, three or four years in this House - I believe we have been presenting petitions since 1974 - almost five years, Sir, and the people of Newfoundland have begged the government - because it is the government, Sir, it is the government, it is not the Public Utilities Board - it is the government that makes the decision. The decision is made down on the 8th Floor in the Cabinet room. Going through a hearing at the Public Utilities Board is merely a routine procedure, it does not mean anything. The government make the decision. All the Public Utilities Board does is rubber stamp the request of Newfoundland Hydro and it is the government who make the decision, the Premier and the ministers on the 8th Floor. So I hope, Sir, that message gets out to the people, and I hope the hon. gentleman will put it to the test soon so that we can get this matter settled.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) The hon. the member for Conception Bay South.

MR. NOLAN: Mr. Speaker, if you would be kind enough to use your position to silence some of the Yahoos opposite while I address myself to a very important matter in this Province, the petition as presented by our hon. friend. For those opposite - not all - it is a laughing matter. Obviously people in the galleries can see this. But it is no -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. NOLAN: You are aware, Mr. Speaker, that my time is limited, and could I be heard in silence?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please! The hon. gentleman wishes to be heard in silence.

MR. NOLAN: Mr. Speaker, the petition that is presented by my hon. friend is one of many that have been presented. Fortunately, I can say that the hon. the Premier some weeks or months ago on television indicated publicly that he was aware that it is an important social matter in this Province, one that is affecting a lot of people, and the result is, I can assume, that he obviously has received the same kind of information from as many sources, perhaps, as we have. This situation is not one that is a minor matter, it is something now where you have people of all political stripes. It has nothing to do with political parties or anything anymore, it

MR. NOLAN: has to do with an awesome financial burden that is falling on people in almost every home in this Province whether they live in Bonavista, Conception Bay South, Labrador or anywhere else. If there were such a thing as a referendum, as I mentioned the other day, on this matter, any government, no matter who it is, who is in a position of authority and power with the Newfoundland Hydro under their administration and were not clearly prepared to take a great public stand on this would be immediately dismissed. There is no question about that at all. And this is a matter now where we have had, as we have indicated, about 100,000 or more people who have sent in petitions on this matter since 1974 and they have been tabled in this House. It may not be a feasible idea, but this afternoon we talked, the hon. the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, concerning the oil refinery deal in Come By Chance. It may or may not be feasible but is it possible that whoever the refinery goes to, whether it is First Arabian or Mr. Shaheen, is it not possible perhaps because of their dealing in oil, which very few of us have any real in-depth knowledge about, that there could not be a deal to get oil perhaps at some kind of a cheaper price some way along the line through one of their sources that could be beneficial for Newfoundland Hydro and so on? I do not know. All I am saying is I am reaching out, grasping for answers to a problem that is affecting so many people so you have to look at every single possibility where the people of this Province can be spared from the enormous burden that they have now financially in attempting to provide heat and light. And it is incumbent then upon us as members of the House of Assembly to take every opportunity to address ourselves to this problem. If we do not, then we are all in serious jeopardy as elected officials in this Province—as we should be. Because as the Premier indicated, and rightly so, it is a very serious social problem that we have here today in this Province and it is not one we can try to speak out of both sides of our mouth on. This is a situation now where there has

MR. NOLAN: to be a statement very soon, publicly, by those in authority as to what can be done to help alleviate this problem. This is not just another petition, although you would think from some of the response we have had in the past that you are probably not going to get any more of a response than we have had. It is a serious matter, it is an urgent matter, and the people are demanding now that someone in authority reply to the anguished cry that has been coming from them since 1974 in petition after petition after petition. And we dare not continue this session of the House of Assembly without addressing ourselves publicly to it, not just in petitions but in perhaps a full-length debate and more importantly we have got to have a decision as to what can be done and how we are going to do it. It cannot wait any longer. Do not think that because the warm weather is coming on that we can sneak in a few more increases and a few people get mad at Newfoundland Light and Power and then it will be forgotten again until the cold weather comes in the Fall and Winter. It will not. The fix is in on this with the people of this Province. There is no question about it; they know. You can make all the grand political statements anyone wants to make but the people out there know what the issues are and this is one burning issue and nobody can duck it. So I certainly support the petition, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. W. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the petition signed by 2,650 people who put their names on the document, the petition having been circulated by the town of Channel-Port aux Basques, a petition, Sir, which decries the already high rate and costs of electricity for domestic users, for homes in this Province, and, Sir, which pleads and beseeches, pleads with and beseeches the government not to impose any greater financial burden on the people of this Province with regard to electricity

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MR. W. ROWE:

than they are already
staggering under and struggling under. Now, Mr. Speaker, there
is a segment of our society who could not care less if electricity
rates

MR. W. ROWE: go up or not, it makes no difference. But, Sir, there are other people in our Province today, especially older people, elderly people, especially people who are on small incomes or no incomes at all who cannot stand, Mr. Speaker, neither they nor their families, they cannot stand any further increase in the cost of electrical rates.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the government agency, the Newfoundland and Labrador Power Corporation, was not responsible in any way for the predicament that a lot of people in this Province now have themselves in there might be less of an argument to be presented against increases in electrical rates. But, Mr. Speaker, for a solid ten years in the 1960s the predecessor, the same corporation, the Power Commission and Newfoundland Light and Power Company, perhaps goaded into it by the Power Commission, went the length and breadth of this Province encouraging people to put electrical heat in their homes -

MR. NEARY: That is right.

MR. NOLAN: Heat better and cheaper electrically.

MR. W. ROWE: - it is going to be much cheaper.

MR. NOLAN: That was the ad.

MR. W. ROWE: The hon. member for Conception Bay South (Mr. Nolan) remembers it, Sir. He was probably working in television during that period of time and remembers the ads and the commercials, Sir, which "sucked people in" is not too strong a term, into getting electrical heat put in their homes, many of them. And the argument that electrical heat now compared to oil heat may not, in my opinion, does not hold water because many of these people around rural parts of our Province were using wood and coal, wood for heating their homes. Young married people coming out, who would have had their homes

MR. W. ROWE: heated perhaps by wood and coal,were encouraged, bamboozled, cajoled by the government agency, the Power Commission, and Newfoundland Light and Power Company into getting involved with electrical heat because it was going to be cheaper, more efficient and cheaper and they got it, Sir. Hundreds and hundreds of families around this Province got it because they were looking for a cheap method of heating their homes, only to have the government in the past, since 1974 or before, since this administration took over, Mr. Speaker, to have the government increase by at least 100 per cent, and maybe more, the cost of electricity to homes in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, the people were misled. The Power Commission perhaps had good intentions but when this government came in these intentions were certainly turned around and the people were treated in bad faith and many families in this Province are now suffering as a result of the high electrical rates.

My hon. colleague said that it is one of our policies to put a freeze on increases in hydro-electrical rates as far as the Power Corporation is concerned. Mr. Speaker, I have said that many times and I reiterate it here now, that if this Party does nothing else by way of presentation to the people of this Province of our policies and platforms, if we stood on nothing else, Mr. Speaker except that -

MR. NEARY: And they dare not copy it either and try to -

MR. W. ROWE: - we would be doing the greatest favour possible -

MR. NEARY: - try to parrot what we are saying.

MR. W. ROWE: - to the people of this Province.

MR. NEARY: They will try to copy it.

MR. W. ROWE: I expect the other party, Mr. Speaker, to put something in their platform along those lines.

MR. NEARY: An election gimmick. They will try to copy it.

MR. W. ROWE: But it will be treated as the election gimmick it is. We have had that kind of promise before.

MR. NEARY: The tunnel underneath the Straits of Belle Isle is a good example of that.

MR. W. ROWE: But, Mr. Speaker, if we make no more commitments to the people of this Province than that single one that we will not allow the electrical rates to go up insofar as it is possible because of the control we have over the Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro Corporation, they will not go up. And, Mr. Speaker, as far as the private distribution company is concerned, Newfoundland Light and Power Company, we will be watching that very closely as well and if there are any increases which are to the further disadvantage of the people of this Province something will be done about that as well. We cannot afford, Mr. Speaker, to allow power costs to families in this Province go up any more and I support this petition wholeheartedly, Sir, and I would like to see some government members speak

MR. W.N. ROWE:

to it, Sir, but they have been noticeably and conspicuously absent as far as their support for this policy is concerned.

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): The hon. member for St. George's.

MRS. MCISAAC: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words in support of this petition. I think my hon. friend for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) is correct in stating that some of the names on the petition are probably from part of my district in the Codroy Valley. However, there is also a petition being circulated completely throughout the district which will be coming in and I am sure that that too will reflect the feelings of the people in the other part of the district.

I do not know what the solution is but I certainly know that the people of this Province cannot afford, cannot stand another increase in electrical rates. The hon. Leader of the Opposition in his comments referred to the people being more or less sucked in to installing electric heat. I agree with him 100 per cent. I was one of the people who listened to all of the advertisements and believed that electric heat was going to be cheaper. We had an estimate done and the estimate - I do not remember the exact figures but it was somewhere in the vicinity of \$400 a year that our house could be heated for. Well, as I stated last week in supporting one of the petitions, my bill last month, the month before now, was \$175 and \$175 a month is going to add up to a lot more than \$400 a year. This was in 1970 or 1971 that we had electric heat installed. So it is certainly escalating way out of proportion. There is no way in the world that people on low incomes or fixed incomes - or no income - can keep up with it. They just cannot do it. There may be ways to do it and I would suggest that we take the bull by the horns. This is getting out of control and government must have some control over it. I do not know if we are not paying for that \$15 million monument that is sitting in Stephenville that to my knowledge has not been in

MRS. MCISAAC: operation since it was put there.

MR. S. NEARY: No, that is right!

MRS. MCISAAC: As far as I am concerned it is a complete waste of money and from what I am told it is a \$15 million monument. Now, somebody has to pay for that and I believe it is taxpayers of this Province are the ones who are paying for it.

And another way that I think we may be paying is through the vehicles; for instance, just about every employee with Newfoundland Light and Power and Newfoundland Hydro, just about every employee is driving a government company vehicle and the taxpayers of this Province are paying for that. So there has to be some controls put -

MR. S. NEARY: They are all air-conditioned too, nothing but the best, ordered in special, a special make.

MRS. MCISAAC: Oh, nothing but the best, nothing but the best, and they even take them on vacation, I am told. When they go on vacation that vehicle is taken home and parked in their yard, or taken with them if they are around Newfoundland. The whole system is being abused. But if that was private enterprise you would not see all the employees going around in company vehicles. There is no way in the world that that would happen. But it is happening. Just about every employee or every second employee is running around in a company vehicle, burning company gas, parking in the shopping mall area parking lot and going and doing their shopping with the government vehicles or with the company vehicles.

MR. S. NEARY: Back and forth to school; they do not use the school buses.

MRS. MCISAAC: Anywhere and everywhere they are using them for you name it and they use the company vehicles for it.

MR. S. NEARY: Their kids do not use the school buses.

MRS. MCISAAC:

And we end up paying for it. So there must be some way that this can be stopped and I think that the only way it can stop - it is fine for public utilities, the Board of Public Utilities to make the decisions, they look at it, 'Sure you can have an increase'. But I think that since the Government of this Province has control over Newfoundland Hydro that they are just going to have to take the bull by the horns and take a look at what is going on, take a look at the waste, the extravagance and realize that it is the taxpayers of this Province who are paying for it. And it is no laughing matter, I have seen - not since I have stood I have to say I have not seen anybody snickering-but across the House when the hon. member was speaking there was conversations going on and there was people sitting there snickering and joking. It is not a joke! It is by far a serious situation and it may very well get out of hand if it is not taken in hand and taken in hand very shortly and I would like to see the Premier of this Province, the new Premier of this Province take the reins and straighten out Newfoundland Hydro and Newfoundland Light and Power. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): The hon.member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to say a word of support for the petition presented by my colleague for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) with the 2,600 names. As he has reminded the House, it is just the latest number in a great number of names that have been tabled in this House on this very important subject. Indeed, there is no other issue that has had so frequent representation to the House as this particular matter or representation by so many people in all walks of life across this Province. My colleague for St. George's (Mrs. McIsaac) hits at what may well be the root of a good part of the problem here, and that is that monstrosity, that insult to humanity, that inefficient, wasteful, top-heavy bureaucracy called Newfoundland Hydro. It is a monstrosity. It is an insult to the people of this Province.

If someone, somebody had the financial wherewithal to prepare a case before the Public Utilities Board - and let us keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that there are two bodies which have the wherewithal. Newfoundland Light and Power and Newfoundland Hydro. I am not talking about these - if there were a third body, a body representing the many thousands of people who sign these petitions, who had the financial wherewithal to prepare a proper case to go before the Board, a case which would analyze the cost components of the cost of a unit of electricity, I believe they would find, Mr. Speaker, I believe that group would find, if they had to research to do so, that a good chunk of the spiraling costs can be labelled with one word, abuse.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Right! Right!

MR. SIMMONS: Abuse of vehicles as my colleague has mentioned.

MR. NEARY: Helicopters.

MR. SIMMONS: They are not unique in that respect, Mr. Speaker, if they operate by example it is hard to blame an employee, I would say to my colleague - I am not condoning it - but it is hard to blame an employee for using his truck to do his shopping if the Premier of the Province is using the aircraft as a private vehicle,

Mr. Simmons: if the Cabinet ministers are using helicopters for personal reasons.

MR. NEARY: Going to weddings and so on.

MR. SIMMONS: The example of abuse is there, Mr. Speaker, it is getting condoned at the highest levels of government. That is not to condone what they are doing in Hydro. It is to show that it part of a pattern of abuse, the kind of abuse, Mr. Speaker, that has got to stop in the interest of keeping down the cost of electricity and in the interest of basic integrity alone. It has got to stop, this abuse. And we are paying the bill, we are bearing the brunt of it, Mr. Speaker, because we are dealing with a very callous and uncaring group of people. That is why the cost of electricity keeps going up. Stunned decisions, abuse, the clear impression that somehow they are above it all, that somehow they are answerable to nobody, And they are right, because the way we set it up now they are answerable to nobody in effect. Oh, the theory is there, Mr. Speaker, but who are they answering to? A bunch of fellows who want to cover their own abuses, that is who they are answering to. So we never get to hear the facts about what really goes on in Newfoundland Hydro, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, we never get to know what are the real cost components involved in the increasing cost of a unit of electricity. I say it is high time we begin to find out. It is a disgrace. It is an insult. I support the petition, Mr. Speaker. I predict there will be many more, until somebody has the gumption to do something about it. I doubt this government has the gumption to do so. I know that they have powerful motivations during election time. One electrical, electrifying motivation they had cost this Province \$110 million -

MR. NEARY: Right.

MR. SIMMONS: - on the Lower Churchill shemozzle, and I predict that they will have other electrifying ideas like that come next election. Let them put their money where their mouth is now, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NEARY: Do not forget that gas turbine.

MR. SIMMONS: Let them come to the aid of the people of Newfoundland now when they are needed, not when they are trying to buy a few votes. The gas turbine, my colleague mentions, over there in Stephenville.

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): Order, please!

I think the hon. member has strayed quite some distance into the area of debate and I would ask him to confine his remarks to the prayer of the petition.

MR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to state a few simple facts of the case, Sir.

AN HON. MEMBER: Very simple.

MR. SIMMONS: A few simple facts. The simplest fact of all of course is that this particular government is

MR. SIMMONS: negligently and grossly ducking its responsibility on this crucial issue. When it became political opportunism for the now Premier to make a statement, he made a statement some fast then, Mr. Speaker -

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS: - during the leadership, if you remember.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS: What does he have to say now?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! I think the hon. member is aware of the ruling of the Chair just a few minutes ago and I would require the hon. gentleman to observe it.

MR. SIMMONS: I apologize abjectly, Sir. It is like my colleague just to my left - at least physically. I say quite seriously and quite candidly, Mr. Speaker, that it is not any wilfulness on my part to put the Chair in an awkward position, but a wilfulness on my part to lay the case squarely before us because it is high time that this government did something about it. Enough talk, now where is the action from this particular government?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. gentleman and lady for supporting the petition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will not require, of course, all presenters of petitions to express their thanks to the House for its support.

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

MR. HICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The District Court Act (1976)," (Bill No.).

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. Ottenheimer): The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, some days ago I promised to table the details surrounding the Auditor General's comments in his latest report with regard to the government's use of a consultant for special events. I would like now to table that information which includes the details of monies paid to the consultant from September, 1976 to March, 1978.

MR. NEARY: The Bob Cole contract.

PREMIER PECKFORD: If the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) would just cease and desist for a few minutes, there are a couple of points I would like to make with regard to this situation. The government has placed a freeze on payment of outstanding invoices from the consultant. This freeze affects invoices totalling around \$8,000 covering services rendered during the calendar year, 1978; secondly, I have instructed the Department of Finance to review every invoice submitted by the consultant and to take steps to insure every payment was properly documented; and finally, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in the house, the consultant is no longer retained by government and we do not anticipate a requirement for similar consultants in the future, as I feel the necessary expertise already resides in government. So I table that as I promised.

MR. NEARY: Will you table the termination?

PREMIER PECKFORD: No, I do not have a copy of the termination, but I can get that for the hon. member. That is that one. And then I also promised to table the contract of Mr. Cole, the Director of the Action Group, and I so table his contract.

MR. NEARY: What about the Frank Petten contract?
Do we get that?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the hon. the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) can get every single contract that has been negotiated by government for any person employed by government.

MR. NEARY: And the list of loans
(inaudible) RDA?

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Health.

MR. HOUSE: Mr. Speaker, there has been a number of questions on the Order Paper for the Minister of Health that have been laid on the table by the hon. the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) and I have the answers to five of these, number 27, 28, 30, 31 and 37.

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

MR. W. N. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. the Premier a number of questions concerning the statement he just made on the Come By Chance refinery.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier undertake to table in the hon. House the report or analysis done of First Arabian Corporation by Kates, Peat, Marwick or Peat, Marwick and Mitchell, whichever firm was employed to do such an analysis?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I will table all reports that are available, and have no caveats or no conditions attached to them, in this hon. House, as it relates to all matters dealing with the refinery, and, therefore, if there is a statement or a decision by Peat, Marwick earlier to choose, and Peat, Marwick chose between the two proposals and chose First Arabian,

PREMIER PECKFORD: if that information is available without any conditions attached to it, something that would prevent it that I would not know about, well then I am only too happy to present it to the House.

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. Ottenheimer): The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. W. ROWE: I can only assume from the Premier's very vague answer, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier himself has not seen the analysis done of the First Arabian Coporation by Peat, Marwick and Mitchell, would that be correct?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, the government has been, as my statement indicates, been talking to the First Arabian Corporation and the principals involved in that proposal and know the details of the proposal to date and if the hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes to do certain things which seem to him to be valid then he is free to do so but I can only reiterate that we have at our disposal information relating to both proposals to such a degree that we were able to make a decision about one not being proceeded with and the other one perhaps being proceeded with.

MR. NEARY: But were you told? Did they direct you what to do?

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

MR. W. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. the Premier answer the question as to whether or not there is in existence a report in physical form to Kleinwort Benson, which the government may have a copy of, dealing with the proposal by First Arabian Coporation? Is there a report or analysis, a physical document dealing with it that the Premier has read and which can be tabled in this House?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: There has been no analysis in the same way as the Thorne Riddell report was done.

MR. NEARY: What?

PREMIER PECKFORD: There has been a decision by Peat, Marwick -

MR. NEARY: What a scandal.

PREMIER PECKFORD: - to accept one or the other and what the government is now saying today is that we have had two proposals, one we have a report on, the other one we are still negotiating to see whether that proposal is of any consequence or not.

MR. NEARY: You are being told what to do.

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. Ottenheimer): A supplementary.

MR. W. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, has the government gotten Thorne Riddell or any other reputable firm to make the same kind of an enquiry, an investigation into the proposal of FAC, the pet term now adopted by the Premier concerning that corporation, the First Arabian Corporation, has the government gotten Thorne Riddell to look into the matter with the same thoroughness as they did with the Shaheen proposal?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, back some time ago, as I mentioned in my statement, the Peat Marwick receiver received two proposals, one from First Arabian Corporation and one from Avalon Refining, and they made a decision, Peat Marwick made a decision as to which one of those proposals they found acceptable and likely to see the reactivation of the Come By Chance refinery. As a result of their decision there was a lot of discussion, public debate as to whether the Avalon Refining proposal really got a fair hearing, that for some reason Peat Marwick might not have given Avalon

PREMIER PECKFORD: Refining a fair shake. The Government of Newfoundland, aware of this kind of public criticism, if you will, of the two proposals by Peat Marwick said, "Okay, if there is some suspicion that Mr. Shaheen is not getting a fair shake with his proposal even though Peat Marwick looked at both and accepted one, the First Arabian Corporation, the Government of Newfoundland would see to it that his proposal, the Avalon Refining proposal, got a fair hearing." So we went ahead then and hired an independent accounting firm, the accounting firm recommended by Mr. Shaheen, one that he wanted to do an analysis of his proposal to ensure that the decision that had already been made by the receiver was not one which was prejudicial against Mr. Shaheen. And therefore this report is now being tabled today in the House which indicates that Mr. Shaheen's proposal, the Avalon Refining proposal is not a feasible proposal confirming the decision made by Peat, Marwick some time ago.

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. Ottenheimer): A supplementary.

MR. W. ROWE: So what the Premier is saying, Sir, is that no report exists, there happens to be no report which exists which draws the same conclusion with regards to First Arabian Corporation about feasibility as the Thorne Riddell one does. But the Premier mentioned here today a half a dozen conditions which had to be met and which have not been met to date, after months and months and months. Now my question for the Premier is this, if it transpires that these conditions cannot be met over the reasonable future, I believe the deadline was June 15th.

MR. NEARY: 30th.

MR. W. ROWE: June 30th., given by the hon. the Premier, if it appears that these conditions cannot be

MR. W. ROWE: met and therefore the First Arabian Corporation proposal has to be deemed to be non-feasible too -

PREMIER PECKFORD: Right.

MR. W. ROWE: - then has he closed the door to further negotiations with the Shaheen group?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Under those circumstances no, Mr. Speaker. We have closed negotiations with the Shaheen group until we have had the opportunity now to do a full analysis of the First Arabian Corporation's proposal -

MR. NEARY: What?

PREMIER PECKFORD: - to check out the whole thing.

MR. NEARY: What kind of double talk is that?

PREMIER PECKFORD: the details that are there before us and after,if that proposal is turned down in time by the First Arabian Corporation and some other person then has a proposal to put on the table for the reactivation of the Come By Chance refinery,of course we would look at it,but only after we have had an opportunity now to take a full look at the First Arabian proposal.

MR.NEARY: You are digging a hole for yourself boy.

PREMIER PECKFORD: You would know all about that.

MR. SPEAKER:(Mr.Ottenheimer) Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. W.ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I realize that supplementaries cannot have a preamble attached but I just want to understand what the Premier is trying to tell the hon. House. It is very confusing. What he is saying is that they are now about to launch into an investigation, an enquiry as to the proposal of First Arabian Corporation and see whether it is feasible or not. Having tabled a report - there being no report in the government's hands concerning the First Arabian Corporation, there being no report they are now about to launch into an investigation. They have tabled a report which, rightly or wrongly - I am no expert in this field- rightly or wrongly characterizes the Shaheen report as non-feasible and perhaps destroys any creditability that he may have with regard to the Come By Chance refinery, in a very irresponsible fashion does that, now admits that they are nowhere near satisfied with the First Arabian Corporation,and tells us if it is not feasible by June 30th then they could possibly go back to the Shaheen proposal.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No, a new proposal. Any new proposal from anybody else.

MR.W.ROWE: Well then will the Premier please answer my question: Has he now closed, has his administration of the government now closed all doors to Shaheen with regard to the Come By Chance refinery? Is that the decision which has been taken because apparently no other decision has been taken?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition is trying. I do not know if he cannot hear properly or not.

MR.W. ROWE: Please answer the question. That is all.

PREMIER PECKFORD: As you asked it?

MR.W. ROWE: Have you closed the doors to the Shaheen proposal?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated to the hon. gentleman, we have now closed the door on the proposal that has been presented by Avalon Refining, completely and - let the hon. Leader of the Opposition be clear now, when he talks about by publishing this report we are now effectively questioning or throwing suspicion upon the credit worthiness of Mr. Shaheen or so on, let there be no mistake, Mr. Speaker: Mr. Shaheen wanted this chartered accounting company and agreed to have this report made public. We are not doing something here, Mr. Speaker, without the consent of the Shaheen group.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: So we are not conniving to try to bring some ill repute, if you will, or some lack of credit worthiness upon the Avalon Refining Company or Mr. Shaheen or anybody else. All I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that there were two proposals.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

PREMIER PECKFORD: May I finish the answer?

MR. SIMMONS: You can try.

PREMIER PECKFORD: There were two proposals presented to the receiver, Peat Marwick. Peat Marwick decided after the two proposals were presented that one was better than the other and the one that was better than the other was the First Arabian Corporation's, in Peat Marwick's view. We were not satisfied that Mr. Shaheen got a fair deal, so therefore the Government of Newfoundland, to insure that Mr. Shaheen got a fair deal in that kind of a decision made by Peat Marwick, got another chartered accounting firm, who was okayed by Mr. Shaheen as the

PREMIER PECKFORD: proper chartered accounting firm, independent, outside of any involvement in Come By Chance, to do an analysis of Mr. Shaheen's proposal to insure that the decision already made by Peat Marwick was a sound, reasonable one. And now, in light of Thorne Riddell's report made public today, it confirms that the Shaheen proposal as presented by Avalon Refining is not a feasible one and therefore allows the government to proceed with the decision made earlier by Peat Marwick to pursue the First Arabian Corporation's proposal. If down the road, Mr. Speaker, the First Arabian Corporation's proposal is rejected by the Province, which it could very well be if all the conditions are not met, then we have no proposal on the table. If then, after we reject First Arabian Corporation's proposal, there are other companies who come along with another proposal for the reactivation of the Come By Chance refinery after we reject the First Arabian Corporation, then of course we will look at it because we are eager to get Come By Chance refinery reactivated.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. ROWE:

Now whether Mr. Shaheen or his group consented to the disclosure of the Thorne Riddell Report, have you seen it or have they seen it before it was disclosed publicly?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I do not know if they saw it or not. They agreed in writing to its disclosure anyway. I mean, that is academic.

MR. W. ROWE:

That is so totally irrelevant!

Well it is important, Mr. Speaker, because, to be brutally frank, the Shaheen group, and who the personalities may be involved and so on and so forth are of no consequence

MR. W.N. ROWE: of no consequence
or consideration of mine, I am merely concerned, as
are my colleagues -

PREMIER PECKFORD: Just ask the
question now, as I answered it.

MR. W.N. ROWE: We are interested
in trying to reactivate the Come by Chance refinery.
Now what, I am wondering, is in the best interest of
this Province? What possible purpose was served as a
government, supposedly acting responsibly, in closing
the door to a group who may have been able to
improve their proposal as time went on? I do not
know. Closing the door to a group who made a proposal,
publishing a document which might destroy the
creditability or credit worthiness of a group who may
be able to improve a proposal, what public service has
the government done, especially if First Arabian
Corporation decides it cannot go ahead, or the conditions
cannot be met? Then we are left with nobody in the
field, Mr. Speaker, the government having effectively
destroyed, perhaps, one of the proposals. What public
service was done? Why did they table it at this point
in time?

MR. SPEAKER (Ottenheimer): Order, please!
The hon. gentleman
was, in fact, I believe, asking a question. My ruling
was going to be to pose the question.

MR. W.N. ROWE: I was bringing it
to a head, Mr. Speaker. My question is, Sir, what was
the point in doing it? And what happens with regard to
the Shaheen group if the First Arabian Corporation
proposal should founder, for whatever reason? Will the
Premier then at that point agree to negotiate further
with the Shaheen group? Or is this a decision which is

MR. W.N. ROWE: made in respect of the company with regard to all future proposals from that group? There is some spite and malice here.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, the public service that was done was to ensure that every single person in Newfoundland and Labrador would become aware that there was no single determination on behalf of government to see that Mr. Shaheen did not get a fair deal; that we wanted to ensure, the government, that Mr. Shaheen got a fair hearing; that his past performance would have no reflection on his present performance, number one. Number two, let me suggest to the hon. the Leader of the Opposition in his preamble to his question where he indicated that, you know, a proposal can always change and therefore you should not shut the door; if, when the hon. the Leader of the Opposition reads the report he will look on one of the pages in the report and it says this: - the Thorne Riddell report, I am referring to - "We went back to Mr. Shaheen to ensure that we had all the evidence and all the information and to ask was there anything additional that could be put on the table at this time before we made our final conclusions, or made our final analysis to ensure that the whole area was covered, that the whole thing was covered so that this was the proposal on which a decision had to be made; that it was not amended right up near the end, only a couple of weeks ago."

Now, Mr. Speaker, we cannot as a government continue to deal with a proposal that changes from day to day by a telex here or a telex there which vaguely indicates some other condition which might be attached to it.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Government cannot operate that way, business cannot operate that way. Decisions have to be made in the long term in the best interest of the Province and that is what we are trying to do here today by disclosing these reports and indicating by experts, agreed to by all, what a proposal means, whether it is a good proposal or a bad proposal.

So now, we have two proposals on the table. One has been proven by experts to be non-feasible, the other proposal is to be pursued to see whether it has a chance to fly. That is the present position of it so that we can move. And perhaps if the First Arabian Corporation proposal does pan out, then we have a deal and we have the reactivation of the Come by Chance refinery. That is the position.

MR. SIMMONS: A supplementary,
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER(Ottenheimer): A supplementary.
The hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on the same subject. It is interesting the Premier does not believe in telexes. Perhaps that explains why he is not answering the phone calls either from his predecessor down South.

PREMIER PECKFORD: To a point of order,
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order.

PREMIER PECKFORD: To the point of order, Mr. Speaker. In asking a question or a supplementary question, a question along the same line which had to do with the announcement that I made earlier on the Come by Chance refinery, the hon. the

PREMIER PECKFORD: member for Burgeo -
Bay d'Espoir rises in his place and makes comments
about phone calls from down South which I do not
think has any relevancy to the whole question of
the statement on the Come by Chance oil refinery
and therefore I think he is out of order.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I
quite agree. It has no relevancy at all and I
apologize to the Chair and realize that truth and
relevance are not necessarily the same thing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER(Ottenheimer): Order, please!
I have called to
the attention of hon. members before that Beauchesne
states quite clearly that supplementary questions
should not be prefaced by preambles

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): The hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a supplementary on the same point, I am referring to page 3 of the Premier's statement on the Come By Chance issue, and at the bottom of that page he has begun to list a number of conditions, and one of them, number two, reads "That the Province has been advised that a chartered bank after seeing preliminary financial projections is seriously interested in providing financing." Mr. Speaker, as a supplementary to the Premier, I wonder would the Premier indicate whether this condition - I was going to say 'implies', but then his answer may well be we can imply what we want, but I am asking him if it is possible that the government has not assured itself on this point already? Is that what we are being told here in condition number two? Or is there any particular reason why the condition is there? Does the government have some suspicions about the company's ability to raise the necessary financing? Is there some reason why this particular condition is placed there?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No, Mr. Speaker, only that we have ensure of course as a government and involved in this operation that, you know, finances are in place so that the whole thing is financeable and to know the source of the financing. No particular priority to that condition anymore than the rest, only that we have to ensure of course it is one of the conditions that the financing is in place, in the same ways that we will want to ensure that the crude supply is in place as best reasonably can be established, that the markets are in place as best reasonably can be established. So it has no more meaning in that context than the other factors I just mentioned.

MR. SIMMONS: A further supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): A final supplementary, the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir, and then the hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the answer I got would imply that the government has no particular concern about this issue anymore than it has the concern about crude supply and so on. And I want to raise a supplementary in another fashion to make sure we understand what the Premier is saying. My information, and we went through some length to have The First Arabian people checked out, and I say some considerable length, experienced some considerable difficulty in the financial investment community trying to find information, indeed the answer even after you had given the fellow due notice and he would come back to you with a tentative reply was that he was having some difficulty finding anything about them, and the one bit of information that surfaced on this subject was the questionable nature of their financing. And I ask the Premier now if again, if he will confirm, if there is any particular reason why a big issue is apparently being made of this particular point? Does the Premier have any reason to believe that this firm will have some difficulty putting together the necessary financing package? Or is it as he said first, this is just one of the routine items he wanted to have covered in his statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, you know, the hon. member's information or the information gathered by members opposite I am not privy to, so that therefore I cannot make any conclusions or draw any deductions from information that I do not have at my disposal that the hon. member might have. If he does have information which he thinks might be germane to the whole issue, I would ask him to pass it along to me because it might be information that we would like to have.

The fact, the condition that is in the statement is one like the rest, crude supply, markets, finance ability, the source of financing and so on. There is no particular reason at all. I do not have anything in the back of my mind or have been told anything

Premier Peckford: which would suggest that they were going to have difficulty raising the funds. None whatsoever about the course, it must be a factor that we must cover in any deal that we make or support.

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): I think I indicated that I recognize the hon. member for Bellevue for a supplementary next.

MR. CALLAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the Ministerial Statement that the Premier gave earlier this afternoon, on Page 3, on the top of Page 3 it says, "In the interest of ensuring that the refinery is brought back on stream as quickly as possible", which we all agree with, everyone in this Province, "the Province takes the position that it will not entertain a new proposal." So the Province has refused, turned down the present proposal. And then it says, "The Province takes the position that it will not entertain a new proposal from Mr. Shaheen until the FAC proposal, the First Arabian Corporation

MR. W. CALLAN: proposal, has been given a fair hearing. On page six, the bottom of the page, it says: "The government supports FAC's request for an extension of the deadline for signing of the contract of sale up to June 30th." Now, this is the second deadline that First Arabian has asked for. They were supposed to have it done on the 15th of February and then they asked that it be extended to the 15th of April, which is a week from now, and now they are asking that it be extended to June 30th, another extension. So let me ask the Premier this question: What does the Province or the Premier mean by "we will not entertain a new proposal from Mr. Shaheen until FAC has been given a fair hearing"? How many more extensions will this Province allow the First Arabian and what is meant by a fair hearing? If, for example, on the 28th of June, First Arabian comes out and say, "We want another three month or two month or half year extension." you know, how long can this go on? Meanwhile the door is shut on Mr. Shaheen's old proposal and any possibility of a new one.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, that is a judgement call that the government must make at an appropriate period in time. Obviously, I do not think the hon. gentleman understands that we are going to try to expedite this matter as quickly as possible and hopefully we can expedite it by the deadline now of June 30th. I for one do not want to see it go beyond that date. If there might be some unusual reason for it to go beyond it, you know, then therefore I would not close the door to even a further extension.

MR. S. NEARY: First Arabian is running the government and not the hon. gentleman.

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) Order, please! Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD: I would not rule out another extension, Mr. Speaker, but, you know, we are intent to try to get full understanding on the First Arabian proposal so that we can either say yes it goes and we fully support it and we will support

PREMIER PECKFORD: the signing of the sale, or otherwise we do not, by the 30th of June. I think that is a realistic expectation that we have now as a government in light of all the information that we have at our disposal. I could not obviously rule it out, There might be some totally unusual condition which might be totally justified at that time, extending it another five days or two days or seven days or whatever, in order to expedite things, I think the hon. member understands that here we have a proposal that has in it some elements of success, I mean, that is the way I read the situation. We have two proposals one of which has been proven to be non-feasible, the other one of which seems to have elements that can make the whole thing succeed. We want to push that now. You cannot deal with both of them at the same time so you have to eliminate the one that has been proven to be non-feasible, go with the other one for a couple of months, see if it will be feasible then at that point in time eliminate that one or approve it and then accept new proposals all over again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) Final supplementary, hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. W. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, final supplementary. Let me ask the Premier this question and perhaps the Premier will say it is -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. W. CALLAN: I will wait until I get the Premier's attention.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Yes, if the hon. member will keep his friend quite I will.

MR. W. CALLAN: Now, Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Premier this question. It may be construed as being hypothetical, but let me ask it this way, The Premier obviously as everybody knows around this Province has been saying a lot and practically every day talking about the refinery in the last several weeks, three or four weeks and so on, Let me ask the Premier, let us assume that this government did not like First Arabian's proposal either, did not like either one of them, could not accept either one of them; the Premier has said, I believe, that

MR. W. CALLAN: we would be back to the table again waiting for new proposals. Is that how it is, or not? Is it not a fact, for example, that the British who have a couple of hundred million in this deal compared to approximately forty million by this Province, which is about twice the value of a Federal wharf, you know, that the Federal Government has into it, and with the Supreme Court and FIRA and so on, the Province here is just one step of five or six decision-making processes, is it not a fact that the British could go ahead? Well, what would the Premier do if the British decided, "Well, we cannot wait around for

MR. CALLAN: this Province make a decision. We want that refinery open. We own the major portion of it, we have the biggest mortgage on it and so on," and if the federal government were anxious to get it open is it necessary that we have to go back to the bargaining table or could not the British force the government to do something?

MR.S. NEARY: The Premier is being told what to do by Peat Marwick.

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what would happen in that kind of a situation. I do not perceive it as ever happening, but in the unlikely event that everybody else agreed but us, you know, we would have to just re-examine our position as a government. I mean, if, as the hon. member says, the federal government wants to see it open under a given proposal, ECGD is on side with that same proposal and everybody else is except the Government of Newfoundland, I guess we would have to debate that here in this Legislature what would be the next step for government to take. That is how I see that. It is highly hypothetical and unlikely, but in that unlikely event where everybody else was on side with the proposal except the Government of Newfoundland, I guess we would have to debate it here in the House as to how we wanted to see the future of Come By Chance. I think it would open up the whole issue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I have indicated that would be the last supplementary. Hon. members may come back to it, time permitting.

The hon. the member for
Port au Port.

MR. HODDER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Premier.

MR. HODDER: I understand that the Newfoundland Teachers' Association made a proposal to the Premier that the teacher layoffs in given areas, for instance, in the Bay St. George area where you would have some thirteen teachers from the R.C. Board and twenty teachers from the Integrated Board being laid off, I think there was a proposal that the average - I think the provincial average is 2 per cent of declining enrollment each year and they were asking the government if they would consider laying off teachers at 2 per cent a year in some of those areas where there are a lot of teachers being lost. And I ask this question as a long-winded one because I had three and I do not know if I have time to get them all out. And has the Premier taken into consideration that in Bay St. George, while there has been a drastic decline in enrollment which caused teacher layoffs, that this thing will probably reverse at the end of the Summer when the influx of people come in because of the Abitibi-Price start up?

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association has given government and the Minister of Education a proposal which I saw a couple of days ago. I thought it was a confidential proposal and I am somewhat surprised that the hon. member knows the contents of it, but be that as it may, the Minister of Education (Mr. Hickman) is now studying it and examining it, and we hope to have a statement on it before or on Friday.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. the Premier, Sir. Today the latest Statistics Canada statistics on unemployment in Newfoundland which show that Newfoundland, Sir, is a disaster area, were disclosed. There is a crisis situation, an emergency in the Province. Thirty-nine thousand Newfoundlanders are unemployed, looking for jobs. What plans does the Premier have to deal with this situation? Can we expect any proposals to be brought before this House in the next few days to deal with record unemployment in this Province?

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, we are monitoring that situation very carefully. We recognize the high level of unemployment in the Province and we are, in the budgetary process, looking at various means and ways to create employment. And along those lines, we hope that through certain pre-tender calls which would be subject to budgetary provisions, we can get an early start on a lot of Capital Works in the Province this year to help alleviate the unemployment situation.

MR. NEARY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman had risen for an additional question and I was pointing out that the time had expired.

MR. S. NEARY: By leave, he can continue, Your Honour.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. It is usually not the Chair's intention to cut off an answer once it has started and I thought the hon. gentleman had finished.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No. Number two, Mr. Speaker, there are other areas of employment generation that we are looking at and, of course, will be announced in due course.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Motion 1.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Environment to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Consumer Affairs And Environment Act (1973)," carried. (Bill No. 5).

On motion, Bill No. 5 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

Motion 2.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Lands and Forests to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Crown Lands Act," carried. (Bill No. 28).

On motion, Bill No. 28 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. HICKMAN:

Order 9.

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottenheimer) Order 9. Adjourned debate on Bill No. 13.

MR. SPEAKER (OTTENHEIMER):

Hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. R. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, this Bill No. 13, "An Act To Amend The Crown Guarantee And Loan Act", is a good example of what this government is best at. It is not the only example. We saw another example this afternoon on the Premier's statement concerning Come by Chance. The Come by Chance example and the bill are too excellent examples of this government's ability at confused thinking. Now, Mr. Speaker, I understand I have about five minutes or so remaining and I shall get quickly to the point.

Just by way of example, Mr. Speaker, the statement from the Premier today, at the top of page three of that statement concerning the Come by Chance subject, I read, "In the interests of ensuring that the refinery is brought back on stream as quickly as possible, the Province takes the position that it will not entertain a new proposal from Mr. Shaheen until the F.A.C. proposal has been given a fair hearing." Mr. Speaker, by way of example I recall the late Judge Jimmy Higgins, and one of his favourite stories was that a magistrate many years ago told him that he had no difficulty deciding the merits of any particular court case or deciding who the guilty was, no difficulty at all. The magistrate who told the late Jimmy Higgins this story said, "You know, Mr. Higgins, it is very simple. I just decide which side of the case I am going to hear and then I make up my mind." And that is what the government has done in this particular case, Mr. Speaker. They have decided which side of the case they are going to hear. The story goes on, according to the late Jimmy Higgins, "Why do you not hear both sides of the story?" And the magistrate replied, "That would only confuse me. That would only confuse me." That, Mr. Speaker, sums up

MR. SIMMONS: the problem of this particular government. They will be confused if they heard all the facts. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, an investment, an asset sitting in our Province worth those millions of dollars out at Come by Chance with its potential for gearing up the economy of that area of the Province, with its potential for job creation, and then to have a government admit that they are afraid to hear all the facts? "Do not confuse me with too many options", they say. It is incredible! I read it and I re-read it and I thought when the Premier read it himself he had misread so I took the statement and quickly checked it, but it is there word for word. And they say, "In the interests of ensuring that the refinery is brought back... do you know what we are going to do? We are not going to confuse ourselves with too much information. We are going to be like the magistrate. We will hear one side of the case only." That is the kind of confused thinking, Mr. Speaker, that has this Province in trouble under this administration's leadership and that is the kind of confused thinking that is in this bill here, that somehow they can grab a bit of power, somehow they can centralize her a little better. Well, I have news for that crowd, Mr. Speaker, that hon. crowd. The public is watching them just a little closer now. The public is watching them just a little closer.

The Premier can try all he wants to put on the cosmetics of a new image and part of those cosmetics is what I referred to earlier in the House today, get as much distance as he can between himself and his former Premier. I have news for him. He is going to have to live with the former Premier. I realize the present Premier thinks he is an albatross, thinks he is an albatross, but

MR. SIMMONS: like the original story about the albatross this one is not going away very quickly. And while the cosmetics of a new image are trying to be projected, the reality is the same only more daring, only more brazen, to centralize in the hands of a very few the essential financial decisions of this Province. It is wrong, Mr. Speaker. This bill is wrong. Not only does it have a lot of confused thinking, a lot of kindergarten approaches to politics which we will expect a lot more of, Mr. Speaker. Do not forget that in this House we once had three great debaters on the government side and we used to have to distinguish them. We had Mr. Barry, the former Minister of Energy. We used to call him - but first of all we had his predecessor, Mr. Crosbie, the Minister of Energy. We used to call him the 'highschool debater' - the 'university debater', I remember, and then we called Mr. Barry the 'highschool debater', and you all remember what we have called the next Minister of Energy, the now Premier.

MR. SIMMONS: We used to always call him the kindergarten debater and this, Mr. Speaker, is kindergarten thinking. This childish is youngsterish! But it is also, Mr. Speaker, worst than that. If it were just lack of knowledge, if it were just ignorance, you could understand it, but it is worst than that. It is a deliberate effort, I say to the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins), and he should have no part of it. He is an honourable man as we know. He should have no part of this effort. I am aware also that he might not have been aware that this was the motive behind the bill, and I am sure he has been told all the right things to say to refute our arguments. But time will tell, I say to him, time will tell if he puts his foot in this one, time will tell how wrong he was if he tries to defend this particular bill, time will surely tell. If he has any doubts about the particular subject, Mr. Speaker, I draw the parallel for him once again with the Come by Chance refinery announcement this afternoon. Confused, childish, kindergarten thinking, the kind we have come to expect from this particular gentleman who is now the Premier! A disgrace! A disgrace that we should have this kind of thing paraded before us under the guise of being intelligent information on the subject. A disgrace! And I refer to the two documents together, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's statement and the bill because it is the product of the same kind of thinking or, to put it more kindly, the product of the same lack of thinking. Take the bill back, I say to the minister! Here, take it back! Take it back! Take it back and re-draft it, re-draft it if it is needed to be re-drafted, or just haul it off the Order Paper and let things stand until you get a better idea. Here, I say to the Minister of Finance, you have a much, much worst idea!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (MR. CROSS):

If the hon. minister speaks now

he closes the debate. The hon. Minister of Finance.

DR. J. COLLINS: I hardly recognize this bill that I introduced - it seems a long time ago. is just a little small thing but somehow or another it seems to have developed into a Throne Speech. Possibly, Mr. Speaker, I could just mention the points that have been raised in regard to it. Just to point out the difficulties I am in, because I believe there was a little bit of confusion when the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) was speaking how much time he had.

MR. S. NEARY: No.

DR. J. COLLINS: No, I am not saying confused in his thoughts, just how much time he had. It turned out that he had unlimited time and I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that possibly I should have unlimited time to reply to all the points that were raised. Just to enumerate them, there was a point raised in regard to the loans by lending agencies.

MR. S. NEARY: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: (Cross) A point of order has been raised.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman still thinks he is sitting in the Chair. The hon. gentleman just left the House with the impression that somehow or other he has been muzzled, that he cannot have equal time to what I had when I spoke on this bill. I want to tell the hon. gentleman that he has 90 minutes, and if the hon. gentleman wants to avail of his 90 minutes, please feel free to do so. We are not trying to muzzle the hon. gentleman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

DR. J. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order there. I said that I would need unlimited time. I would suggest that I might need unlimited time to respond to it, which is not available to me.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, to my point of order, Sir, by leave the hon. gentleman can have unlimited time if he wants to answer it. We will give the hon. gentleman permission, this side of the House will give the hon. gentleman unlimited time now

MR. S. NEARY:

to answer the questions

that we put to him. By leave.

MR. SPEAKER (MR. CROSS):

Order, please!

There is no point of order.

There was a point of explanation.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

DR. J. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your

ruling which I certainly accept without any hesitation whatever. There was no point of order involved.

So getting back to the points

that were raised were loans by lending agencies. Now this amendment has nothing whatever to do with loans, this has got to do with guarantees; it has nothing to do with loans. Another point that was raised was in regard to Pelcon, a company that did operate in this Province at one time. There was also a point raised in regard to the Canadian Cushion Corporation. Also in regard to the Farm Loan Board, in particular to a tractor that had something to do with Bell Island. Another area of discussion in regard to this small bill, Mr. Speaker, were the operations of various corporations, the Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation, which incidentally is federal/provincial, it is not a provincial organization solely it is a federal/provincial organization. In regard to the Newfoundland Industrial Development Corporation, which is a provincial Crown corporation and also in regard to Nordco, which

DR. J. COLLINS:

is another federal-provincial corporation. Another point that was raised was in regard to traffic courts, the traffic court accounting system. There was also a point raised in regard to auto insurance, particularly in relation to motor registrations. There was also the hardy perennial of the town of Buchans. The town of Buchans is a worthy subject but it was difficult to see how it related to this amendment, but the points in debate were raised in regard to Buchans.

There were points raised in regard to the operation of the Newfoundland Municipal Financing Corporation, particularly in regard to the interception of grants to municipalities, and the hon. member who just took his seat then raised a point in regard to Come by Chance. So indeed, there was a large number of subjects raised, Mr. Speaker, that had in my view very little, if anything, to do with this bill, so I think what I should do in the first instance is to place this bill, which is an amendment, in the proper context.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the amendment is to the Crown Guarantee and Loan Act, 1973, and without reading that act in toto, the explanatory note really gives the essence of that act, and that act says, "That where any Minister of the Crown is authorized to guarantee the repayment of any bond or issue or loan or whether any Minister of the Crown is authorized to make a loan or when any Minister of the Crown is authorized to act in any incidental matter in regard to this, that that authority is exercised by the Minister of Finance and even if another Minister is mentioned in a bill giving such authorization, that reference is to be deemed to

DR. J. COLLINS: refer to the Minister of Finance". So in actual fact as it presently stands, the Crown Guarantee and Loan Act, 1973, says that no minister can guarantee repayment, can make a loan or act in any matter incidental without reference to the Minister of Finance, that even though it mentions in an act under which he is operating that he is the one who authorizes it, that is to be read as meaning the Minister of Finance. So the departments of government already are under that umbrella and if one refers to the schedule in that act, Mr. Speaker, it means that the Loan and Guarantee Act of 1957 comes under that umbrella, the Local Authority Guarantee Act, 1957, the Senior Citizens' Housing Act, the Newfoundland Municipal Financing Corporation Act, the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation Act, the Melville Pulp and Paper Limited Authorization Agreement Act, 1966-67, the Newfoundland Industrial Development Corporation Act, the Stephenville Linerboard Agreement Act, 1972. So all these departments and all departments acting under the authority of these acts are already under that umbrella of having to have the authorization of the Minister of Finance to guarantee repayment, to make loans or to act in matters incidental to.

Now this particular amendment, Mr. Speaker, in essence does this. Where agencies, that is, where boards, commissions or other bodies are authorized to guarantee repayments of loans or bonds, not make loans but guarantee repayment, such authorization is to be exercised by the Minister of Finance. In other words, what the ministers of the Crown operating under acts so authorizing them have to do now, that is, they have to in actual fact operate in the name only of the Minister of Finance. We

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DR. J. COLLINS: are now asking that agencies,
not departments of government, they are already covered, we
are now asking that merely agencies operate in the same way.
In actual fact -

MR. HICKMAN: You have to finish by five
minutes to five.

DR. J. COLLINS: what this

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DR. COLLINS:

means is that the Department of Finance have to be informed, the Minister of Finance has to be informed about the guarantees and only guarantees, not loans but guarantees of repayment of loans. The Minister of Finance has to be informed of these which all departments of government are presently doing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that that puts this in the proper perspective. Now, Mr. Speaker, I could go on at some length to answer some of the points that have been raised but, Mr. Speaker, I think that at this point in time I will merely reiterate that there is no question of this amendment overcentralizing government, there is no question of this amendment giving undue power to the Minister of Finance, and there is no question that this amendment diminishes in any way the authority presently exercised by other ministers of the Crown. This is merely bringing into operation something that already applies to the departments of government, bringing that into operation for the agencies, in other words, lesser bodies of government. Mr. Speaker, I therefore move second reading.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Crown Guarantee And Loan Act, 1973," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently by leave. (Bill No. 13)

On motion that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 13, Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:

MR. NEARY: Is this proper, Mr. Chairman? This is the first time I have seen this happen and I do not want to question Your Honour but where the Speaker leaves the Chair and comes down and sits at the Table? I will have to check that one out with my constitutional experts.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Crown Guarantee And Loan Act, 1973." (Bill No. 13)

On motion Clause (1) carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

MR. NEARY: Just as a matter of procedure, how is Your Honour now going to report the bill? Does he go over there to his seat and

MR. NEARY:

say, "Mr. Speaker, I wish to report the bill"? You have to have the Speaker in the Chair, do you not?

AN HON. MEMBER: Not necessarily.

MR. NEARY: Okay. You are talking to an empty Chair if you do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

On motion, that the Committee rise and report progress and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Ottenheimer): The hon. Chairman of Committees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report having passed Bill No. 13 without amendment and ask leave to sit again.

On motion report received and adopted, Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

Motion, that Bill No. 13 be read a third time now, by leave, carried.

MR. SPEAKER: On motion "An Act To Amend The Crown Guarantee And Loan Act, 1973" (Bill No. 13) read a third time, ordered passed and its title shall be as on the Order Paper.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, a point of information, Sir, a Point of Order I guess is about the only way I can put it. Your Honour, when Your Honour was out in his office doing research we went into Committee of the Whole and the Speaker at the time, the Deputy Speaker, left the Chair, came down and became Chairman of Committees, which I thought was most irregular, Sir. I am not complaining about it but I think there was probably a solution to the problem; at least I think we should have followed the precedents and the tradition of this House since I have been here anyway. When the Speaker is in his office and the Deputy Speaker is sitting in the Chair, we go into Committee of the Whole and the Assistant Deputy Speaker or Chairman of Committees is not available, then some backbencher is asked to sit in the Chair on Committee of the Whole. I do not know if Your Honour advised the Deputy Speaker, you know, of what procedure we have been using but I just raise it, Sir, as a matter of record. I think, you know, we should raise these matters when they crop up. And then Your Honour was dragged in out of his office, rushed in and then had to bark at the people at the table which probably was a little bit embarrassing. I heard what Your Honour said, but I believe Your Honour would be well advised to straighten out the Deputy Speaker, you know, on just how to handle these matters when they arise.

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. Ottenheimer): Well actually, as hon. members are aware, there is no Deputy Chairman of Committees. But the procedure as stated by the hon. gentleman to my right has been the regular one and that is if the Deputy Chairman leaves the Table to come to the Chair the report is read to him by

MR. SPEAKER (OTTENHEIMER): a backbencher, by any backbencher.
Hon. minister.

MR. HICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that this House do adjourn until Monday, April 30th, 1979, at three of the clock and further be it resolved that when this House adjourns - provided always, rather, that if it appears to the satisfaction of Mr. Speaker or in the case of his absence from the Province, the Chairman of Committees, after consultation with Her Majesty's government that the House should meet at an earlier time than the adjournment, the Speaker, or in his absence the Chairman of Committees may give notice that he is so satisfied and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated by such notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time.

MR. NEARY: Scandalous, scandalous!

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved then that this House adjourn until Monday, April 30th, at 3:00 p.m., provided always that if it appears to the satisfaction of Mr. Speaker or in the case of his absence from the Province, the Chairman of Committees, after consultation with Her Majesty's government that the House should meet at an earlier time than the adjournment, the Speaker, or in his absence the Chairman of Committees, may give notice that he is so satisfied and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated by such notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: It is a bad example.

MR. W. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I would have expected the hon. Acting House Leader to have given at least a word of explanation for this startling development. We have a new

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MR. W. ROWE: Premier come into the House, full of vim and vigour or so he tries to project himself. We are in here for a half a dozen days and the House is now adjourning for twenty days - three weeks! All through the last number of weeks when the leadership convention for the other side was going on, all we heard was the great legislative program we were going to have. We are going to have this; we are going to have

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MR. W. ROWE: that, we were going to have measures to cope with unemployment, we were going to have measures to deal with the high cost of electricity, the Lower Churchill development was going to be taken care of, the Come by Chance refinery was going to be dealt with in man-fashion, a forthright man-fashion, and now we have the new Premier, who is not even in his seat put the acting House Leader up to move the adjournment of the House for three weeks. When did we get here? When did we come back to the House?

MR. S. NEARY: The 27th.

MR. W. ROWE: The 27th. So we have been here for two weeks. We had the House adjourned for a month or more, six weeks, while another political process was going on that is no concern of this hon. House, Mr. Speaker. The House adjourned; the people's business came to a dead standstill; unemployment figures, and they are only figures, at 18 or 20 per cent -

MR. S. NEARY: 39,000 as of today.

MR. W. ROWE: -with 39,000 or 40,000 people unemployed in this Province, and they adjourned the House to allow a convention to go ahead. And now, with Easter coming up and a few people wanting to go down South to their condominiums and on their various holidays, the House is adjourning for three weeks. With delegations coming in from all corners of the Province, delegations from everywhere in the Province, Westport yesterday, and other parts of the Province looking for answers to their questions, questions which if not a matter of life and death are the next thing to it, hazardous road conditions, bad road conditions, no water and sewer, the newly appointed Premier flicks them to one side with a vague answer like, "Oh, five or six weeks we will bring the Budget down." And now we have the House of Assembly adjourning, Mr. Speaker, for another three weeks and every Cabinet minister here - some of them are already gone I would suspect -

MR. S. NEARY: The House Leader.

MR. W. ROWE: Every Cabinet minister here with very few exceptions, those who are just getting their feet wet, maybe, will be

MR. W. N. ROWE: of legislation presented to the House, nothing, Mr. Speaker, housekeeping legislation which could be attended to by the Clerk of the Council downstairs on the 8th Floor. That is what is brought before us, nothing of a substantial nature whatsoever, no Budget brought before this House. The fourth seat for Labrador was a matter which had the unanimous consent of this hon. House, and as far as consent was concerned it could have been passed in one minute we have been so eager over here to have it passed years ago.

AN HON. MEMBER: 1974, 1975.

MR. W. N. ROWE: It should have been passed years ago.

And now we have a government which we on this side had taken a decision to allow to try to cope with the problems of this Province, give them elbow room - a new Premier - give him some elbow room, let him not be concerned with the political day-to-day problems in the House of Assembly, or in the country for that matter, let him come to grips with the problems facing this Province. We would lay off him, we would not bother him. I do not think there has been a word of criticism uttered against the hon. the Premier.

MR. NEARY: This is the first day - today.

MR. W. N. ROWE: 'Give him a chance,' we all said and we all decided. 'Give him a chance to do what he can do.'

MR. NEARY: That is right.

MR. W. N. ROWE: Because we are all politicians, Mr. Speaker, but we are all Newfoundlanders first and we want to see action taken on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador. So give him a chance. If he can come up with a programme that is in the best interests of this Province

MR. W. N. ROWE: in a reasonable period of time and that leads to our defeat as a party because he has come to grips with the problems, I am prepared to live with that as are my colleagues.

MR. NEARY: Right.

MR. W. N. ROWE: Because we may be politicians and party politicians, but if there is anybody who can come up with answers to the problems and grapple with the problems, then he deserves to form a government in this Province as far as I am concerned.

MR. NEARY: Newfoundland first.

MR. W. N. ROWE: And what do we see? - Yes, put your Province first, your party second and yourself last. That is the advice and the injunction issued by a man who charitably did not follow his own advice, to say the least, but we will not get into that; he is no longer on the public scene. But that was the postulate, that was the guiding principle for this government as laid down from on high by the disappearing Premier, the former Premier, and we were willing to live with that kind of an edict. That is the way you should act - your Province first, your party second and yourself third. And what we are seeing here, Mr. Speaker, is nothing less than a complete reversal of that piece of advice. We have a government consisting of individuals led by an individual who are not prepared to put their Province first. I do not know what they are putting first, maybe themselves or their party, I do not know - it is irrelevant to me, immaterial - but we know the Province's interest is not being put first. We see them all now skedaddle out of this House -

MR. HICKMAN: I hope you are right.

MR. W. N. ROWE: - many of them leaving the Province altogether, many of them going off to rusticate in the Province for two or three weeks. Some of them, the junior ministers, the new ministers, will undoubtedly be at their desks trying to find out what they are supposed to be responsible for.

MR. NEARY: The novelty has not worn off yet.

MR. W. N. ROWE: That is right, and their seats are scarcely warm in any event, trying to get the grooves worn properly in the seat over the next number of weeks. So I can understand that the novelty has not worn off. But for the other ministers, the ones, Mr. Speaker, to be blunt about it, the ones in whose hands the destiny of this Province is, these ministers, Sir, will not be around their desks for the next three weeks, they will be gone. Nobody begrudges anybody a little break, but let us take our breaks, Mr. Speaker, when it is most convenient for the people of the Province, not when it is vitally necessary that we all be here present, standing up, arguing the issues, talking the issues, proposing solutions, uncovering misadministration and incompetence and abuses of justice in this Province -

MR. NEARY: Hear, hear!

MR. W. N. ROWE: - to cite one or two minor examples.

MR. NEARY: We would be here for the rest of our lives if we got into that one.

MR. W. N. ROWE: Let us get the Minister of Justice thinking about some important considerations. It is well known, Mr. Speaker, that a government's first duty beyond everything else is to provide security and justice for its people.

MR. NEARY: Or the appearance of it.

MR. W. N. ROWE: And the appearance of it!

MR. W. N. ROWE: Not "or," and the appearance of it. Provide security and justice for its people. That is the first duty of a government, and everything else is secondary to that - it has to be. Not that they are not important, because without security and with a breakdown in the justice system, everything else goes by the board.

Let us get the Minister of Justice, if he has any courage in this matter, let us set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry, a proper one, into the breakdown of justice in this Province, the misadministration of justice in this Province. This proceeding which we have often talked about in this House before, this proceeding under the Public

MR. W. ROWE: Inquiry Act known as a Royal Commission of Inquiry or public inquiry, let us have some thought by Royal Commission into the procedures used there.

My hon. friend, the member for Lapoile (Mr. Neary) had the agonizing experience, I well remember, and I hope he does not mind my referring to it -

MR. NEARY: I certainly do not -

MR. W. ROWE: - the agonizing experience -

MR. NEARY: - of the kangaroo court, the Star Chamber.

MR. W. ROWE: - of sitting down there in a kangaroo court - no reflection on the commissioner involved because it was not in his hands; - the Public Inquiry Act procedure, that is laid down here - sitting down there with witnesses pulled in, asked questions by a counsel for the Royal Commission, answers which he knew to be misinterpretations of fact at very best -

MR. NEARY: And lies, absolute lies!

MR. W. ROWE: - and perhaps untruths, and not being permitted to cross-examine, not being permitted to cross-examine, not being permitted, Mr. Speaker, to have to sit there and listen to it in a kangaroo court structure, a Star Chamber structure, a Star Chamber set-up. Not being able to question his accusers except perhaps if he had counsel present, and he was under his own obligation to do that, if he had counsel present, his counsel, his lawyer, might be able to scribble down a note saying, "Please ask him such and such", and pass that up to the counsel for the commission. The counsel for the commission would then, in his own words and in his own way, ask the questions, perhaps not pursue the cross-examination at all.

MR. NEARY: Never did pursue one question.

MR. W. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, let us look into these questions. Royal Commissions, which are not courts of law, which can come down with conclusions even before reports are out which can have the effect of damaging, before all the evidence is in, individuals in this Province in their private or public capacity, let us look at that because it should be changed. We saw a former Premier of this Province, a former Premier of this Province, dragged before a Royal Commission and he was in the same boat and had reports issued on him which amounted in the ultimate analysis to nothing, no charges of any kind ever laid by anyone in connection with anything. But we do know that for a couple of years that former great public servant of this Province laboured under the most disreputable accusations from people in society as a result of this Royal Commission report. We know that. The same gentleman had raided left, right and centre, files rifled down here by the most wanton abuse of justice that we had seen up till that time.

We have seen laws broken in this Province by men in high positions, the Public Tender Act for one, and no action whatsoever ever taken by anybody in the Justice Department. Yes, we saw the Deputy Minister of Justice trotted out by his Minister and used as a political tool of this government, we saw that to absolve people, having deliberately and publicly announced broken the Public Tender Act. We saw that. We saw a matter over here involving the Fire Department where an investigation was characterized as incompetent which to me is the same as saying, "If it is true then there was no investigation", and then the matter dropped completely, never pursued any further, to see what the cause of that fire was, whether

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MR. W. ROWE: it was faulty wiring, whether
it was somebody totally unbeknownst to anybody. No action,
no follow-up taken at all. Justice, Mr. Speaker, if you
questioned 500 people in this Province today and asked them
the state of the justice system in Newfoundland and Labrador,
I know what the answer is or what it would be:

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MR. W. ROWE:

There is none. Yes, one system for the high and mighty, perhaps, and another entirely for the ordinary people. One law for the high and mighty to be brushed away like so many cobwebs, and another one which is like chains of steel for the ordinary people in the Province. That is what we have and that is the perception as well, Mr. Speaker. And if the Minister of Justice wanted to do something about it, sincerely wanted to do something about it he would have a Royal Commission investigate that aspect of the breakdown in justice in our Province. The misadministration of justice in our Province and the perceived abuses of justice in our Province, that is what should be looked at. But no! Instead the House and the members are ready to leave the House, not grapple with those important questions, not deal with the question of what construction work is going to be done in the Province this year, services for our people, none of that. Interim Supply Bill brought in, the financial year now ten days old, a budget cannot possibly be brought down until the end of April, perhaps the middle of May. We are likely to see another adjournment for at least a portion of the federal election. We are likely to see something like that going on. The budget will not be passed, Mr. Speaker, until well into June, if it is passed then. And everybody in this Province who depends on the government and budget decisions and government financing are left hanging and dangling because the excuse of the government can then be, "Oh, we will let you know when the budget comes down. The budget is not down yet," the people left high and dry and dangling without knowing where they are going and nobody knowing what kind of work is going to be done in the Province. Mr. Speaker, the worst kind of mismanagement and misadministration of this Province is going on here now.

You could talk for hours on it, Mr. Speaker.

As a matter of fact, we did talk for hours on it. The last time this government negligently, without concern for the interests of the people, adjourned this House for a month or more during their leadership

MR. W. ROWE:

convention we talked for hours on it. We tried to keep the House going and the House together. We talked all night until eight o'clock or ten o'clock in the morning. We got nowhere with it because this government, which is lacking in decisiveness, lacking in the ability to make decisions, lacking in concern, can make decisions however and can be decisive and can be concerned about one thing and that is how to avoid grappling with the problems facing the people, how to get out of the House of Assembly, how to get out of the Province and avoid their responsibility. They are good at making decisions on that and they can come to a decision on that, Mr. Speaker, like that! No great debate is needed then.

I say we could talk for hours on the subject. There has been so little time for debating the important issues facing the Province we could talk now for hours, but I do not intend to do so. It would be like wailing in the wilderness, Mr. Speaker, because it is going to fall on deaf ears anyway. But the people are hearing what is going on and know what is going on, the people of this Province, and they will hear about this and there will be further erosion in the public mind concerning the government, this government particularly, but all aspects of government and that is the

MR. W.N. ROWE:

part that is damaging. This government, by its negligent, uncaring attitude towards the problems of this Province cast everybody in public life in much the same light. They do not care, could not care less, run off on holiday, ignore the problems. They are all alike, the people are saying.

It so happens they are not all alike but this government does its best to paint the picture of everyone being alike because they know that is the only way they can survive. The only way this government can survive as a government is by trying to pretend to the people of this Province, "We are no worse than anyone else; we are no worse than the other crowd." Well, Mr. Speaker, the perception, the idea is sinking through, it has sunk through to the people of this Province that they are worse than almost any other crowd that you could imagine because they have grown tired and bankrupt of ideas. There was a glimmer of hope that some new energy, some new vigor, some new ideas might be breathed into the governmental process as a result of the change of leadership. That has now gone by the board. We see the same types of practices being pursued once more. If they wanted to adjourn the House for a week over Easter, and those that could afford wanted to go down and get some sun for a few days, hardly any complaint about it! But to adjourn this House for three weeks, Mr. Speaker, for a month in reality because then you have the gearing up again, getting into the problems again which will take a full week after we resume again, a full month out of twelve once more thrown and opportunities missed and opportunities to grapple with problems and solve the problems, thrown away again. Mr. Speaker, it would make a public figure, a politician nearly despair for the future of this Province knowing that the Government of the Province could and may in fact be in the hands of this kind of attitude, people with that kind of attitude for another eighteen months. I say to the hon. the Premier and his colleagues that if they have worn out themselves, if they have run out of, if they have no ideas, if they are bankrupt of ideas, if they

MR. W. ROWE: drag on again, Mr. Speaker, hang on, hope that the manna from heaven will fall, that lightning will strike twice, that they will have some miracle occur which can put them into office. Well it is not going to happen, Mr. Speaker, so they might as well call the election now and get the matter over with.

AN HON. MEMBER: Presently by leave.

MR. W. ROWE: Presently by leave is right.

Mr. Speaker, suffice it to say, without belabouring the point anymore, that this is one of the most despicable acts that any government could do at this point in time, to leave this House and the people of the Province in the lurch, not deal with the problems facing the Province, run off, skedaddle off somewhere and fail completely with an uncaring, negligent attitude, fail completely to try to solve the problems facing the people of this Province.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: (Cross) The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to have a few words on the motion moved by the Government House Leader that this House at its rising do adjourn until April the 30th, which is twenty days from now. Twenty days! The House will be closed for twenty days!

Let me start off by showing the House how many days we have met since the House opened on December the 5th. Can anybody hazard a guess on how days this House has met out of a possible total of eighty-four days? We could have sat in this House since December the 5th when the House opened, we could have sat eighty-four days. Eighty-four possible sitting days and nights if we wanted to. We could have sat for eighty-four days and that does not count Saturday or Sunday; that is just sitting days. How many days did we sit since December the 5th? Would Your Honour care to hazard a guess? How many sitting days we have had since the House opened on December the 5th?

AN HON. MEMBER: Seventy-nine?

MR. S. NEARY: No, not seventy-nine. Would Your Honour care to hazard a guess? Would Your Honour think it was seventy-five? Seventy? Well I will not keep the House in suspense, Sir. Maybe the

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MR. S. NEARY: hon. Minister of Fisheries has been keeping the score.

MR. CARTER: No.

MR. S. NEARY: Well has the hon. the Premier been keeping the score? Perhaps, the hon. gentleman from Exploits (Dr. H. Twomey) could tell us how many days the House has sat since December the 5th out of a total possible number of days of eighty-four. How many days? Eighteen.

AN HON. MEMBER: Eighteen?

MR. S. NEARY: Eighteen days since December the 5th. Eighteen sitting days.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is contemptible, beneath contempt. I think Your Honour will agree that with the serious problems facing the people of this Province and with a promise by the new Premier that he was going to be a man of action, that he wanted to make some reforms, that he wanted to do a few things before he went to the electorate, that he wanted to do his stuff, he wanted to show the people of this Province what he was made of. We heard a lot of things said by the hon. gentleman when he was running for the leadership of his party, what he was going to do, bring in reforms, make the House of Assembly work; that was one of the planks of his platform. As a matter of fact it was 'the' plank, the big plank in his platform. Going to make the House of Assembly work! Going to force us on this side of the House to knuckle under, to kowtow to the hon. gentleman, going to make the House of Assembly work! We have not been here long enough to make it work.

AN HON. MEMBER: I am going to speak on that.

MR. S. NEARY: You are? You have a few choice words. I am sure, Sir, that all hon. gentlemen will participate in this debate. There is so much to be said. There are so many issues. I would say myself, Mr. Speaker, that the four major issues in this Province at the present time that are being ignored and

MR. NEARY:

neglected by the government, by the new Premier, who can be accused today really of dereliction of duty. I am not allowed to say the hon. gentleman deceived the people of this Province - if I could say it I would say it during the time he was campaigning for the leadership.

MR. F. ROWE: You can. You cannot say he deceived the House though.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, can I say the hon. gentleman deceived the people of the Province?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. NEARY: I believe I can. Your Honour has Beauchesne in front of him there. Not deceive the House. I am talking about running for the leadership.

MR. F. ROWE: Right.

MR. NEARY: Deceived the people of Newfoundland and Labrador: I believe that is parliamentary, Sir. The hon. gentleman misled the people of this Province. He bluffed them.

Mr. Speaker, the four major issues that we have facing us at the present time that should be dealt with now, should have been dealt with weeks and months ago are, number one, inflation, cost of living including the cost of electricity that we have heard so much about in recent times; unemployment, the highest in our history, double what it was in the depression years, 39,000 Newfoundlanders unemployed who cannot find work. The third thing, Sir, that is bothering our people that needs to be resolved quickly, that is tearing the hearts out of our Newfoundland people, number three I would put on the list is increased vandalism and crime. The fourth thing, Sir, I would list is high taxes, the highest taxes in the whole of Canada. Newfoundlanders have the second per capita lowest personal income in the whole nation and yet we have the highest taxes in Canada.

AN HON. MEMBER: You are wrong.

MR. NEARY: I am wrong? I am right. I am right, Sir.

MR. R. MOORES: We have the highest per capita -

MR. NEARY: We are paying the highest taxes in the whole of Canada.

AN HON. MEMBER: Right.

MR. NEARY: Right or wrong?

MR. R. MOORES: Through this direct and indirect taxation, the highest in Canada.

MR. NEARY: Now, Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, who took his seat a few moments ago, who made a superb speech, Sir, took a few cuts at the Department of Justice and the Minister of Justice who I have been arguing for years and years in this hon. House is a weakling, weak-kneed. We have a weak-kneed Minister of Justice, a weakling, Sir. Last night anybody who heard Barbara Frum last night who runs a programme right from coast to coast, from British Columbia to Newfoundland, Barbara Frum, made Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders the laughing stock of the Canadian nation.

MR. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman was not on the programme, was he?

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Speaker, I was not on the programme but the hon. gentleman can sneer and laugh all he wants and snicker. When the CBC reporter was giving a report on the decision of the Leader of the Opposition to call a convention, Barbara Frum said, "Do you mean to tell me that down there in Newfoundland they are investigating a leak of a confidential report and not investigating the cause of that fire at Elizabeth Towers." Mr. Speaker, we are the laughing-stock of the North American Continent, the laughingstock. And my hon. friend, rightly so, Sir, justifiably so, took a few strips of hide off the Minister of Justice today who I have been saying for years

MR. NEARY: in this hon. House is a weakling, is a lame duck Minister of Justice. It is incredible, Sir. It is unbelievable the way that justice has deteriorated in this Province. I know it is an old cliché to say, Well, there is a law for the rich and a law for the poor. It is almost worn out I have heard it so often, but it is true, Mr. Speaker, it is true in Newfoundland. There are two laws, one for the rich and one for the poor.

AN HON. MEMBER: And one for your political enemies.

MR. NEARY: Well, that is a political vendetta. What is happening to my hon. friend, the Leader of the Opposition is nothing short, Sir, of a political and personal vendetta carried on by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hickman) and a couple of his colleagues - Witch-hunt Willie from St. John's East. It is a political vendetta of the lowest kind. But it will not work, Sir. I guarantee you it will not work. The people of this Province now are beginning to wise up to what the regime are up to. I do not have to defend my hon. friend, my hon. friend can defend himself, but I am very concerned about the so-called administration of justice in this Province.

AN HON. MEMBER: It could be you tomorrow.

MR. NEARY: It could be. Your Honour tomorrow could be the victim. If you do not like a fellow's politics, if you do not like the colour of his hair, if you do not like the way he conducts his business, why, down in New York and Montreal and Chicago they hire a hit man and take out a contract on you. What would they do in Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker? Under the Public Inquiries Act, they set up a Commission of Inquiry and that is how they get you. In the

MR. NEARY: kangaroo court, the Star Chamber tactics, that is how they hit back. Mr. Smallwood was the victim of that. They thought for sure, Mr. Speaker, when the member for St. John's East Extern got up ranting and raving and babbling like an idiot in this House, that they had the member for Bell Island across a barrel - another Commission of Inquiry. I do not know if Your Honour has ever attended one of these Commission of Inquiry hearings or not. Your Honour nods his head and says no - at least I think Your Honour was nodding 'no'. It would be worth Your Honour's while as a learned gentleman to go down and watch these kangaroo courts, these Star Chamber - What do you call them?

AN HON. MEMBER: Procedure.

MR. NEARY: - procedures in action. A good word, thank you, my friend.

It is unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable the hatchet job that they can do and you are not allowed to cross-examine a witness. You have to sit there and take it. And you know, Mr. Speaker, we in this House have laid down that procedure, and we, Mr. Speaker, have to take the guff and the innuendo and the suggestion from magistrates and from people who sit on the bench and we cannot defend ourselves in this House. We are not allowed to answer back. Well, we will answer back, Sir. We will answer back with a substantive motion when the opportunity presents itself and we will show the people of this Province the technique in Newfoundland is not to hire a hit man and take out a contract on the Leader of the Opposition; they have a cuter way - at least they think they have a cuter way of doing it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Adjourn the House for twenty days.

MR. NEARY: That is right, Sir, adjourn
the House for twenty days.

There are too many situations
in this Province, Mr. Speaker, too many emergencies.
And I want to say this, Your Honour, too, before I get
off the subject of justice, that during this whole
episode of the fire at Elizabeth Towers, one would never

MR. NEARY:

believe the stories that were making their rounds in this Province about the behaviour and the goings on and the procedures that were being used by people in high places. You would never believe, Mr. Speaker, what was said, the stories that made the rounds. Some of them I have checked out. They had nothing to do with the fire now, but other things, other cover-ups that had taken place.

I only wish, Sir, that I could lay on the table of this House a few bits and pieces of information that I have, a few tidbits that I have in connection with cases that have been investigated in this Province, investigated and charges were recommended by the law enforcement officers, and in once case, the matter brought to the Cabinet and quashed by the Cabinet - brought to the Premier, quashed. And other cases where the charges were withdrawn. Not this Premier, I am talking about his predecessor.

MR. F.B. ROWE:
Cabinet, though.

He was in the

MR. NEARY:

The hon. gentleman was in the Cabinet. The hon. gentleman cannot think, as I said the other day, that for one moment he is going to weasle out from under the collective responsibility that the Cabinet had when the hon. gentleman was a member.

MR. CALLAN:

Is that what the hon. member for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) was going to tell a couple of years back?

MR. NEARY:

He was going to tell all. Well, one of these days I will tell all, tell all I know.

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MR. NEARY: I do not want to be sidetracked now, Mr. Speaker, I was on a trend of thought there about the things that surfaced - they had nothing to do with the fire mind you - the things that surfaced about the Justice Department where the law enforcement officers, in one -

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has arrived.

MR. F.B. ROWE: Do not forget to move the adjournment.

MR. NEARY: I move the adjournment, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Admit His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the Province has at its present session passed certain bills to which in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

A bill, "An Act To Provide For The Registration Of Qualified Social Workers." (Bill No. 6).

A bill, "An Act To Provide For Additional Representation For Labrador In The House Of Assembly." (Bill No. 1).

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Crown Guarantee And Loan Act, 1973." (Bill No. 13).

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (Hon. Gordon A. Winter): In Her Majesty's name I assent to these bills.

MR. SPEAKER(Ottenheimer): Before the hon. gentleman continues, I will give a decision on a matter which came up earlier today which at the time I did not think I would be able to dispose of today. However, I am able to dispose of it having come across a relevant authority and, of course, with the adjournment for such a period I do not like, if it is unavoidable, to leave a matter pending so long.

First I will repeat what exactly the Speaker's role is when a question of privilege is brought up and I read from Beauchesne, Fifth Edition, page 25. "(1) Once the claim of a breach of privilege has been made, it is the duty of the Speaker to decide that a prima facie case can be established. The Speaker requires to be satisfied, both that privilege appears to be sufficiently involved to justify him in giving such precedence (or as it is sometimes put, that there is a prima facie case that a breach of privilege has been committed); and also that the matter is being raised at the earliest opportunity.

"(2) It has often been laid down that the Speaker's function in ruling on a claim of breach of privilege is limited to deciding the formal question, whether the case conforms with the conditions which alone entitle it to take precedence over the notices of motions and Orders of the Day standing on the Order Paper; and does not extend to deciding the question of substance, whether a breach of privilege has in fact been committed - a question which can only be decided by the House itself."

I repeat that because frequently there is a misunderstanding and it

MR. SPEAKER(Ottenheimer): is sometimes assumed that the Speaker decides whether there has been a breach of privilege or has not been a breach of privilege. That is not the case; it is only the House which decides that and the finding which the Speaker makes has only one effect that being, whether a motion arising from the complainant will have priority over the other motions and priority over everything on the Standing orders; or whether such a motion will not have priority.

I find in the present instance that such a motion would not have priority and I quote as my reference there Beauchesne, Fourth Edition, page 100. "To constitute a breach of privilege, a libel"- and here I substitute statement, libel or statement - "but to constitute a breach of privilege a statement upon a member must concern his character or conduct in his capacity as a member and the conduct or language on which the statement is based must be actions performed or words uttered in the actual transaction of the business of the House."

The hon. the member
for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, before I go on with my few remarks, I would like to give Your Honour notice that I intend to bring in a substantive motion in this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: That will have to be under notice of motion.

MR. NEARY: Yes, Sir.

MR. HICKMAN: Just before the hon. gentleman continues, so that he will not be interrupted at six o'clock, we could agree now to stop the clock until six-thirty o'clock?

MR. SPEAKER(Ottenheimer): Is it agreed that House continue until six-thirty o'clock?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed!

MR. SPEAKER: So as to preclude misunderstandings later, as I understand it, it is agreed that the House continue until six-thirty o'clock and then that the motion will be put?

MR. NEARY: Around six-thirty.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Around six-thirty.

There is nothing sacred about 6:30.

MR. SPEAKER: P.m., P.m.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I do not remember where I left off. Oh yes, I was on taking a few strips of hide off the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hickman) and I was telling the House about some of the stories that I had heard about the Justice Department - I believe I mentioned one or two to the minister while I was in his office a couple of times, and nothing was ever done about it, Sir. Nothing ever done about it, swept under the rug - things, Mr. Speaker, things that would make you very suspicious of the Justice Department.

I will tell you one thing, Sir. If I wanted to, right now, if I had the time

MR. NEARY: and the inclination, and I may do it before too long, I could lay a few things out on the table of this House that hon. gentlemen would think they read in a detective magazine. They would never think that it happened in Newfoundland; laying charges, withdrawing charges, suppressing investigations, manipulating the law enforcement officers. Absolutely unbelievable, Sir, Unbelievable! Is it just political hearsay, gossip that I am flinging out now? No, Sir, it is not. Some of these things I have checked out myself and find them to be true and if I were the Minister of Justice I would hang my head in shame, and instead of carrying on a political or personal vendetta against my hon. friend, the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. gentleman better clean up his own act. It is coming out; it is going to come on the table of this House one of these days, several little items that I have tucked away for a rainy day when things get dull in the House that will liven her up a little bit. I am sorry to have to do it. I feel very sad about being forced to do it, but it has to be done, Mr. Speaker, it has to be done. We cannot have two laws in this Province, one for the rich and one for the poor. We cannot allow that to continue, Sir. No wonder we have increased vandalism and crime in this Province when people, young people especially, say, "Well, if so and so can get away with it, if so and so can get put on a suspended sentence, if so and so can have his charges withdrawn, why cannot I? Why cannot I do it?" There has been a complete breakdown in the administration of justice in this Province. The hon. gentleman folds his hands sometimes and says, "Oh, we must maintain law and order at all costs", and the hon. gentleman is the biggest culprit in causing increased vandalism and crime in this Province because of his dereliction of duty. That is one

MR. NEARY: matter - we will deal with the justice problem in due course, Sir, but I just want to go on the public record right now, as I said a few minutes ago, as saying that Newfoundland is the laughingstock of the whole of Canada - investigating a leak. Down in the United States they have taken steps to protect informers so that justice will be done. In this Province the Minister of Justice is not interested in seeing that justice is done or appears to be done, but is going to have a Royal Commission to investigate a leak. The next thing they will have one to investigate how many times you go to the toilet.

MR. W. ROWE: Did you hear Barbara Frum last night?

MR. NEARY: I am talking about Barbara Frum saying, "You mean to tell me down in Newfoundland they are investigating a leak of a confidential report or document and not investigating the cause of the fire?"

MR. W. ROWE: Laughingstock.

MR. F. ROWE: Latest Newfie joke.

MR. NEARY: Honest to God, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentlemen somehow or other think that the issue is now clouded, that Newfoundlanders do not know now what the real issue is, that there has been a big red herring dragged into it, that they are going to forget about the real issue because my hon. friend told a little white lie, so they think, so the administration thinks.

MR. LUSH: A file.

MRS. MCISAAC: That is right.

MR. NEARY: Beg your pardon.

MR. LUSH: A file.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, what my hon. colleague said may have been a little fib but it was neither premeditated nor deliberate; it was something

MR. S. NEARY: history in this Province, and the fire fanned, by the way, the fire being fanned by Ministers of the Crown and that is why, Mr. Speaker, I said the other that I thought, Sir, the hon. gentleman when he took over was going to clean house. What a golden opportunity the hon. gentleman had to gut her out!

MR. R. MOORES: Get rid of 'Doody' and a few more.

MR. S. NEARY: No, not 'Doody'. 'Doody' is a good man. I know one particular individual over there, the hon. gentleman knows it too, the hon. gentleman had a row with him before he became Premier about his spreading around slander and libel and his personal attacks on the Leader of the Opposition and his smear tactics. Mr. Speaker, this crowd would do anything, stoop to any level to cling on to power in this Province.

MR. W.N. ROWE: The Minister of Justice (Mr. Hickman) is well aware of it.

MR. S. NEARY: The Minister of Justice condones and is well aware of it because my hon. friend the Premier and the Minister of Justice had a few words about it long before the hon. gentleman ever thought he would become Premier. But the hon. gentleman did not do anything about it except to keep that minister in his new Cabinet.

MR. G. FLIGHT: There was a price though. Look at the price he paid.

MR. S. NEARY: That rumour-monger, that slanderer, that character assassin. I do not hear -

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): Order, please!

I must, number one, ask the hon. gentleman to retract 'slanderer'! But the general point I wanted to make is that personally abusive language should not be used. While an hon. member may attack or criticize as strongly as he wishes policies or

MR. SPEAKER (MR. OTTENHEIMER): programmes, personally abusive language should be avoided.

MR. S. NEARY: What is it I have to withdraw, Your Honour?

MR. SPEAKER: 'Slanderer'.

MR. S. NEARY: Okay, Your Honour, I withdraw.

Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the hon. the Premier hauled at least two gentleman back into his Cabinet. He is not getting any marks for it, not scoring any points around the Province for it. The hon. gentleman had the opportunity to give him the Royal Order of the Boot, a number 10. They are about the lowest form of life. Sometimes in the heat of debate in this hon. House, Sir, we have the odd little flick at each other but we do not go out deliberately to slander one of our colleagues, whether he be on that side of the House or this side of the House. Mr. Speaker, not going far enough to get a handle on the hon. gentleman, except that you feel like giving him a belt in the gob, you cannot get a handle on him so you can get him into court where you can deal with it. You can deal with a mouse, Sir, or a rat, you cannot deal with this rattlesnake. But it has to be dealt with, Mr. Speaker. It is condoned by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hickman), who knew about it, who knows about it. Look, Mr. Speaker, let me say this, that I know my hon. friend and I hope I am not embarrassing my hon. friend, 'ty hon. friend did not know I was going to talk this way when I got up and I am only going to take a few more minutes, for anybody who wants to get up. But believe me, Mr. Speaker, nobody but nobody on the face of this earth knows what my hon. friend has gone through, and his family, in the last eighteen months as a result of this political and personal persecution and vendetta. He proved to me that he is a real man, nobody else could take it. I could not take it, I would have long ago gone and throttled the individual. I guarantee you if it were me it would not take me very long. In two shakes of a lamb's tail

MR. NEARY: I would throttle him if it was me and my family that the hon. gentleman was talking about and spreading rumors about and smearing. Oh, we hear the croaking bullfrog every day ridiculing us, calling us down, the croaking bullfrog who will do anything for money, M-o-n-e-y. That is why the croaking bullfrog talks the way he talks, money. People have often said to me, "Why is he so down on Rowe? Why is he so down on you?" The answer, Mr. Speaker, is money. That is their God, money. The croaking bullfrog -

AN HON. MEMBER: Who?

MR. R. MOORES: Jamieson.

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman does not know who he is? You hear him every morning from five minutes to nine until eleven.

MR. FLIGHT: Who is he talking about?

MR. R. MOORES: Bas Jamieson.

MR. NEARY: So, Mr. Speaker, they have a few skeletons in their closet too and I guarantee if the croaking bullfrog keeps it up he might get a few skeletons dragged out.

MR. MORGAN: Who are you threatening?

MR. NEARY: Ah, that is not a threat. My weapon to defend myself is in this House and if the hon. gentleman - what would you call him? I cannot call him a rattlesnake, that is unparliamentary.

MR. F. ROWE: Call him a big square mouth.

MR. MORGAN: He cannot defend himself in the House; I can.

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman could not defend himself against anything or anybody, the hon. gentleman is so low-down, low-down.

MR. SPEAKER (Ottenheimer): Order, please! Order, please!

I would like to point out to hon. members that personally offensive and abusive language has to be avoided.

MR. NEARY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Honour will understand why, Sir, one would get carried away when responsible, respected people like the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hickman) and the Premier who you would expect, Sir, would put an end to that, stop it - Mr. Speaker, how can we come into this hon. House, as the hon. the Premier has said, and sit here day in and day out and listen to these smears and these

Mr. Neary: character assassinations and these low-down, sneaky, rotten tactics of some of his ministers? How can we sit here without defending ourselves and not get personal?

MR. MORGAN: What are you talking about? Tell us the whole story. Tell us the whole story.

MR. FLIGHT: We are talking about you, boy.

MR. NEARY: I am talking about, Sir, people who behave like cowards and rattlesnakes, snakes in the grass, and if the hat fits the hon. gentleman he can wear it. But I tell you I am pretty mad about this, I am pretty sore about it because I know the effect that it has had on the hon. gentleman's family. The hon. gentleman does not show very much emotion, but one thing I have learned how to do over the years, Sir, is to be able to size up a face and size up a situation. It almost brings tears to my eyes every time I think about it, every time I look at the hon. gentleman, every time I meet his family and his little boy, who could not play a hockey game on Saturday because he was sick. Tensed up, I would say, tensed up, very close to his Dad. And we have to put up with this, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. gentleman sits there and tells us, "Behave yourselves in the House. Behave yourselves. Depends on how the House works. No more of this name calling or anything." If the hon. gentleman had the guts he would take that minister by the scruff of the neck and he would do with him what needs to be done.

MR. FLIGHT: Fifty-six was not worth it.

MR. NEARY: Fifty-six votes. I would not worry if I were the hon. gentleman about these fifty-six votes. I only wish I had more time, Sir. I have to end now but I am sorry the House is closing because these matters are going to have to be dealt with and they are going to have to be dealt with quickly. The Minister of Justice will answer one of these days. As my poor old mother always says, "One of these days he will die roaring for what he has done." He tried to do it to me. He tried to do it to Joey.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) on the bench.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, on the bench? On the bench all right, on the bench down by the Lake Side.

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MR. R. MOORES:

He can be impeached.

MR. NEARY:

Yes, he can be impeached, Sir, I guarantee

you that

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MR. S. NEARY: one of these days there will be another administration. They will get their hands on the records and the files -

AN HON. MEMBER: Is that a threat?

MR. S. NEARY: No, it is not a threat, Mr. Speaker, Justice! Ah, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman, 'threats, threats, threats.' No matter what you say you cannot seem to get through to the hon. gentleman he is so thick-headed.

MR. T.A. HICKMAN: He is not pig-headed.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, if I said what I said in the last fifteen or twenty minutes to any other member of this House he would hang his head in shame, go out and dig a hole and crawl down into the hole, but not the hon. gentleman.

AN HON. MEMBER: He has no reason to hang his head in shame.

MR. S. NEARY: Ah, yes, the hon. gentleman has no reason to hang his head in shame.

MR. F. ROWE: It is the nature of the beast; no reason, no shame.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, what can you say or do?

MR. MORGAN: Ask the RCMP.

MR. S. NEARY: Ah, there is the smear. There is the dirt and the smear coming again. There is the dirt, Sir. The scoundrel!

MR. J. MORGAN: I rise to speak on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:(Mr. Ottenheimer) A point of order has been raised. Hon. Minister.

MR. J. MORGAN: I am not sure whether or not the term 'scoundrel' should be applied to any member of this House. I am of the opinion it should not be; therefore, I would ask that that remark be retracted.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman has a legitimate point there. I would ask the hon. member to my right to withdraw the word 'scoundrel'. I would ask all hon. members to be temperate in their language.

MR. S. NEARY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw, Sir. I often said, Sir, that I would not say inside this House anything that I would not say outside. I am prepared to say that outside this House anytime. I would not hesitate outside this House to say that some hon. members are rogues and scoundrels. I would not be allowed to say it inside the House, but I would say it outside and I would take my chances.

MR. G. FLIGHT: You can prove it in that case.

MR. S. NEARY: That is right. Go to the RCMP Superintendent or Commissioner.

Mr. Speaker, hon. members must be ashamed. Why do they not just disassociate themselves from that hon. gentleman?

MR. G. FLIGHT: Some have. But not the Premier.

MR. S. NEARY: Why does not the hon. gentleman come out and say what he is talking about: Lack of intestinal fortitude. He would rather through innuendo, malicious gossip and smear tactics try to smear the Leader of the Opposition.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion that the Leader of the Opposition will survive -

MR. J. MORGAN: He shall return.

MR. S. NEARY: - and when he does, Sir, he will walk into this House with his head held high. And those who want to conduct their Star Chamber tactics and their kangaroo courts will regret the day.

AN HON. MEMBER: You made your point.

MR. J. MORGAN: Not even his own crew clapped for him.

MR. SPEAKER: (Mr. Ottemheimer) Hon. Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I think we are debating the adjournment motion and I am sorry I was not here at the time the motion was made because I wanted to indicate at that time the reasons for the adjournment. This morning I telephoned the Leader of the Opposition and invited him to my office to discuss with him in a general way what my plans were for the remainder of the day and the remainder of this sitting; if you will,

PREMIER PECKFORD: to indicate to him the reasons for it and to see whether the opposite side would agree after some debate to allow - because it is a debatable motion which could continue on for quite some time if the Opposition wanted it to - to agree to an adjournment for a specified period of time. I think I should go on record, Mr. Speaker, as giving the reasons why I requested this adjournment.

Number one, Mr. Speaker, I think it should be clear to all hon. members that what we are requesting here in this motion is to adjourn for a specified period of time. It is not a permanent adjournment; it is until April 30th. The major reason for that is because if one looks at the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker, one will see that there are a number of pieces of legislation, some of which are ready to come up, others of which are not ready to come up, and what we intend to do, Mr. Speaker, is to give the Opposition the opportunity to study some of the major pieces of legislation. I do not know if the hon. members opposite realize that the bill on public financing, if it was presented to the House today and went into Second Reading or

PREMIER PECKFORD: Committee of the Whole, one of the howls you would hear from the other side is that "We have not had an opportunity to read this bill which has about 382 sections to it, the Elections Act". Also, of course, Mr. Speaker, we intend to bring in new legislation on matrimonial property law, which has not been completely drafted yet, which we will also distribute to the Opposition between now and the 30th so that hon. members who are interested in that piece of legislation will have the opportunity to study it and then be in a much better position to debate it when the House reopens.

We have on the Order Paper bills relating to the Lower Churchill Basin River lease, the whole question of Labrador Linerboard and the ratification of the agreement for Abitibi Price. I have tabled today, Mr. Speaker, the reports on Come by Chance which now the Opposition will have an opportunity to read and be in a position to debate when the House resumes on April 30th, and last but not least, and very, very important, is the whole question of the budget. Therefore, hon. ministers on this side of the House will need some time, as will government in general, to go through the budgetary process to try to bring a budget on stream as quickly as possible. So the reasons are sensible reasons, Mr. Speaker. We could continue on in the next couple of days, or for a week or so on fairly minor legislation. It is Easter. It is normal to have a short recess; this recess will be longer than, I guess, the normal or the average has been over the last number of years. But considering that we have these major pieces of legislation, which the hon. member for Lapoile (Mr. Neary) says that I indicated I want to take action on a number of fronts, and some of the legislative action I want to take I am outlining

PREMIER PECKFORD: as I outlined a number of days ago. We have passed the legislation, which everybody has agreed to - all hon. members - on the fourth seat for Labrador. Now we want to prepare and it is ready now, it will be ready in another three or four days or four or five days, the Election Act - the disclosures, public financing of elections, all that is contained in that act. The matrimonial property law should be ready before the House resumes to give the Opposition an opportunity to take a look at that. The Lower Churchill agreement for L.C.D.C.; the Labrador Linerboard-Abitibi agreement has to be ratified; all the documentation now that was tabled today on Come by Chance and the whole question of the budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to do is to put into action what we have said in words that we would do, that we would consult with the Opposition, give them the opportunity to look at all the legislation, the major pieces of legislation. The other housekeeping ones any hon. member could take in a half an hour and scan and know and be able to get up and make a response to. But intelligent debate in this House, to raise the level of the debate in this House, here is some major legislation that the Opposition will have an opportunity in the next two weeks to get their teeth into, to be fully prepared. Whatever hon. members want to - and, of course, hon. members on this side in the backbenches as well, will have the opportunity to go through the big act. The Election Act is really the real key one here and, of course, the one on matrimonial property law because it is a new direction for the Province, a new direction for the House - 382 sections.

PREMIER PECKFORD: How can any hon. member, if that was brought in today or tomorrow, really do justice to that act? And it is major when you talk about disclosures. Ontario went through a long, long process on the election act and they have had to make all kinds of amendments to it. The Opposition will have ample opportunity now over Easter to study these bills and to come back prepared, study the Thorne Riddell report, get whatever information they can get on the Come by Chance oil refinery so that they will be in a position to debate that. Also, hopefully, that through this process of the next two weeks, government will have an opportunity to move more quickly towards getting a budget in place. These are the major reasons why the adjournment motion has been made today by the Government House Leader and why we are requesting at this time that we have this Easter recess.

I explained these reasons to the Leader of the Opposition this morning and I hope that through this process of consultation, no secret agreements, of providing the Opposition with legislation beforehand, we can have, when the House opens on the 30th, a good debate on all the major legislation coming up, a budget quickly, and the committees put in place, Mr. Speaker. Somebody mentioned on the other side of the House the whole question of committees. I intend under the Standing Orders to carry out

PREMIER PECKFORD: the three committees that are there under the Standing Orders, which will provide for thirty hours of the estimates of the seventy-five to go into committee, either a committee hearing held in this Chamber in the mornings and then the House in the afternoon, or in some other boardroom in this building that might be appropriate. But if it is appropriate to have the committees use this Chamber in the mornings, press available and so on and the galleries open for the clause by clause, if you will, estimate by estimate, subhead by subhead study by a Committee of the House made up of members on both sides to go through ten departments, three hours each, which is the thirty hours that are allowed under the Standing Orders, And if the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite would like to consider it, because I think any changes of rules takes a two-thirds majority, if the Leader of the Opposition over Easter would like to consider changing the rules to increase the amount of hours in Committee, I am willing to consider that kind of a proposal. Because I think, given that the press will be available, that we can spend our time perhaps more wisely, remembering that the committees when they report back after examining the estimates, there is then an opportunity for the Whole House to debate the report of the Committee. So the Whole House still gets an opportunity to debate the estimates, but they debate them then based upon the report that the Committee brings in and we could go ahead as a Whole House debating these major pieces of legislation in greater detail and with a great deal more knowledge.

MR. W.N. ROWE:
Committee?

What about the Public Accounts

PREMIER PECKFORD: And the Public Accounts Committee will be reconstituted and put in place when we come back.

MR. NEARY: According to the precedents of the House?

PREMIER PECKFORD: According to the rules of the House, a Public Accounts Committee will be established, as well as these committees.

But if the Opposition would like to consider enlarging the number of hours that the estimates would have in committee, I am willing to consider that. And I think because you already have the electronic equipment and recording devices and so on available that we might be able to use this Chamber for the committee meetings, and a different committee every morning or whatever, you can enlarge it from thirty hours to forty or fifty hours or whatever to put more time here. And then in the afternoon that would mean, Mr. Speaker, you see, that we could have the normal hours of sitting to debate legislation - no long hours at night or going into all night sessions and at the same time, the members would be using their time better because they would be having the morning to do the clause by clause or the subsection by subsection of the estimates. So the members would be involved for a longer number of hours, but the actual House, itself would not be sitting for any longer period of time. And I think all hon. members, especially members on the opposite side and the backbenchers here, who hithertofore have just been involved in their own constituency problems would be more involved in what was going on in the House and could contribute and participate in a more meaningful way than they have done to date, in my view. So I would be willing to consider

PREMIER PECKFORD: even a larger number of hours than thirty if the Opposition wanted to consider that. But it takes consent from the Opposition because of the two-thirds majority rule as it relates to amendments to the Standing Orders. But I would be willing to consider them.

These are the reasons for the House closing, Mr. Speaker. We will be prepared when we come back to debate the legislation - hopefully, a Budget very shortly thereafter, so that obviously, given the number of hours for estimates, we will be in this House then to debate the matters of import besides these bills, besides the Budget, between the 1st of May and the 30th of June or sometime thereafter. Because the seventy-five hour rule alone, given normal hours of the House without extending hours into the evenings, if you just do up your little arithmetic, you will see that the House would have to be open well into June, if not the last of June or early July in order to accommodate all the hours. And with the committee system working, with debate on legislation and then the Budget and the Budget debate, the House in the afternoon could do Budget debate while the committees in the morning are doing the estimates and we could be interposing into that the legislation that the Opposition will get during the next couple of weeks.

So all in all, I think, Mr. Speaker, that when one looks at the reasons for it, the fact that we will be open for all of May and all of June, that ministers and all hon. members will have the opportunity to debate major pieces of legislation, an opportunity for the first time to more meaningfully discuss the estimates and at the same time get into the matters of unemployment, inflation or whatever, which are issues the Opposition consider important under the

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Tape 873

EC - 4

PREMIER PECKFORD: Budget debate headings after
the Budget is brought down.

So overall, that is the way
I perceive the House going in the next couple of months
and look forward

2245

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PREMIER PECKFORD:

to consultation and co-operation with the Opposition to ensure that this hon. Chamber through our deliberations from May 1 onwards will be elevated in the eyes of the public. And not only the Chamber and the Legislature itself but hon. members, so that when we go out of here at the end of June or early July we can all say that we have done our bit in making the House work a lot better than it has in the recent past. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Ottenheimer): The hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to have just four or five minutes - I do not think I will be any longer than that. There are a number of things I could talk about but this is not the time I do not believe. When we come back after the Easter recess would be a better time to get into more detail. I could talk about the Come By Chance oil refinery since it is in the district of Bellevue, I could talk about what has transpired here this afternoon in connection with that, the Thorne Riddell report and so on, but I will leave that. Perhaps in a day or so I will prepare a press release regarding my feelings on the thing and perhaps the Premier might not be all that surprised to find out exactly how I feel about what was said here today and what the result was coming from the government side of the House regarding the Come By Chance oil refinery. And even though we on the Opposition side of the House asked probing questions - I think that is our duty and responsibility - even though we did that, that does not necessarily mean that we are at loggerheads regarding what should happen at Come By Chance. But there is another time coming for that.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask the Premier in particular, and perhaps his Cabinet ministers, to think about a couple of other things. The Premier just listed off ten or a dozen things that we as Opposition members should think about during the next two weeks, twenty days and be ready when we come back. Perhaps there are

MR. CALLAN:

a couple of other things that I would like to suggest that perhaps the ministers might consider might not be a bad idea. Let me first of all say, Mr. Speaker, that a long, long time ago there were people who did not believe in Christ and so they took the word 'Christmas' and they put an x through it because they did not believe in Christ and so we came up with the word 'Xmas' instead of 'Christmas'. I do not think for one minute, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier is going to take the East out of Easter just because he happens to be going South for a couple of weeks. I think everybody is entitled to a holiday and I do not think there is too much wrong with that. I cannot afford it myself. I will not be going anywhere but that is something else. Perhaps the Premier, if he is going to be as good as some people expect him to be, will also increase the salaries of MHAs to the point where we can, you know, if we have to stay home at least can afford to enjoy ourselves there.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier a couple of questions, or to consider a couple of things. About a year ago, Mr. Speaker, I wrote three ministers in Ottawa and I also wrote the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs at that time - the Premier himself is in that portfolio now, I think, for the most part, he is looking after it - I wrote the federal ministers and the provincial Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs regarding a section of road in the district of Bellevue. It is nineteen miles long, it has nine communities on it, there are at least three fish plants. I asked or I tried to suggest in these letters and so on to the Minister of Governmental Affairs of this Province that it might not be a bad idea and might not be too silly an idea to take some of the burden off the provincial dollars for roads and to ask that this road be included under DREE. At the present time - I just had a telephone conversation not too long ago, as a matter of fact - I am having this checked out with Ottawa to see if the proposal ever did go to Ottawa. So I am having it checked out from the Ottawa

MR. CALLAN:

end to see if the Province on this end bothered to take it up, number one. And I am asking the Premier now, since he is in Intergovernmental Affairs, would he also, perhaps, consider that and if it was taken to Ottawa perhaps provide me with some proof. The minister has been doing quite well in the last couple of days. He has tabled Mr. Cole's contract which he promised to do and so on. A proposal to have the South West Arm Road, that is the road which starts at the TCH, Northwest Brook and goes down to Southport, you know, through Hodge's Cove, Little Hearts East, nine communities altogether. I think the Premier, at least

MR. W. CALLAN: the Minister of Transportation and Communications (Mr. Brett) knows what I am talking about, the present minister and the former, and also the former Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Doody) he knows what I am talking about. So anyway that is one thing that I would like to have a decision on or an answer to when we come back after the Easter recess.

Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Mr. N. Windsor) announced whether it was a result of Opposition pressure and so on is totally immaterial - anyway, he announced that funding in the amount of 75 per cent will be provided now to incorporated and unincorporated areas of the Province for the provision of fire-fighting equipment. In my own district, as I said at that time, I have organized three areas not just one or two communities but areas. I think of, for example, Blaketown, South Dildo, Old Shop, Dildo and New Harbour, New Harbour happens to be in Trinity - Bay de Verde but that is nothing here nor there. If those five communities can get together and buy a piece of equipment to have better facilities in the case of a fire, then it does not matter which district you happen to be in.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this question and perhaps the Premier can reconsider it. A year or more ago the Opposition asked that the tax be removed from wood-burning stoves because a lot of Newfoundlanders were getting back to them and it was done. It seems rather ludicrous to me, Mr. Speaker, that when the government is going to provide 75 per cent towards the purchase of say a \$30,000 or \$40,000 -

MR. NOLAN:

Fire engine.

MR. W. CALLAN:

Yes, fire-fighting equipment, a truck for example. The reason I said oil, by the way, I was thinking about Norman's Cove. I know how much they cost because - I think it is \$37,000, a truck that can take a capacity of five hundred gallons of water. That sort of truck is \$37,000. An awful lot of money! But, anyway just look at it, even if it only cost \$30,000 - at the present time there is 11 per cent sales tax on top of that and so you are talking about another \$3,300 on top of that \$30,000. So the government is giving 75 per cent in one hand but they are taking it back in sales tax, a lot of it on the other hand. So I am wondering if it might not be a bad idea to remove that 11 per cent sales tax from this particular commodity, from this particular commodity because, as I said, it is fire-fighting equipment. So that is one suggestion I throw out and it might not be a bad idea to include that in the Budget or what have you.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that I wanted to talk about and I will end off on this one, I want to ask this question. Some members of the House might think this is a silly thing I am going to mention now but I do not think it is and it came to mind, as a matter of fact, it came to mind when I looked at the cover of the Thorne Riddell report. I am wondering for example how many people there are in this House of Assembly - this is the International Year of the Child, this is the International Year of the Child and I am wondering how many members of this House of Assembly know who the first child that was born in Canada during the Centennial year? In other words, who was the first child born in Canada on January 1st., 1967 - 100 years - Centennial. Who was that first child? Where is that first child now? Was that first child born in Newfoundland or some other Province? I do not imagine there are too many people in the House who know - that child by the way now would have to be twelve years old obviously. Obviously that

MR. W. CALLAN: child was twelve years old on January 1st., 1979. Now then the name of that child, the surname by the way is Thorne, as in Thorne Riddell, the name of that child is Thorne. I am asking, and it may seem silly to some people, but I am asking in this International Year of the Child can something be done or what plans does the administration have to recognize in some particular way this particular year? And I wondering-I just throw this out as a suggestion because this child happens to live in Norman's Cove which is my hometown and that is why I know that that child was the first to be born in Canada, and some people said, 'Well, obviously it would be a Newfoundlander anyway,' but not necessarily. The father of that child has told me that he has looked at children, the first to be born in Canada in years before and since that, and not necessarily but quite often the first child to be born in Canada, not because we have the half hour advantage in time zone difference, but the first child in Canada was born in other Provinces rather than Newfoundland so it is possible for it to happen. And I am asking - I am wondering if it might not be a fair suggestion, I mean, why not do something for this child who is now twelve years old while that person is still a child? Next year that child will be a teenager and will not like being called a child. Perhaps he does not like it now but anyway I throw that out. You know, in the year, the

MR. CALLAN: International Year of the Child, I am wondering if that child could not be thought of, made mention of, recognized in some form or other during this particular year, not because the child is from Norman's Cove but because the child was born, in St. John's at that time as a matter of fact, the first child born in Canada during the Centennial Year. And the Minister of Justice has a question. That is it. Mr. Speaker, that is all I have to say and I hope everybody has a Happy Easter including His Honour.

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. Ottenheimer): The hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

Just for guidance, and that is the problem when things are vague, the agreement was that around 6:30 we would adjourn. I do not know if hon. members want to give it a parameter or if there has been a consensus that I am not aware of; I do not know. Anyway, I put that forward to hon. members.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to speak for probably three to five minutes at most.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, the agreement is that it would be around 6:30. I anticipated that there would be a number of speakers, as there is, on the opposite side who might like to speak for three to five minutes so if it goes on until 6:40 or 6:45, so be it.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: It is in that spirit I rise.

MR. W. ROWE: You misunderstood, it was 6:30 a.m.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the time is very limited under the undertaking we have made to the Chair and for that reason I will come very quickly to the point. My colleagues have made a number of points in reference to the subject.

MR. SIMMONS: One of the chief arguments that the Premier has put forward for the recess is that we ought, in good teacher fashion, be sent home to do our homework first. It is another indication of how well he performed another role in which he found himself. Mr. Speaker, I submit that while we are glad to have some homework to keep us out of trouble during the Easter recess, I would suggest that with those long, lonely nights here in St. John's away from the pleasures of home, we have lots of time to do our reading at night. Perhaps during the day we ought not to be sentenced to more homework, for the next twenty days all day long, while the Premier languishes in the shade of a southern palm.

I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that if the House Leader on the government side or indeed the Premier is in need of something to call, some order to call, let him call the Throne Speech Debate, for example, which has yet to hear any more than two speakers as I remember, two or three speakers. Indeed I adjourned the debate back in December and we have not heard hide-nor-tail of it since. So I submit, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of items of business that could be gotten on with.

I am glad to have the item on the public financing bill. Certainly that is one that we need to have whether it was only ready today or was kept until today to distribute.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No, it is only now ready.

MR. SIMMONS: Alright, so the Premier indicates to the House that he is only now ready. That is fair enough.

MR. SIMMONS: There are a number of items that we could deal with. The Cole contract, Mr. Speaker, is worth a fair debate in this House. I am sure it is to the Premier's credit that he tables the document. The tabling of it is to his credit; the fact that the document exists is not to his credit and I would hope that in time he will tell us his part in that document, and I hope the member from St. Mary's (Mr. W. Carter) will tell us his part in that particular document or if he saw the details of it for the first time today when I saw them for the first time. If he saw them for the first time today, I suggest he was shocked as I was. A lot of people out there, Mr. Speaker, would like to have that kind of a contract. That is assuming they would have the kind of conscience to accept it if it were given to them. Shameful, shameful! I say the tabling is to the Premier's credit; the fact that it exists is not particularly to his credit and before I pass judgement on that point I would want to hear from him what part he had in it and I can suggest to you that is a very good reason if he wants an item of business soon after Easter.

We are not suggesting we sit Good Friday or Easter Sunday but let us get back here next Monday or Tuesday and talk about the Throne Speech Debate, talk about the Cole contract, talk about some other things.

The budget, Mr. Speaker, we have heard the answers; we have heard the reasons; we have heard the excuses. When will this budget come down? Two weeks, three weeks, five weeks?

MR. R. SIMMONS:

I cannot seem to find out. I think it is unpardonable that the Government is prepared to go now, at least, until the end of April without a budget, a month beyond the fiscal year. It indicates to me, Mr. Speaker, that this Government took only seventeen days - this is the 17th day, I believe, this Administration under the present Premier has been in office, the 18th day since he was sworn in, the 17th day since his ministers were sworn in - in seventeen days, Mr. Speaker, this Administration has managed to come to a complete halt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, because the time is short - there is so much more we could say - in conclusion what the Premier has told us are the reasons for the long recess of the House are not reasons. They are excuses. They are good, articulate excuses.

MR. W. ROWE:

Honey-coated.

MR. R. SIMMONS:

Honey-coated excuses, but they are not reasons because, Mr. Speaker, there are many more reasons why this House ought to say open than why it ought to close.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier mentioned unemployment, the cost of living, inflation, and then he added, those things the Opposition think important. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we do think unemployment is important. The Premier may not think so. If you judge by the answers he gave during Question Period you would be convinced that he does not think so. We do.

Since last January the 8th, or 10th, or 7th, I think, we closed here one night in a fit of pique when the Premier of the day decided he could not carry on any longer, the Premier who is now scripted in as the albatross around the neck of the present Premier - that is part of the script over there, Mr. Speaker, he is going to be characterized as the albatross - well, the albatross Premier we shall call him for distinction because when we say, 'former Premier,' some people still think fondly of another day, so instead of saying former Premier for clarification we shall refer to him as the albatross Premier and

MR. R. SIMMONS: everybody will know who we are talking about - Well I am talking now about the albatross Premier - One night in July the albatross Premier, Mr. Speaker, in a fit of pique ran out of this place and adjourned until November or December or sometime. Do you know that since last July the 7th, eight months and a bit, we have been in this House less than a month. Less than a month in eight months and there is always a good 'reason'. Mr. Speaker, there is only one reason. This Government cannot stand to face the House. We hear the talk about the level of debate and dignity and so on and so forth, and that is worth a good discussion too. But these are all excuses as well. No one is arguing that an excuse has no substance. Of course it does. But the real reason, Mr. Speaker, the reason this House is not working is because this Administration is afraid to face the House. This Administration is afraid to sit in the House and they avoid it like the plague, and they have managed to do it very well, Mr. Speaker. I suppose it is almost unheard of in parliamentary history that a Government has been able to dodge the House for so long a period. And they have managed to do it, Mr. Speaker, for seven months out of eight. Seven months out of eight since the 7th or 10th of July whatever the date was last year when we rose here. Less than a month out of eight. That is a shame, Mr. Speaker, and I cannot be associated with it and my colleagues on this side of the House cannot be associated with it. There is a lot more we would like to say about it but the important thing we want to say right now is, we think this motion is a disgrace, we think the House should stay open with the exception of two or three days over the Easter weekend, we think we should get on with the business of the House and that is why we on this side are voting against the resolution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: (Cross) The hon. member for Trinity-Bay de Verde.

MR. F. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I will only take a short period of time in order to protest this particular motion. I was really, really shocked to hear, Sir, that the motion called for an adjournment of twenty days, particularly when you take into consideration the fact

MR. F. ROWE:

and it has been essentially shut down for reasons unknown over the last eight months. Sir, the Premier stands in his place and suggests that he is trying to make the House work and the method that he chooses to make the House work is to close her down for a further three weeks. And to add insult to injury, Sir, the Premier for some tactical, political reason is trying to portray himself as the nice guy, trying to make the House work, trying to consult with the Opposition on legislation with respect to the Election's Act and Matrimonial Law Act and this kind of a thing. Some nice, Sir, some co-operation! When we had a situation in this Province where a \$500 million fisheries programme was announced, did we have any debate on that in this House? It was rammed down the throats, Sir, of 100 representatives, supposedly representing the fishermen of this Province. A great fisheries programme announced not in this House, Sir, but instead over in the Holiday Inn with the political cameras rolling, canning video tape for future campaigns. Sir, what exactly is going on here?

Given three weeks homework to study matrimonial law, important as it is, to study the Election's Act as important as that is, but rammed a \$500 million fisheries programme down the throats of the people of this Province without one minute of debate by the representatives of the people of this Province. Absolutely disgraceful, Sir! I cannot understand it. Sir, if the hon. the Premier wants to portray himself as a nice guy in trying to make this House work and government work in this Province, he would be well advised to do something about the justice system in this Province. My friend from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) related to it in his speech. I am too close to the Leader of the Opposition to even speak to the subject in this House of Assembly because I have lived with him over the past couple of years and what he has had to go through, the vicious rumors, the set-ups, politically motivated in this Province. I have seen his family suffer and, in fact, I have seen my own family suffer as a result of it. And I have seen members of this caucus and their

MR. F. ROWE:

families suffer and their constituents worry, a premeditated, malicious smear campaign culminating in this so-called enquiry down there.

I would like to see that one of the first things debated in this House of Assembly, the Enquiry, whatever you call it, the Enquiries Act or whatever the official name is. Set up your political enemies, bring them down there, no rebuttal allowed, cannot cross-examine, no cross-examination process, just nail your witnesses, nail your political enemies. That is what is going on in this Province, Sir.

My hon. friend from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) mentioned there are two laws, one for the rich and one for the poor. Well, Sir, I have gone through three years where I have learned the hard way that there are three laws in this Province, one for the rich, one for the poor and one for your political enemies. And I sincerely hope that in this session we will see legislation brought in here where instead of having contracts handed out, as my friend from LaPoile suggested, you get your political enemies by setting up a Royal Commission or a Commission of Enquiry. Because I can warn my hon. friend across - we came up through the same profession, about the same age, presumably we have the same kind of ears when it comes to listening to the electorate in this Province - the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this Province know exactly what is going on in this Province, they know exactly what is going on leading right up to this Commission of Enquiry. I would say to the Premier that

MR. F. ROWE: the right and honourable thing for him to have done when he became Premier through a convention would have been to go to the people of this Province and seek a mandate instead of becoming Premier on the basis of a very small group of people. But now, Sir, he is boxed in. He does not know what to do. If there were a leadership convention called on this side he does not know what to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. F. ROWE: Well, I would welcome the election tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMONS: He knows what to do. He said on the radio he would not kick a fellow when he was down unless it was to his advantage.

MR. F. ROWE: Unless it was to his advantage - that was a remarkable insight into the obvious, Sir, which bares the character of the present Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. F. ROWE: The fact of the matter is, Sir, he is boxed in, he does not know what to do. Is there going to be a sympathy vote now if he calls it? 'Do I call it now and take my chances or after the convention?' He has not got a chance after the convention. So the fact of the matter is the Premier has reinstated and enlarged the same old sad faces. That was the first great shock the people of this Province received after his election, the nature of his Cabinet, and a continuation of the sad old things that were going on before.

Sir, I would recommend very strongly - I am going to vote against this particular amendment - that there is no rationale, no reason, no sense whatsoever in closing this House of Assembly down for three weeks for an Easter vacation for some

MR. F. ROWE:

hon. members opposite.

In the most critical period in this Province's history, record unemployment, industries having been closed down, still not being opened up let alone new industries started - at the most critical time in our Province, we have a situation where once again the Premier of this Province in claiming that he is going to make the House work sees fit to close her down. It is sad, Sir. The people of this Province were expecting a heck of a lot more from this so-called dynamic, energetic, reform, far-reaching Premier who was going to come in here with great, bold and new initiatives - a sad disappointment, Sir, and I cannot in all consciousness on behalf of my own constituents and the people of this Province who are concerned about the administration of a lot of things and mostly justice in this Province, I cannot in all honesty vote for this particular resolution and I will, in fact, vote very strongly against it.

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. Ottenheimer): The hon. member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, in the few words that I want to say, I want to say that a person would have to be pretty naive to accept the Premier's reasons for closing down the House for twenty days.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a fact that some major decisions will have to be made in the next twenty days and I want to address myself to a couple of them, decisions that should not be made until the questions that needed to be asked in this House were asked.

The Minister of Lands and Forests (Mr. Morgan) a week ago went on provincial TV

MR. FLIGHT: and said that we are now trying to decide whether or not there will be a spray programme in this Province. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a major concern in this Province today. We have the reports of the various committees set up to advise government. There seems to be a conflicting consensus there. The budworm itself seems to be on a natural decline. Some of the people in this Province, Mr. Speaker, indicate that maybe we should not have a spray programme, that it is not necessary. Other people, knowledgeable people indicate that we should. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that no way a decision should be made as to whether this Province is going to go into a spray programme without the questions being asked. And they cannot be asked if this House is closed down. I cannot conceive of this administration.

MR. FLIGHT: It will be the first of May before we get back here, Sir. We all know that if a spray programme is going to be effective in this Province it has to be carried out in the first week or week and a half of June. And is this administration admitting they will not make a decision on that spray programme until a month before the programme is going to take place?

MR. MORGAN: It will be made momentarily.

MR. FLIGHT: It will be made momentarily? That is why this Province is in the trouble it is in today, Mr. Speaker, because decisions are made momentarily, without any chance for anybody who might have some input to ask a question. The decision last year was made momentarily and now there are some experts asking whether or not it was the right decision in the first place.

And the minister, a few days ago, sloughed off his responsibility in telling the people whether or not - he said, "We are looking at all the possibilities." And since the minister piped in, Mr. Speaker, an obvious question to be asked about the spray programme; is that minister in favour of a spray programme in view of the fact that when a debate took place in this House as to whether or not we should go into a spray programme - the merits - he was the one member of the government who stood up and said that he was not prepared to go into a spray programme? Where does he stand now? Where does that minister stand after taking the position of almost getting himself flicked out of Cabinet for his stand on the spray programme? Now he is the minister who has to make the decision. Unless that minister is prepared to stand up, Mr. Speaker, and

MR. FLIGHT: say that that decision will not be made until after May 1st., so that this Opposition get the opportunity to ask the questions - it is very important to me and very important to a great many people in this Province. It is very important to the constituents of everybody here and we are not going to have any input in that unless that minister can tell the people of Newfoundland that that decision will not be made. That decision, whether we go into a spray programme this Summer, Mr. Speaker, should not be made until there is a possibility of having the pros and cons aired in this House, giving the members concerned a chance to analyse the various reports and to make their input. That is the kind of thing that is going to happen, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the House closing for twenty days.

There are other decisions. Newfoundland Hydro is looking at whether or not they will develop Cat Arm or the Upper Salmon, the feasibility right now. Those kinds of decisions should not be made until questions can be asked.

Mr. Speaker, this House approved three months Interim Supply, \$356 million. I see copies of letters all the time to various recreation commissions telling them that the grant they applied for could not be looked at or could not be granted until the budget was brought down. What is government doing with the \$356 million we gave them? It is three months supply. Under normal circumstances if the budget was down, the recreation commissions in this Province would have the money they had requested. This government is saying we cannot make a decision on

MR. FLIGHT: your application untill the budget comes down. What did we put \$356 million Interim Supply through this House for? Three months. There are a lot of people who believe that the Premier did it to buy enough time to make a decision as to whether or not he would go into an election. If he decided to go into an election he had three full month's money to play with.

I will be kinder.

I believe that he needed the three month's supply to do what had to be done, to pay the bills. Well, why is he allowing letters to go out to corporations and commissions saying that we cannot deal with your application until we get the budget?

This House, the first time, I suppose, in its history authorized three months, one-quarter of the money that will be spent in this Province this year, voted on it with a half day's debate and now we are going to close for twenty days. No, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to go on - there is no justification for this House closing for twenty days.

Mr. Speaker, there has been talk around this Province that the minute the leadership convention was over the various ministers who had offered themselves and had worked so hard would take a vacation, go down South, go to Florida or Nassau or the Bahamas and then on coming back the House would be called. But that could not happen, that was an area that could not be played out, Mr. Speaker, because that Premier could not take a chance on going to Florida the day after that convention, there would have been a palace revolt. He had to stay to make sure the troops were in place. He would have come back and found himself, Mr. Speaker - the

MR. FLIGHT: that we were sitting here today. And I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, it took the first two weeks after the leadership convention to put it together and it is very shaky right now.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is disgraceful. It is disgraceful! I can understand the ministers wanting the Easter break, I can understand them wanting to go to Florida, but it is disgraceful, with the kind of decisions that are going to have to be made over the next twenty days in this Province, that this House will close for twenty days.

The Cabinet and the Premier, Mr. Speaker, are ignoring the problems that are facing the people of this Province. They are just writing them off. We have been in this House one month in eight and, Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing here is a total disregard for the problems of the people of this Province and I will vote against the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until Monday, April 30, 1979 at 3:00 p.m. or to the call of the Chair.

I N D E X

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

TABLED

APRIL 10, 1979

2268

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April 10/79

QUESTION #27

Mr. Neary (LaPoile) - to ask the Honourable the Minister of Health to lay upon the Table of the House the following information:

Number of emergency airlifts by plane and helicopter from the Western Memorial Hospital at Corner Brook to St. John's for the calendar years 1974, 1975, 1977 and 1978 to date?

Reason for such airlifts:

- (a) complications following surgery at Corner Brook hospital;
- (b) accidents;
- (c) major surgery that can only be performed in St. John's?

ANSWER

Number of emergency airlifts arranged through the Western Memorial Hospital at Corner Brook by calendar years

1974	19
1975	22
1976	11
1977	20
1978	55

Question #27 (continued)

It is agreed that most reasons for such airlifts were

1. accidents
2. surgery that can best be performed in St. John's
3. complications following surgery

April 6, 1979

2270

2269

April 10/79

QUESTION #28

Mr. Neary (LaPoile) - to ask the Honourable Minister of Health to lay upon the Table of the House the following information:

Number of emergency airlifts by plane and helicopter from the Central Newfoundland Hospital at Grand Falls to St. John's for the calendar years 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1978 to date?

Reason for such airlifts:

- (a) complications following surgery at Grand Falls hospital;
- (b) accidents;
- (c) major surgery that can only be performed in St. John's?

ANSWER

Number of emergency airlifts arranged through the Central Newfoundland Hospital at Grand Falls by calendar years:

1974	5
1975	4
1976	11
1977	15
1978	18

It is agreed that most reasons for such airlifts were:

1. accidents
2. surgery that can best be performed in St. John's
3. complications following surgery

April 6, 1979

April 18/79

QUESTION #30

MR. NEARY (LaPoile) - TO ASK THE HONOURABLE THE MINISTER OF HEALTH TO LAY UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:-

HAS THE NEWFOUNDLAND CANCER SOCIETY REQUESTED ADDITIONAL FUNDING IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A REALISTIC RESEARCH PROGRAM IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR?

IF SO, GIVE DETAILS AND ACTION TAKEN ON SUCH REQUEST.

ANSWER

NO.

WHILE THE NEWFOUNDLAND CANCER SOCIETY HAS NOT REQUESTED ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM GOVERNMENT, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL PROJECTS BEING CONDUCTED IN THE PROVINCE RELATING TO CANCER RESEARCH. IN GENERAL, CANCER RESEARCH IS ESSENTIALLY A NATIONAL AND/OR INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKING WITH NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL FUNDING BODIES, SUCH AS THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE, THE MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, AND/OR SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATIONS PROVIDING ASSESSMENT AND FUNDING.

April 11/79

QUESTION #31

Mr. Neary (LaPoile) - To ask the Honourable the Minister of Health to lay upon the Table of The House the following information:

Total cost of providing eyeglasses to

- (a) Children under 16 years of age
- (b) Individuals over 16 years of age
- (c) What is the procedure and under what circumstances is a judgement made as to whether an individual should receive free glasses.

ANSWER

The question is answered making the following assumptions.

- 1. It is assumed the question is directed toward eyeglasses provided by Government.
 - 2. It is assumed that the cost is related to cost in the current fiscal year.
- (a) We do not have statistical information by age groups.
The cost of supplying eyeglasses to needy children attending school or under school age will be approximately \$180,000 for 1978/79.
 - (b) The cost of supplying eyeglasses to needy adults will be approximately \$75,000 for 1978-79.
 - (c) The family physician or public health nurse will first recommend further eye examination if required. The field worker for the Department of Social Services will conduct an assessment and

Question #31 (continued)

provide the Department of Health with certification of inability to pay. An order is then issued to supply the prescribed eyeglasses.

The supply of eyeglasses to needy adults is for reasons other than just inability to pay. Some examples are:-

- (a) needy mothers of school age and preschool children;
- (b) bedridden mothers who have a requirement for eyeglasses in order for them to be able to read, knit, watch T.V., or whatever; and
- (c) needy persons who are taking vocational, upgrading, or trades courses.

April 6, 1979

2274

2273

April 10/79

QUESTION #37

Mr. Neary (LaPoile) - to ask the Honourable the Minister of Health to lay upon the Table of the House the following information:

- (a) How many Public Health Inspectors were recruited outside the province in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1978 to date?
- (b) In what provinces or countries were these Health Inspectors recruited?

ANSWER

(a) 1974	0
1975	0
1976	1
1977	6
1978	<u>0</u>
	<u>7</u>
(b) Ontario	4
Nova Scotia	1
Prince Edward Island	1
New Brunswick	<u>1</u>
	<u>7</u>

April 9, 1979