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The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

Before calling for Statements by Ministers, I would like to rule on the point of order raised yesterday by the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) during the debate on Bill 51, "An Act To Amend The Public Utilities Act."

I refer the hon. member to our Standing Order No. 81, "No member is entitled to vote upon any question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest."

As I understand the procedure in this House, this does not prohibit a member from speaking in a debate, as long as the member declares his interest. There is no point of order.

Statements by Ministers

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, November is Seafood Month in Canada, and as it draws to a close, I would like to bring to your attention, and indeed to the attention of all Newfoundlanders, the fact that fish is becoming widely known as an excellent health food.

Recently, medical journals have begun to expound on the positive contributions of seafood to a

healthy eating programme. The high quality protein and the numerous vitamins and minerals contained in fish can only enhance the image of seafood in the minds of consumers. Its benefits to those on low calorie or low cholesterol diets have been proven by doctors worldwide. It goes without saying then that seafood is the smart food to include in your weekly diet. Mr. Speaker, one of the important purposes of Seafood Month is to make consumers aware of these facts. The hon. gentlemen should have some to eat, Mr. Speaker.

The old tales about fish being good brain food, and about cod liver oil being a cure-all, are actually true in many respects. The New England Journal Of Medicine recently reported on several studies which would seem to support these beliefs. It noted that fish oils lower levels of cholesterol which are the blood fats associated with heart disease. They also help prevent blood clots, a major cause of heart attacks. Seafood is also rich in vitamins that are vital for your eyes, skin, teeth and bones.

Mr. Speaker, seafood can truly be called the miracle food of the future. Food scientists and medical researchers are excited about recent findings, and no doubt continuing studies will only serve to further our knowledge about fish and its relationship to good health.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
From a fisheries marketing perspective, this should mean a higher consumption rate of fish

per capita within our major market areas.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the per capita consumption in some of these markets areas is already high. For example, in Taiwan each person consumes an average of 99 pounds of fish a year. In South Korea, it is 104 pounds a year, and in Japan it is 148 pounds a year - ten times, Mr. Speaker, what we consume here in Canada, where the average consumption is only 15 pounds a year per person.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame! Shame!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Our biggest market for fish is the United States. Indications are that despite stiff competition from cheaper products; per capita consumption of fish is on the increase. The present consumption rate in the U.S., Mr. Speaker, is 13 pounds per capita for a total of 1,500,000 tons. Increasing that rate - and the hon. gentleman should listen to this, Mr. Speaker - by just one pound per year would mean that the United States would require an additional 111,600 tons of fish every year.

MR. SIMMONS:

Send it to them on consignment.

MR. RIDEOUT:

No, Mr. Speaker, we want them to pay for it. With a growing market, an important part of market development strategies is the generic advertising of fish.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Right on!

MR. RIDEOUT:

An example of this, 1984 saw the revitalization of the North Atlantic Seafood Association. Members, including Canada, are those countries who are major fish exporters of fish to the U.S. market. The purpose of this organization, Mr. Speaker, is simply to sell more North Atlantic Fish by increasing awareness of and interest in fish, especially North American fish. It is also satisfying to see that this organization is vigorously pursuing the health theme as it relates to fish from a generic perspective.

Mr. Speaker, another very important positive aspect relating to the advertising of our products is the increasing presence of our processing and marketing companies at major U.S. and European trade shows. During my recent visit to the world's largest food show in Cologne, West Germany, I was impressed with the Canadian booth and particularly the F.P.I. display. I also understand that our displays at U.S. shows are second to none, and I can report that support afforded by programmes both within the department, and the Department of Development and Tourism, greatly assist to bring about this degree of excellence.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I can say that consumer attitudes towards fish are becoming very positive, and given the laws of supply and demand, no doubt a seller's market will continue to exist. However, we have to be prepared to meet the strong competition which exists within our markets today, and this is only possible through an awareness at all levels of government and industry that consistent, top

quality products are the key to continued success. We must continue to develop an image of excellence, both at home and abroad. As Minister of Fisheries, I will continue to ensure that programmes within my department are tailored towards those goals.

Mr. Speaker, fish can be promoted to a health and nutrition conscious public as a very desirable alternative to other food products. However, given the relatively low per capita consumption of fish not only in Canada, but in Newfoundland and Labrador as well, it is obvious that we must begin here at home. We must lead by example, because although much has been done, much remains to be done. That, Mr. Speaker, is not just my responsibility, it is the responsibility of each and every one of us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear! Hear!

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker, this is of course, action on the part of the government. I am not sure that it is the kind of action that is required by the Minister of Fisheries today, although I suppose he is perhaps required to do this. What he is dealing with is our efforts to sell fish to, not only Canadians, but the United States and other countries as well.

If you look through these two or three pages, what the minister says here about his own actions is

that he has taken no action. Really there is something happening here that he is reporting on so I wonder if the Premier might perhaps give him a C+ on this paper that he has put together. He says, "November is seafood month in Canada", I would suggest to him that his effort should be to make an attempt to make every month, particularly in Canada, seafood month because as he states in his own release and for example, the consumption of the Japanese is ten times what it is in Canada per capita.

It is amazing that in Canada our own Minister of Fisheries and our own Federal Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Tom Siddon) cannot increase the market consumption of fish to the point where perhaps most of our market problems will be taken care of.

MR. SIMMONS:
They tried it with tuna.

MR. TULK:
They tried it with tuna and that action was tainted. It is the consumption of fish by Canadians that is the key to our marketing problems and while we welcome the bit of news that the minister has given us, that at least one month in Canada is seafood month, I would say to him that his efforts should be towards increasing the consumption of fish by Canadians.

I want to point out to him also that he talks about the generic advertising of fish and I wonder what the Provincial Minister of Fisheries has done to get back in place a programme that the P.C. government in Ottawa, last fall, cut \$5 million out of. That was the programme put in place by the Liberal Party in this country to advertise fish and indeed to try

to sell fish in Canada and other countries. What has he done?

He would be much better off today, to come into this House and tell us what it is that he has done to get his Federal counterparts to take the same kind of interest in fish he himself says he has. I doubt that we will see him do anything. I think we will see the same kind of actions and the same kind of nonsense that we saw with the FFTs coming out of the Premier. We will see them lie low, wait until the decision is taken, and when they know it is going to be taken then carry on some charade in front of the Newfoundland public. Because, Mr. Speaker, this paper that the minister has given us today is indeed a confession again of his own failure to be able to do anything with the selling of fish.

The minister goes on to point out that there are programmes within his own department and any programmes that are in his department will be supported. They may very well be supported on paper but this government, it should be noted, last year I think, put in something like \$21 million into the Department of Fisheries, our biggest resource and one of our smallest allocations in the budget. While the minister may indeed stand up here and tell us that the per capita consumption of fish in Canada is low and while he may tell us that it is good brain food - and on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that if it is the House should vote 300 pounds or 400 pounds for every member opposite - but while he may stand up and tell us all those things, tell us that our old folks tales are true, what is required on the part of the minister in this

Province is some action here at his own level and with the PC Government in Ottawa to see that certain things are done, to see that fish is indeed bought and eaten by Canadians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, as Provincial Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications, I wish to express my support and concurrence with the initiatives recently announced by my federal counterpart, the hon. Michael Cote, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, designed to reform the Tax Rebate Discounting Act.

The Tax Rebate Discounting Act was enacted in 1978 in response to growing consumer demand to control the enormous unregulated charges being paid discounters, in some cases up to 50 per cent of the value of the income tax refund. The act, amongst other things, limited the amount of a discounter could charge the customer to a maximum of 15 per cent of the anticipated tax rebate.

The most recent initiative of the federal minister will refine to a greater extent the tax rebate discounting industry and will comprehensively address the various problems inherent with the present practices. The new initiatives will further correct serious shortcomings whose impact has been felt primarily by those in the low income categories,

while still allowing the continuation of tax rebate discounting services for those who wish to use them.

Included in the new initiatives are the following five major reform:

(1) The federal government intends periodic payment of the child tax credit, thus eliminating the need and opportunity to discount it. Technical issues are under review by the Ministers of Finance, Revenue and Health and Welfare and it is expected that a system can be proposed by early 1986.

(2) Maximum allowable rates charged for discounters will be reduced to 5 per cent on any amount over \$300. The rate will remain at 15 per cent for the first \$300 of a tax refund which will take into account the preparation cost of a tax return.

(3) Simplified procedures will make it easier for financial institutions to advance loans at normal rates on the strength of anticipated income tax refunds.

(4) Information on the true costs of discounting, alternatives to discounting, the speed of tax return processing and the availability of free tax preparation assistance will be provided to the taxpayers.

(5) Procedures for administering the Tax Rebate Discounting Act will be improved. Limitations on prosecutions under the Act will be extended from six months to two years, thus making it easier to detect and prosecute violators.

This new policy will reduce the negative effects of discounting on

the consumer by reducing the cost significantly, while still maintaining the right of choice of the consumer to use the tax rebate discounting avenue.

These proposed changes in the current Tax Rebate Discounting Act, coupled with the periodic payment of the child tax credit to ensure that benefits reach those for whom they are intended in a more timely way, are most welcome and are a direct result of a number of federal/provincial consultations on the subject.

As provincial Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications I am fully supportive of Mr. Cote's initiatives and I am confident that various other consumer orientated reforms will be implemented.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Russell) for giving me a copy of his statement in advance so I could read it over. Certainly the low income people of this Province have been grossly neglected in the high taxes they have been charged with high electricity costs and high costs for housing. Their incomes have stayed the same and it is about time that someone in this Province and in the federal government started taking the consumer into consideration.

One thing I would like to ask in relation to this is while we have reduced the percentage that they are going to be charged on their tax rebate, I wonder if the government itself, especially social services, going to clean up its act because in one particular case last year it was noted that they had to sign over their rebate to pay for their electricity bill. That is the part there that we can certainly take into consideration and look at while we are cleaning up the part that they will be charged only 15 per cent.

In dealing with that I would certainly go along with the minister and give him my support also in the way that the child tax credit is going to be paid because this will certainly help the people who are in the desperate situation of having no money in their houses to help children go to school, so instead of it being paid once a year, it is certainly going to be an advantage to the consumer and the people who are on a low income.

But as far as the tax rebate goes, the way things are going in this Province now, if some jobs are not provided for the people and most of the people do not get out to work we are not going to have to worry about a tax rebate because there is going to be no income tax paid anyway.

So I would certainly hope that this will not stop here, that in many other aspects, and with the consumer certainly being neglected, there will be a trend set and from now on the government will take into consideration the low income people and the pensioners of this Province and give them a lot more consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Premier. I would like to ask the Premier would he agree that free trade with the United States will mean less government intervention into the economy, less capability for the Government of Canada to influence the Canadian economy, and must less capability for provincial governments to exercise influence over the provincial economy?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the absolute concept or the ideal concept of free trade that the Leader of the Opposition is now talking about obviously would have certain impacts upon the Canadian economy and upon the provincial economy if it were an absolute, total free trade situation. I think what a number of provinces and the federal government are talking about is to enter into negotiations with the Americans to have more free trade than we now have but, in so doing, to also be able to negotiate certain areas where adjustments might be needed on both sides of

the border, not just on the Canadian side of the border.

So one can construct all kinds of scenarios based upon the ideal situation of complete and unfettered free trade. I think what most of the people who are supporting the concept of free trade are saying, and I am one of those, is that it would be in Canada's best interests over the longer term to move towards a freer trade situation. As Canada gets into negotiations, we have been assured that the provinces - and there is a framework now in place - will be consulted on an orderly and timely basis and have input, that there are going to be various provisions in that freer trade agreement which will protect and provide adjustment periods for areas of the Canadian economy where in the short term there might be some negatives.

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BARRY:
I wonder would the Premier indicate how arrangements that will result in less control over the economy are consistent with the Premier's expressed desire for more federal input through regional development programmes and greater provincial influence over certain industries, such as the fishing industry? Does not the Premier see a danger in our losing regional development programmes, not to mention social welfare programmes such as unemployment insurance? Equalization has been mentioned as something that could be at risk, Mr. Speaker, that is being regarded as a subsidy by the

U.S. Government. Does not the Premier see any dangers in these areas?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
The Leader of the Opposition is talking about the constitution now. Equalization is in the constitution. It is extremely unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition would take such an irresponsible attitude towards something that most commentators in the field of economics see as a very positive move, to throw up all these bogeymen now that somehow indicate that this whole question of freer trade with the United States is bad for Canada. Freer trade with the United States is good for Canada. It has been proven over and over again by innumerable studies done by several universities as well as other research institutes. The whole question of regional economic development does not impinge upon having a freer trade relationship with the United States. And, of course, a lot of these issues will be negotiated at the table with the United States, and it is the intent of the federal government and those provinces that support the concept of freer trade to ensure that the comprehensive package that is finally negotiated will be one where we are protected in certain areas and where the United States economy is protected in certain areas, and so on. But it has been proven, and the Leader of the Opposition knows this, but he wants to try to resurrect certain bogeymen, which is supposed to frighten everybody away from a long-term economic, beneficial situation for Canada. It has happened in many parts of the

world, not the least of which is the E.E.C.

And now, I suppose, the Leader of the Opposition will bring up the whole question of sovereignty and culture and so on. My answer to those kinds of arguments that have been presented from time to time is there is a free trade arrangement that has made Ontario very well off, the Auto Pact, and I do not see that Ontario is any less Canadian today than it was before the Auto Pact came in, nor do I see that England is any less English today than before it entered the European Economic Community.

But, in any case, to refer back specifically to the Leader of the Opposition's question, the question of equalization, you have in the United States a federal government which provides various assistances to states in the United States, as well as the cities, which will not be impeded by a freer trade arrangement. I think the Leader of the Opposition is unnecessarily creating a whole bunch of bogeymen in people's minds. If people are going to advocate such policies through questions like the Leader of the Opposition is posing, he is asking for more unemployment in Canada over the longer term.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

I would like to ask the Premier, since the Minister of Finance (Dr.

Collins) would not do it, to table the studies which are giving him the assurances to get up and make these great sweeping statements that he is making today. Would the Premier indicate whether he has read studies such as the studies referred to by the Institute for Research on Public Policy -

MR. TOBIN:

Did Patrick O'Flaherty give you that?

MR. PATTERSON:

Yes, at breakfast at Holiday Inn.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

- such as the study prepared by Professor Lesser and presented to the Senate Commons Committee, where Professor Lesser took the view that the net benefit of free trade would not be large and the Atlantic Provinces might be relatively worse off? He took into consideration the impact with respect to increased sales for fish, pulp and paper and so forth, and he concluded, Mr. Speaker, that the net benefit for the Atlantic Provinces is that we might be worse off, as did other professors and other experts presenting reports. Where are the studies the Premier is relying on? Has he read these?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I think the Leader of the Opposition is referring to a newsletter as opposed to a study. He is quoting from a

newsletter.

MR. BARRY:

No, I am referring to the study by the Institute for Research on Public Policy.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

He is quoting from a newsletter, Mr. Speaker, that Patrick O'Flaherty gave him this morning at breakfast, I think.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

If one wants to refer to studies, Mr. Speaker, the most comprehensive study, I guess, that was done, was done by the Macdonald Royal Commission.

Let us talk about the Macdonald Royal Commission, chaired by a former Liberal Minister of Finance and Minister of Energy, which did a very exhaustive study. And Queen's University did one as well.

MR. BARRY:

Are you going to table them?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Just a second now. Let me finish. I did not interrupt the Leader of the Opposition when he asked the question, and I would expect the same courtesy from him.

There was a study done by a number of economists at Queen's University, also, which was very favourably disposed to all of Canada, including the Atlantic Provinces. And the Macdonald Royal Commission, if you look at the research work not just the Commission's Report - I do not know if the Leader of the Opposition has read the Commission's report, I have - some of the background material leading

up to their conclusions on freer trade with the United States, there is absolutely no question it is only those people of narrow-mind, of very limited vision who would look upon what is happening in North America and the world today and come out and say that we should not at least start negotiating with the Americans and with other parts of the world. In the interdependent world that we find ourselves in as it relates to technology and communication, one would have to put one's head in the sand like an ostrich if one were not going to respectably consider that concept of freer trade with the United States. It would be good for our mineral industry, it would be good for our fishing industry, it would be good for our forest industry, and it would be net positive to Newfoundland.

The studies we have done internally have shown that, and I would refer the hon. member to both the Macdonald Royal Commission and a study done by a number of Economics professors at Queen's University.

MR. BARRY:

Those are the only ones you have?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No, those are two that I remember off the top of my head.

MR. BARRY:

Table them. Table them.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No problem! Do you want me to table the Macdonald Royal Commission Report?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Go to the library!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

You have done nothing.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications. I just learned that the government has accepted the recommendation of the Public Utilities Board that the fuel adjustment charge be dropped. 'Be dropped', this is how it reads, and then it goes on to say 'that it will be rolled into the basic rate'. My question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications (Mr. Russell) is, what objective does the government hope to gain by doing this? Surely, they have no intention of misleading the people of this Province.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure this government has no intention of misleading consumers. That decision has just been made, relatively speaking, by Public Utilities Board and I have not have a chance to take a look at it. I will take a look at it and advise the hon. member accordingly.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I just informed the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications that the fuel adjustment charge is going to be dropping, at the same time they go on in the sentence to say that it is going to be rolled into the basic rates. Surely goodness the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications must be aware of that. On the second hand, there is a new increase applied for of 8.6 per cent, money which the low income people of this Province cannot afford.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member is on a supplementary.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I will get to the supplementary if those people over there will be quiet. Eight point six per cent has been applied for. Seeing as how P.E.I. got a twenty-five per cent decrease, what has the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications done to lobby against this increase?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, if I had to stand here without having a chance to look at the whole ruling the Public Utilities Board has made in its proper context then I would rather believe them. Maybe the hon. member is taking it out of

context.

MR. EFFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. EFFORD:

Surely goodness the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications must know something about what is going on with electricity rates! Seeing as how over the first six months of this year its common share holder's were paid out over \$11 million by Newfoundland Light and Power, would that not suggest that the minister should lobby for a freeze to put on rather than an increase in electricity rates this year?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland Light and Power Company is, of course, a private enterprise and it is not for this government to tell them what they should or should not do with their profits.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, my question was intended for the Minister of Public Works and Services (Mr. Young), and it concerned an answer filed yesterday by him, in reply to a question from the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) concerning the cost of renovations to the Premier's office on the eighth

floor. I shall now direct my question to the Premier. In the reply, Mr. Speaker, there is no mention of interior decorators, yet in a newspaper article that appeared in The Globe and Mail, the Premier's Chief of Staff has been quoted as saying that a certain Susan Campbell was employed as a decorator. I wonder if the Premier can confirm if in fact there was an interior decorator hired? If so, how much did it cost and on what basis was the selection made to hire?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I will get that information for the hon. member. As a matter of fact, may I also add for the benefit of the hon. member, it will not only be the eighth floor. We have spent about \$10 million or \$15 million over the last couple of years on new life safety equipment for this building and will be continuing it over the next two or three years. But in reference to the hon. member's question, I will get the information he requested.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind that the total cost of the Premier's new office will be close to \$800,000, since the cost of the actual renovations on the eighth floor was \$427,000, and last year there was an answer tabled whereby an additional \$279,000 was spent in renovating and upgrading the eleventh floor, the press room which is now being used by the Cabinet, since the Cabinet room was moved from the eighth floor to

the eleventh floor, the question, Mr. Speaker, is this-

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Would the hon. member pose his supplementary?

MR. W. CARTER:

The question is, Mr. Speaker, how does the Premier rationalize an expenditure of close to \$800,000 altogether when we have had to cut back on hospital beds, while we have about 17,000 young people unemployed, while we have about 45,000 others unemployed, cutbacks in education, wage freezes and everything else? How does he justify spending all of that money on an office?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, since I became Premier of the Province there has been an increase in health costs, we have increased the Health budget by well over 100 per cent, the Education budget by close to 80 per cent, and the Social Services budget by 15.4 per cent.

MR. FLIGHT:

Yes, and unemployment.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

We have not reduced our commitment in Education, Health, and Social Services in that length of time. Every year and even before I was Premier, there were renovations done on all the windows in this building to save heat, costing millions of dollars, and on life safety. The eighth floor, one of

the floors in this building, was below our own fire so we were breaking our own rules, and we still are, on some floors in this building. And over time, we started about six or seven years ago, we have spent \$10 million or \$15 million so far to cut back on heating costs and make the fuel bill less. We also have had to improve to meet our own life safety standards. Up until a month or two ago the fire regulations in place in the Province were being violated by the government itself. There are still a number of areas in Confederation Building which, over the next couple of years, will cost a number of millions of dollars which we are going to spend to ensure that this building meets the standards that the government has placed on it.

MR. FLIGHT:

We have the most expensive premier in Canada.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. W. CARTER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. W. CARTER:

I only hope that the Premier and the government will show the same consideration for the health and safety of thousands of Newfoundlanders who are living in homes that are far substandard.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Well, we are trying to do that as well.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Premier. Again I quote the

newspaper article, quoting his Chief of Staff, when he says, 'Can you imagine ambassadors or the President of Mobil Oil coming into the old offices? What they saw physically gave no indication that they would have to deal with a sophisticated individual.' Mr. Speaker, then he goes on to talk about the various waiting rooms.

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. member pose his question.

MR. W. CARTER:

My question now, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, the waiting rooms, the interior waiting rooms-

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question! Question!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I am leading up to my question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, the waiting rooms referred to in this article, quoting his Chief of Staff, are described as 'inner', 'outer', 'inner VIP'. Will any Newfoundlander who wants to see firsthand the Premier's sophistication be allowed into the inner VIP suite?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

That is insulting, Mr. Speaker, and I do not intend to answer it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to either the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) or the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer). It has to do with the question of Northern benefits and the taxation on Northern benefits, so I am open to whichever individual wishes to answer it. As I think the government knows, a lot of individuals, several thousand individuals in my district and individuals in the district of Naskaupi and districts on the Coast of Labrador, all receive Northern benefits which have not been taxable before. The federal Liberal government several years ago brought in changes to the taxation system to tax these. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to our government. As everyone knows, the remission order put in place several years ago is fast running out. My question, to whoever wishes to answer it, is what is the policy of our provincial government with regard to Northern benefits and the taxation thereof?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, our policy is to favour the continuation of the remission order unless the federal government put in place something equally good or even better.

MR. FENWICK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

I was hoping that would be the answer. My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is could the minister then outline what actions have been taken on the part of the provincial government to influence this present administration, which the government admits it has a special relationship with, in order to either extend that remission order or to get those changes cancelled entirely?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, we have encouraged the federal government to take action of the nature I have just described.

MR. FENWICK:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. FENWICK:

I was asking for more detail and what I would like is more detail. Mr. Speaker, can I ask the minister if he would be willing to table copies of letters sent to the federal government and other submissions that have been made on behalf of Northern people to affect this non-change that we are talking about?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the fiscal position of the Province, I have some concern about the strength of the Table in the

centre of the Assembly here. If we have to table everything that is being asked these days we will have to expend a great deal of money strengthening that Table. I will look into the communications that pass between ourselves and the federal government and take whatever action seems appropriate.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

We would have to renovate the ninth floor to bear the weight.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, I have a case which has been reported in the Newfoundland and PEI law reports which indicates that the law firm of the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) has appeared in an action involving an exemption from retail sales tax against the Crown. I wonder if the Premier would indicate whether he considers it appropriate for a Minister of the Crown to be involved with a law firm which is acting against the Crown?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the ministers on this side, when we are giving statements, usually make sure that the members opposite have an opportunity to read it, and when we do not they complain. Now I find that the Leader of the Opposition while he was on his feet, had the page deliver to me three or four pages here which I am supposed to look through and then give an intelligent answer

about a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest involving the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall). Obviously I cannot answer the question until I read through this material here to see exactly what it is the Leader of the Opposition is talking about. So I will read through the material and get back to the Leader of the Opposition and hope that this is a potential conflict of interest unlike the hon. Leader of the Opposition's which was an actual conflict of interest a number of years ago when he wrote letters to The Ocean Ranger people.

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BARRY:
The Premier should know by now that he is going to have to answer these questions rather than attacking the credibility of the people who are putting questions to government. The Premier is going to have to answer questions rather than try to undermine credibility of those asking the questions.

Now, perhaps we could forget, Mr. Speaker, the facts of this case. I know the Premier will get back to us on that just like he got back on the other things that he promised and we never heard anything about.

I would like to ask will the Premier indicate whether he believes that a Minister of the Crown should be involved with a law firm and have that law firm act against the Crown? Does the Premier believe that it is

appropriate and proper for a law firm of which a government minister is a senior partner to act against the Crown?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I am not going to answer that question. I am going to deal with the facts that the Leader of the Opposition has presented to me and then I will reply to the question dealing with the facts here. As I have indicated in this House on many, many occasions over the last number of weeks, in every example that has been brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition there has been no actual conflict of interest occurred because the minister, in any case where there was an opportunity he could influence government decisions, has absented himself from being involved in those decisions. Until I have a chance to review this I cannot answer the question.

MR. CALLAN:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. CALLAN:
I table a copy of a court case showing that the Government House Leader's law firm acted against the Crown in a child custody case. I would like to ask would the Premier consider this to be proper, for the Government House Leader's law firm to be involved?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Well, I do not even have the material yet. I know of one child

custody case that was brought up here in the House where the court had asked for somebody from the hon. member's law firm to act and it had nothing to do with the member at all. So I want to see the facts rather than talk about general allegations, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KELLAND:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies. It is a follow-up question from earlier times. A few days ago the minister told the House that there would be no net job loss for vocational educators caused by the reorganization of the vocational education system. This week, Monday I believe, a CBC report said that there would be eighty plus vocational educators layed off. I wonder if maybe the minister would account for or explain that apparent conflicting statement?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies.

MR. POWER:
Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to explain it again. We are reorganizing the vocational school system in this Province and we are doing that so that our young students can get full benefit of the best educational system that is available to any student in the world. It is a reorganization, a redirection badly in need of being done. Many of the courses and many of the programmes we have are not up to date and much of the equipment we have is out of date.

This government is going to commit a very substantial number of dollars, many, many millions of dollars over the next three or four years to revitalize and reorganize the vocational school system. In order to do that, one area that is quite obvious to everyone concerned, including the instructors involved, is that somewhere along the way you have to drop some courses that are presently in place in order to make room for new courses that are more in demand and that relate more to what is happening in the marketplace. We have identified in our White Paper process, which is basically an idea of where government might like to go, eight-seven or so positions that could become redundant and that could be dropped over the next three years. To this date no persons have been laid off except, I think nine instructors laid off because class enrollment was so small it did not warrant having a full-time instructor. So we have not laid off anyone yet. Over a three year period, if the revitalized, reorganized, vocational school system comes into place, after we have analysed all of the responses to the White Paper in the next two months or so, and we make some decisions in January or February, it is quite possible that as many as eighty-seven identified positions could be lost. Some of those persons will be retrained so that they can come in and teach new courses. The end result, after a three year period, is that there will not be a net loss of instructional personnel. What we will have, Mr. Speaker, at the end of a three year period, very likely is an increase in the amount of instructional personnel we have in our vocational school system, albeit they may not be

exactly the same persons or faces there today.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. speaker.

I would like to ask the hon. the Premier if he considers it proper that the Government House Leader's law firm act against a company that the government itself is a major participant in, namely Atlantic Loto Corporation?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I would like to ask the hon. gentleman to present me with the facts of the matter and I will investigate it. I find it rather ironic that the members of the Opposition would start accusing or alleging certain improprieties on this side of the House when their own leader over there has performed many times over the last number of years in actual conflicts of interest. I also find it ironic that members of the Opposition would suddenly try to criticize other renovations in this building when the Select Committee report asked for \$3 million for their offices.

MR. BARRY:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, not even the Premier has gotten up in this House before and made allegations of actual conflict of interest with regard to me, and I would ask the Premier

to either put up or shut up. Would he remember this? We are not going to be frightened away from asking legitimate question of you and your ministers. We are not going to be frightened away and you are going to have to answer those questions regardless.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I do not care if the Leader of the Opposition is afraid or not afraid. He asked me to put up or shut up. As soon as Question Period is over, Mr. Speaker, and we come to another heading on the Order Paper, I will be putting up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To that point of order, there is no point of order. It is a difference of opinion between two hon. gentlemen.

MR. BAKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will table the document the Premier refers to. I will send him a copy. The reason I did not send him a copy was it seems to be no good to send him copies because we

never get anything back from him anyway.

I would like to ask the Premier if he would check to find out if the minister acted in any of these cases himself and if in fact he acted in any of these cases while he was Acting Attorney General.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I will investigate it completely. I have to say to the hon. member and to preamble to his question, in every case when anything has been brought up in this House I have investigated it and reported back. And in every single example where an allegation has been made it has been checked out, and in every single case there has been no conflict of interest of the member for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall). He has not involved himself in any government decisions whereby conflict of interest actually occurred, I tell the hon. gentleman.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Will the Premier then indicate, if he is so open and if he is so honest, how many times the Government House Leader has absented himself from discussions by letter afterwards, after the fact, to him? Will he indicate how many times that has happened and will he table the letters?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Many times, Mr. Speaker, and I will tell the hon. member about other letters later on.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

I have a question for the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands. I wonder is the minister aware that there is an export market available now for about 10,000 cords of wood which we are not taking advantage of because the timber lands in question are held by Abitibi-Price and they have no plans to harvest them?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder is the hon. member aware that last week the minister signed a permit for an additional 2,500 cords for those same individual contractors so that they can employ people and sell the product from that area in order to carry on employment, which is what I am sure he is getting at?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

Notices of Motion

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow introduce the following resolution:

WHEREAS the attached letter I have here is a copy of a letter from the member for Mount Scio (Mr. Barry) to a relative of an Ocean Ranger disaster victim; and

WHEREAS this letter in addition to expressing sympathy makes certain statements on liability and compensation; and

WHEREAS the letter invites the recipient to contact the member for Mount Scio; and

WHEREAS the letterhead of the letter in question reads House of Assembly; and

WHEREAS the telephone number given on the letter is that of the member for Mount Scio's law office; and

WHEREAS the foregoing constitutes a clear instance of the hon. member using his position as a member of this House for personal gain; and

WHEREAS the foregoing reflects a serious abuse by the member for Mount Scio in the discharge of his duties as a member of this House of Assembly; and

WHEREAS the April, 1984 edition of the The Canadian Lawyer attributes legal fees of \$750,000 to the member for Mount Scio's law firm as a result of his acting for the families of the Ocean Ranger victims;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this

hon. House go on record as condemning the member for Mount Scio for his inappropriate conduct as a member of this House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, on a matter of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! A point of privilege, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

We will have to search the Hansard and we will have to search the record of this Legislature, but I think that we have seen the Premier of this Province sink to an all time low.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. TOBIN:

You can give it but you cannot take it.

MR. BARRY:

I can take it and I can give it, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, here is the scenario. This is a letter which I, at the request of the press, delivered and which has been public knowledge, has been reported on by the news media after it was leaked by the Premier and his friends during an election campaign. It was delivered to the media at the media's request, Mr. Speaker. It was carried in news stories from Bonavista to Vancouver Island. It was carried

on CBC Sunday morning, Mr. Speaker, it was carried in just about every national newspaper. It was carried, as the Premier indicated, in the Canadian Lawyer.

MR. J. CARTER:

Is this a point of privilege?

MR. BARRY:

This is a matter of some concern, it is a matter of privilege, and I ask the Speaker to give me the opportunity to deal with it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Yes, that it so, but it is to establish a prima facie case. If that is done, it can then be debated. The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

That is exactly what we are talking about here. We are talking about a Premier who has a letter, who has information about a letter which has been public knowledge. The letter has been delivered to the media of this Province and has been available, Mr. Speaker, from the news media of this Province. The Premier did not ask me for a copy of the letter. He could have had it. A moment after he asked for it, the letter was available. Mr. Speaker, we now have an attempt to frighten and muzzle the Opposition of this Province, and to impair the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition from performing a public function, a public duty, which is to ask questions concerning the manner in which the Premier and his Ministers are carrying on the affairs of this government.

Let us understand how this process works, Mr. Speaker. There are thirty-six members on that side of

the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I think the hon. the Leader of the Opposition is making a very long speech. If privilege is involved, it can be debated by both sides. At this stage, I think the hon. the Leader of the Opposition is making a rather long speech.

MR. TULK:

He stated it already. He is giving you the facts. What are you doing?

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) stood up here a few days ago and made a forty minute statement.

MR. TULK:

That is right.

MR. BARRY:

A forty minute statement! I have been on my feet here five minutes, Mr. Speaker, on a matter that attacks my character, that attacks my reputation, and which is a low-

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

There has got to be fairness in this House, Mr. Speaker. There has got to be fairness!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I can assure the hon. the Leader of the Opposition that there is fairness and there always will be fairness. I would also say to the Leader of the Opposition that I do

not want to be shouted at in this House. You can speak to me-

MR. BARRY:

If the members opposite would be quiet, I would not have to shout. If Your Honour kept members opposite quiet, I would not have to shout.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

We are talking about a serious matter and I would ask Your Honour to check the Hansards of any British Parliamentary system and see how often, Mr. Speaker, we have had a matter that has been public knowledge for going onto three years, where we have had an investigation carried out by a body that is given the statutory power in this Province when a complaint is laid, presumably, again, at the instigation of the Premier and his friends, and that complaint was dismissed, Mr. Speaker, by that governing body which was given statutory authority to look into these matters. And you talk about double jeopardy! Are they going to tear up, Mr. Speaker, that statute which gives the power to the law society to look into matters such as that? Are they going to do that, Mr. Speaker? Double jeopardy does not apply any longer as a basic principle in this Province, does it?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. WINDSOR:

What is the point of privilege?

MR. TULK:

The point of privilege is that you are trying to muzzle him. You nuisance!

MR. BARRY:

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I could point out what happens here in this House: The Premier of this Province can stand up and make any motion he wishes and with thirty-six members to fifteen and one, Mr. Speaker, that motion will pass if members opposite want to try and subvert the parliamentary process. Trying to intimidate, Mr. Speaker!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

Well, this is one boy who will not be intimidated by such childish attempts to bully. This is one boy that you will not intimidate!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BARRY:

This is one fellow who will not be intimidated, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

It is impossible to hear anything that is going on if we do not have silence while the hon. the Leader of the Opposition is speaking. I think he was getting away from his point of privilege. I would like for him to confine himself to that. The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, the point of privilege-

AN HON. MEMBER:

How long is he going to continue to speak?

MR. TULK:

As long as the Speaker says.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

The point of privilege is that this is a blatant attempt to subvert the parliamentary process in this Province by attempting to intimidate, Mr. Speaker,-

PREMIER PECKFORD:

(Inaudible) the same thing about you.

MR. BARRY:

Yes, you can say what you want to.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

You can say what you want to. I just hope you are prepared to say it outside the House, that is all. I just hope you are prepared to say it outside the House, as I am prepared to say everything I say in here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

What we have and what is so clear are the facts: The information, Mr. Speaker, has been known to the Premier for four years. The letter has been available for at least three and a half years.

It has been referred to and commented upon and carried in full, Mr. Speaker, in the media of this Province. Years afterwards,

after the Law Society has looked on it and dismissed the complaint arising from it, we now have an attempt by the Premier of this Province to put the Leader of the Opposition into double jeopardy, to try and intimidate in a desperate tactic to try and muzzle us from dealing with legitimate questions, Mr. Speaker, legitimate questions that go to matters of principle, such as, what is appropriate for a minister of the Crown to be involved with? Is it appropriate for a minister of the Crown, as the member for Gander (Mr. Baker) has said, to be acting against the Crown or against a Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker? Those are the sorts of matters with which the Premier has locked himself in. He has decided his back is to the wall and he will bring everything to bear. Well, let the Premier know this: Bring that motion on for debate, Mr. Speaker, bring it on for debate, but do not think you are going to deter us from asking the questions which have to be asked in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

And neither, Mr. Speaker, should he think, whatever the vote on that resolution, that it has anything to do with dealing with the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall), or dealing with his eighth floor renovations, or dealing, Mr. Speaker, with Globe Travel.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition is getting away from the point of privilege that he is trying to establish.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, we have, as I have said, an attempt to subvert the facts that I have indicated to Your Honour, if for nothing else than the time lapse that has gone on, apart from the fact that a statutory body, Mr. Speaker, a statutory body which has been given the authority by this House to investigate the matter, has looked into it and has dismissed it. I would submit to Your Honour that for that resolution to go before this House would be a contravention of every basic, decent, common-law rule with respect to double jeopardy, with respect to ignoring the statutes of this House as to who has the right to carry on the investigation and bring in a decision.

Mr. Speaker, it is so obvious, the Premier even referred to what he was bringing up in the context of our conflict of interest questions, Mr. Speaker. He even referred to it in the context of the conflict of interest statements, Mr. Speaker, to show the connection. Out of his own mouth, he has admitted that he is doing that in order to try and keep us quiet. It is not going to work.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Not actual conflict of interest.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, maybe the Premier will tell the Province, whatever he can lay on me or try to lay on me, what does that have to do with the Government House Leader or these matters of principle that we have been raising. What does it have to do with them?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:

The great statesman is a rat.

MR. BARRY:

It is the desperation of a cornered rat. Again, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to be frightened.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

There is no point of privilege. You are speaking on the motion and the motion has not been called.

MR. TULK:

Hold on, boy.

MR. BARRY:

I ask Your Honour, before determining whether this resolution is in order, to investigate the points that I have raised, Mr. Speaker, with respect to whether or not I should be forced to go through again another process -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

- when I have been asked once to explain and I have given a satisfactory explanation-

AN HON. MEMBER:

Explain to the people, now.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker, to the body which was appointed by this House under statute to investigate matters such as that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask Your Honour to consider whether, in basic fairness, I should once again have to go through that process of explaining. Will that not be double jeopardy? Secondly, Mr. Speaker, seeing the way in which the Premier has tied it to the questions, the unrelated questions that we have been raising with respect to conflict of interest, I would ask Your Honour to recognize from that fact, from the Premier's own admitted facts, it is an attempt to intimidate and to muzzle the Opposition, and that goes to the very root, Mr. Speaker, of the Parliamentary process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would ask Your Honour to give it very serious consideration, and I would submit to Your Honour that that resolution is out of order, that that resolution, on the facts that I have set out before Your Honour, is out of order-

PREMIER PECKFORD:
It is very much in order.

MR. BARRY:
- for the reasons which I have given, the fact that it forces me once again to go through - the Premier has had his way once on this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. BARRY:
The Premier raised this during an election, Mr. Speaker. My constituents had that letter delivered to them and they voted me in because they knew it was a slimy tactic.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. BARRY:
They knew it and they made the decision, Mr. Speaker, if you are talking about letting people speak. That is what the Premier wants to have delivered, 'the people spoke'. Thirdly, and just as importantly to my own situation, I would ask you to forget me and look at the position of Leader of the Opposition, whoever is standing there, and should the Leader of the Opposition of this Province have to listen to the Premier of this Province get up and say, as he said to the member for Gander (Mr. Baker), 'I have material here that is going to intimidate you people from asking questions. We will give you something to shut you up', he said.

MR. TULK:
That is right.

MR. FLIGHT:
He said, 'We will shut you up. we will protect the House Leader.'

MR. BARRY:
Now, Mr. Speaker, if that is not an attempt at intimidation I do not know what is. We are in Your Honour's hands. We need your protection. If this House is going to continue under the British Parliamentary system, the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, has to be able to do its job, we cannot be forced to operate under this threat of intimidation.

Mr. Speaker, it is a shameful thing that the Premier has done. It is the lowest that any Premier has ever sunk in the history of British parliamentary democracy. The Premier must really be feeling the heat, he must really be desperate, Mr. Speaker, he must really have nowhere else to turn when he would resort to such a tactic. The majority is over there, their resolution can carry, but I ask Your Honour to look at it and see if it is in order before they are given the chance to try and intimidate the Opposition of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
To that point of privilege, the hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
Mr. Speaker, I certainly will not be anywhere near the length of time of the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) who protests rather vehemently with respect to this Notice of Motion. Basically, I think what he is saying is that the Notice of Motion is out of order because the Law Society has had its say on the matter. Now, the hon. gentleman knows that the Law Society is an organization which is set up to regulate the practice of law, not to regulate the practice of the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
The Newfoundland Medical Association is set up to regulate

the practice of medicine, the Engineering Association to regulate the practice of engineering, the denturists to regulate the practice of that great art, and the Chiropractors, if they have an association, to regulate the chiropractor practice, etc. This House has never -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
That is very weak.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
Oh, extremely weak, yes. Because the Law Society is not set up to regulate the practice of law, is it? No, it is set up to regulate this House of Assembly. Hon. gentleman think that by setting up a regulatory body to regulate the practice of law this House has conceded to the Law Society questions within the jurisdiction of this House. But the Notice of Motion which the Premier has given has nothing to do with respect to the practice of law.

The Law Society regulates questions of advertising, if one can or cannot advertise, what the free trade structure should be, because some people have said that the Law Society is the original free trade organization of the world, but it has nothing to do with the practices of this House of Assembly. So the fact that the Law Society, on a point of view of the regulation of the practice of law has had a say on it, has nothing to do with this House of Assembly which is the guardian of its own practices. Because it is the practices not as a lawyer, it is the practices as a member of the House of Assembly with which this motion deals. So the whole question of double jeopardy is totally irrelevant and has nothing to do with it whatsoever. The Law

Society is concerned only with regulating the practice of law, how much you can build, how you can build, and whether you can advertise, and that kind of thing, it has nothing to do with the appropriate practice of members of the House of Assembly.

So that is the matter at issue here, the practice within the House of Assembly, and the views of the Newfoundland Law Society are no more relevant than if there were a point of privilege brought against the hon. the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) and the Newfoundland Medical Association had something to say about it, or against the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Windsor) and the engineers had something to say about it. This House has never relegated to the Law Society the question of determining what is the appropriate practice not of lawyers, that is their job, but of members of the House of Assembly and that is what this is all about. And what it all zeroes in on, and this is not an area to debate the substantive issue, but what it all zeroes in on is this, not that the hon. gentleman acted for families in a court of law, not that the hon. gentleman after having performed those services sent a bill, or had an assessment, or whatever, and got paid for it, that is not the question, the question is this, that on stationery of the House of Assembly where it reads, "House of Assembly, Government Members Office, St. John's, Newfoundland," the Seal of the Province on top, there was typed in - not printed in, typed in - the number and the area code, in case there were people outside the Province, I suppose, who were recipients. The area code and the number are typed in. And then that goes out,

number one, House of Assembly stationery and the Crest of the House of Assembly and of the Province on it, and then typed in the telephone number of law office of the hon. gentleman, when he writes them and says, "I intend to do everything possible as a member of the House of Assembly." But if one is going to do everything possible as a member of the House of Assembly, why the phone number of the law office? And, "Please feel free to contact me." But where is the hon. gentleman to be contacted? Where the crest says he should be, at the Government Members Office at the time, in the House of Assembly, or at the law office? So there is where the contradiction is. It has nothing to do with the practice of law, it has to do with the practice of the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, every member of this House, I am sure, writes out to constituents and to others and says, "I understand that you have a problem with this, or you have had a problem with that, and if you will give me the details I will look into it and see what I can do for you." Now, that might be in the question of trying to find subsidized housing, of trying to get the person straightened away with respect to Worker's Compensation, of trying to help a person with respect to social assistance, whatever, but we do not, when we write on House of Assembly letterhead, send a bill after. We are paid by our sessional indemnity, that is how we are paid when we send out a letter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

When we send out a letter on House

of Assembly stationery, with the Crest of the Province and say, "If you give us the details we will be glad to help you," we do not send out a bill because that is what we get our sessional indemnity for. So that is what it comes down to.

Now, if the hon. gentleman finds this out of order, there are only two ways, I think, it can be out of order. Number one is if this is a forgery, that the hon. gentleman can say he never sent such a letter, he never sent a letter on House of Assembly stationery with the Crest of the Province on it, with his law office phone number and with his own signature, that this is a forgery. In that case that will be the end of it. Or let him say that he is going to return that money which he got in. One of those ways, I think the Premier would agree, the motion would be dropped. Otherwise, that is where it is and it has nothing to do with the law society, it has to do with the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, to that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

It is very rarely that you will see the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer) stoop as low as he just stooped. It is very rarely in this House that you will see a Premier of this Province stoop as low as he has stooped. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of this Province,

as the Leader of the Opposition said, is trying to intimidate the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition in this House. That is his whole point. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that on that basis the motion should be ruled as a breach of the privileges of the member for Mount Scio (Mr. Barry). That is the ruling that Your Honour should bring in. Of course, there are all kinds of reference, but I refer to sections 67 and section 71, if you will listen, which say, "Direct threats or threats of any sort that impede a member from carrying out his duty as a member of this House are breaches of privilege." That is what we were talking about in the case of the member for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan), that is what we were trying to debate in this House. And we have the Premier shouting across at the member for Gander (Mr. Baker), "When we get to the right place on the Order Paper I will shut you up, I will bring in something to intimidate you." That is the kind of government that we are seeing in this Province. He is probably the same Premier who went to a certain place in this Province and paid a child five dollars for posters belonging to another party. He is probably the same Premier. Mr. Speakers, those are the actions of a scoundrel. The actions of a scoundrel, that is what we are seeing operating on that side of the House this afternoon.

Let me make one other point about this whole motion and why it is completely out of order. The Premier is obviously saying that the member for Mount Scio (Mr. Barry) has breached the privileges of the House. That is what he is obviously saying.

MR. HISCOCK:

Not this session.

MR. TULK:

Not this session, though, four years ago. 'Four years ago', he said. That is basically what he is saying. This letter was public knowledge two years ago, and it has been written, I understand, for some four years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me just make a very rudimentary point. This motion is a motion which says that there has been a breach of privilege. That is what the Premier is trying to say.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No.

MR. TULK:

Why did he not introduce it at the earliest possible opportunity? Why did he wait? If he had been any sort of a parliamentarian, if he had cared for parliament at all, if he had cared for this House, he would have raised it at the first opportunity. But no, not this Premier.

MR. SIMMS:

When was the Chairman appointed to the Board of Regents, four years ago?

MR. TULK:

Not at all. This Premier wants to intimidate. That has been his style of government. And when he gets run into a corner, then he comes out like a rat, a scoundrel.

MR. FUREY:

Backed into a corner like a rat.

MR. TULK:

Backed in. And that is what he is trying to attempt to do in this House today.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me make a

couple more points about the Premier's so-called motion. Let me say to him that the member for Mount Scio, whom he is talking about, wrote a letter, and he also went to bat at the Workers' Compensation Board, for no fee I would remind the hon. gentleman on the other side, and got the matter changed which was hurting some of the widows and orphans of victims of the Ocean Ranger.

MR. MITCHELL:

You are making a fool of yourself, 'Beaton', sit down.

MR. FLIGHT:

You will see who will be made a fool of before this is over.

MR. TULK:

Yes. He says in a letter dated Februray 28, "It will also be my objective to see that the next of kin of those lost are properly compensated through the Workmen's Compensation Board."

MR. PATTERSON:

Yes, indeed.

MR. TULK:

And indeed he did that. And that is probably more than the Premier of this Province has done for many people in a long time.

Mr. Speaker, let me deal with the place, the time and the phone number on that letter.

MR. FLIGHT:

I put my phone number on my letters.

MR. TULK:

I wonder if we are now allowed to write letters from this House and put our home numbers on them so our constituents can call us? Is that possible?

MR. TOBIN:

And charge a fee?

MR. TULK:

The hon. gentleman did not charge a fee. Nowhere does the letter say that he wanted to do law work. He wanted to help the people of this Province.

MR. MARSHALL:

Did he charge for it?

MR. TULK:

Did he charge for it?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. TULK:

You prove that he charged for anything that came about as a result of that letter. Clearly, you cannot prove it. But it is the kind of dirt, it is the kind of slime that is unbecoming of a Premier, a person who sits in that chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:

That is what we are looking at here. We are looking at a Premier who will do anything to save his political hide and his political power base in the City of St. John's, because he knows the man who sits next to him holds that power base and not he, himself.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point to you that it is clearly a breach of the privileges -

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. TULK:

Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. member is now getting away from the point. I wish he would just confine himself to the point of privilege. The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, let me say to you that what the Premier is attempting to do here is an action which does not belong in parliament, it is the action of a tyrant. I say that to him, with all that I can say to him. He has done Newfoundland an injustice and he knows it. He has to know it. He has breached the privileges, in my opinion, of the member for Mount Scio. He has intentionally set out to intimidate him, to keep him quiet on an issue that is not at all related to this.

Let me say this to him: While the member for Mount Scio may have put a phone number on his letter, which was the number of his law office, he was not a minister and that is the essential point here. He was not a minister of Government.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

He was a member of the House of Assembly.

MR. TULK:

He was not a minister of Government.

He was a member of the House of Assembly.

MR. TULK:

And the Premier, by talking about members of this House -

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Oh, members can do anything?

MR. TULK:

The Premier, by talking about members of this House, is trying to intimidate.

MR. BARRY:

I can ask my constituents to call my law office.

MR. TULK:

Sure! Why can a lawyer not ask his constituents to call him at his law office? What is wrong with that? It is a desperate attempt of a tyrant. Mr. Speaker, in my opinion the motion should be ruled out of order, because it is a direct attempt to intimidate a member in the performance of his duties in this House, namely, to point out to the public of this Province where there are potential conflict of interest situations, as there have been, conflicts of interest -

MR. FLIGHT:

Actual.

MR. TULK:

- actual conflicts of interest, and the Premier, for his own political reasons, to keep his own power base in this Province, is afraid, is actually afraid, to take on the member who sits next to him, in the interests of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the Premier, to that point of privilege.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, this question of the point of privilege that somehow this Notice of Motion is out of

order or infringes upon the privileges of the House, I mean, is a complete and absolute red herring. The Opposition House Leader (Mr. Tulk) tries to squirm his ideas to somehow make this Notice of Motion a point of privilege. This is not a point of privilege, this is a Notice of Motion, and there are no rules, no references to Beauchesne, or May, which prevent a member of the House, be it the Premier, be it a minister, be it a backbencher, from bringing in a Notice of Motion at any time, regardless of the information that was available. As a matter of fact, on that, Mr. Speaker, I can say the first time I saw that letter was yesterday evening at about 7:00. That was the first time I saw that letter. I alleged it last week because I was informed about it. I heard rumours about it, but I do not go on rumours. Then, I was told by a really good source, last Thursday, that such a letter actually existed and that members of the media had had it, and then I was provided with a copy of this letter.

Now, this is a very important matter, Mr. Speaker, for members of this House. As the Opposition House Leader says, the Leader of the Opposition, or the member for Mount Scio (Mr. Barry), was not a Cabinet minister. Mr. Speaker, what does that have to do with the price of tea? We are talking about members of the House of Assembly and their conduct as members of the House of Assembly. Now, if we do not take any action on this kind of conduct by the member for Mount Scio, does that mean, therefore, if nothing is done about this, if this House does not address this conduct by the member for Mount Scio, that for time to come, time immemorial,

members opposite who have other jobs can use their position as members of the House to solicit work for that private job? Is that what that means? Because, Mr. Speaker, that is what will happen if this motion is not said to be in order. Then, Mr. Speaker, we can only assume that members of the House of Assembly in future, if they have another job, can use their position as members of the House to solicit work in their private businesses. And that is an actual conflict of interest.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

So, Mr. Speaker, it is not for today, it is not for the member for Mount Scio, it is for members in the future. What kind of ethical standard will this House be setting for the future if this is allowed to go unimpeded, that no action is taken on it? The member for Mount Scio did not only put his law office phone number on it, Mr. Speaker. It is very important to read that letter, paragraph one: " Like every Newfoundlander, I was shocked and deeply saddened to learn of your recent tragic loss in the Ocean Ranger disaster."

MR. BARRY:

Yes.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Paragraph two: "Please accept the deepest sympathy of myself and my family."

MR. BARRY:

Yes.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Paragraph three: "I intend to do everything possible as a Member of the House of Assembly to see that every effort is made to discover the reason for the rig collapse." No problem. New paragraph: "It will also" - in addition to me as member of the House of Assembly, so it corroborates the reason why he put his law office phone number there, the third paragraph does - "It will also be my objective to see that the next-of-kin of those lost are properly compensated, although we all understand that money cannot begin to make up for the terrible loss which you have experienced." And then, to reinforce paragraph three, he reinforces it with paragraph five: "Please feel free to contact me if there is anything at all -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

- which I may do to be of assistance." Now, Mr. Speaker, if you put the telephone number of the law office with paragraph three and paragraph five, "anything at all", it is quite obvious why the member for Mount Scio wrote that letter. If he was doing it as a member of the House of Assembly, he would not have put down his law office. The people of the Province know the Confederation Building. Confederation Building is not an obscure public building in this Province. Everybody knows where Confederation Building is. If they wanted to get hold of the member for Mount Scio as a member to help them, then they would have gotten him at Confederation

Building. Everybody knows where Confederation Building is and the numbers are there.

But if you look at the telephone number, and paragraph 3 and paragraph 4, all of them taken together, it makes it quite clear that the member for Mount Scio was using his position as a member of the House, and very subtly implied - because everybody knows the Leader of the Opposition was a former Minister of Energy and, you know, that is there just by having it on the House of Assembly stationery - "I will do anything at all."

He has, by this letter, used his position as a member of the House of Assembly to gain business for his law firm, and he was highly successful. Now, Mr. Speaker, if we do nothing about this, then what we are saying is that any member of the House of Assembly, any time in the future if they have a private job, can use their office, and the stationery in their office and put their private business number on it; 'If you are trying to look for a house, I am a real estate man, why do you not give me a call. I have my real estate office number here. I might be able to help, because I got a few tips from the Minister of Housing the other day, outside the precincts of the House.'

The members here, we have to conduct ourselves accordingly and we must ensure that we do not use the House of Assembly and our position as members of the House to in any way influence people outside to come to us in our private activities. That is what is at stake. It is the future ethical standards which we want to establish for this House not only for now but for years and decades

to come. That is why this matter is so important, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

I am going to recognize the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, then we will conclude the matter and I will give it consideration afterwards.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, if the Opposition are allowed to have three then we should be allowed to have three.

MR. BARRY:

I would like to just briefly point out a few other things that have happened here. The Premier has come into this House alleging certain facts, Mr. Speaker, certain facts which are not self-evident from the letter and, in fact, facts which are not correct. The Premier and members opposite are going to be asked to vote on the resolution now -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

I would ask for silence from members who are trying to get into Cabinet as well as others, Mr. Speaker. That is not the way an honourable man gets in Cabinet.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, fact number one, the Premier knows as does the Government House Leader, because I spoke with them about it, that my reference to compensation here was seeking to have the Workers' Compensation laws of this Province changed, which we were successful in doing and for which I received no fee. That is fact number one, Mr. Speaker.

Fact number two, Mr. Speaker - now I am stating this before this House and I ask members of this House to accept my word on facts which I am giving or else, get up and put their seats on the line with respect to these facts - is that any client which I acted for - now listen to this - any person I acted for with respect to the Ocean Ranger came, Mr. Speaker, from firm connections, law firm connections -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Free of charge.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

- relatives - in one case a relative of mine, in other cases relatives of people who were doing business with my law firm - or matters that were referred to me by other lawyers, Mr. Speaker.

Now, where is the fact that I solicited clients with this letter sustainable, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

Fact No. 3.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Did you not work out of your office down there?

MR. BARRY:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, yes, I was doing my constituency business out of my law firm office. I was doing that on a consistent basis, Mr. Speaker, and that phone number was there so that these people could contact me. And do you know something, Mr. Speaker? I acted for Ocean Ranger families who were seeking Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation houses; I acted for Ocean Ranger families who were seeking social assistance in that period when they had no workers' compensation and when they had no income, no way to survive, and I acted for them, Mr. Speaker, as I said, with respect to seeing that workers' compensation was improved. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, you may recall the Workers' Compensation Board was not going to permit the families to take any action at one point. In terms of the sensitivity of members opposite and the Workers' Compensation laws of this Province, Mr. Speaker, to those families, those laws had to be changed and everybody knows they did.

Mr. Speaker, I acted for Ocean Ranger families in giving them information with respect to ways in which they could go to government for help, on any matter. Mr. Speaker, I did that without fee, without charge and I did it, Mr. Speaker, because I felt an obligation, and every member there opposite should have

held out the same offer of assistance to these families. And it is a shameful thing that you are doing now, when you know what the facts are and you have known for four years what the facts were.

MR. TULK:

That is right. Scoundrels!

MR. BARRY:

And I do not see any of you looking very proud of yourselves when I look around.

MR. SIMMS:

Take a look in a mirror.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

Yes, I am prepared to look in a mirror.

MR. SIMMS:

Can you do it without cutting your throat?.

MR. TULK:

Go back to your seat! Go back to your seat!

MR. BARRY:

I thought the member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms) was an honourable man.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

Maybe the hon. Leader of the Opposition would like to conclude?

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

I would like to wind up, but I will ask members opposite, Mr.

Speaker, if they did not send out a similar letter to these families, why did they not? Where were they? Why did they not send out a similar letter?

MR. PATTERSON:

You will never cover yourself by getting on like that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

I do not have to cover myself, I have dealt with this now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

I have dealt with this in an election, Mr. Speaker, where the attempt was made to smear me, it did not work then and it will not work now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BARRY:

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is one final thing I would like to point out. The Premier has tabled an article from a magazine and I want to make it clear, and I ask the press to be fair in the reporting of this, that the facts that are set out in this article are incorrect, and specifically, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the alleged fee that I received, or my law firm received. Those figures are grossly exaggerated by several times in magnitude, Mr. Speaker. They are grossly exaggerated, and I want that noted, because again we have the Premier coming in here and making these allegations, in a shameful fashion, without having

the facts.

MR. TULK:

And without doing any investigation.

MR. BARRY:

Presenting, Mr. Speaker, untruths and inaccuracies to this House, and now he is going to try and ram through a resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I seek the protection of the Chair not just for myself but for any future Leader of the Opposition. And the Premier will need it after the next election. He will need your protection, Mr. Speaker. He will need the protection of the Chair after the next election. And he should not be so quick to subvert the parliamentary process, because the system is supposed to be bigger than he is or I am, and it does not take much, Mr. Speaker, for it to be bigger than him!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To that point of privilege, I am going to consider the various points that were made, I will look at various authorities, and rule on it at a later date.

MR. HISCOCK:

A point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of privilege, the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

I have been a member of this House since 1979 and I would say that this is probably the most important point of privilege that has ever come before a Speaker of

the House of Assembly, and that basically is the right to get up and speak on points of privilege instead of the Speaker delegating it to one or two or three people. I want to raise a new point of privilege on that matter. I, as a member of the House of Assembly, cannot get up and speak on a point of privilege. Instead of having it honoured -

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

The Chair decides how many people he will hear. That is not a point of privilege at all.

MR. HISCOCK:

You can speak on the point of privilege after I have finished, all right?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

That is no point of privilege.

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

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act to Amend the Farm Development Loan Act". (Bill No. 57.)

MR. SPEAKER:

Before calling the Order of the Day, I would like to welcome some visitors to the gallery, twenty-three Girl Guides from the Twenty-eighth Girl Guides Company with their leader, Barbara Ellis.

Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Second reading of the Bill, "An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act", Bill No. 51.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, yesterday when I introduced this Bill the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) made some comments pertaining to it. I shall do my best in closing this debate to answer some of them.

One of the points mentioned is why we did not go about this in a different kind of way, instead of making an amendment to this Act which directly would give the Lieutenant-Governor and Counsel the right to ensure that this formula was put in place? Well, that is the very reason, Mr. Speaker, why we did this. We obtained some legal opinions from the Department of Justice in order to ensure that the consumers benefited from this formula. This was the only way that we saw fit to do this.

One of the other points raised by the Leader of the Opposition was about passing on the reduced costs to the consumers. Mr. Speaker, I have raised this matter with the cablevision companies and I do not think we shall see a reduction in the form of a rebate, if you will, to the consumers. I think what we would have seen had this piece of legislation not been debated and eventually passed, was that the cablevision companies would have made an application to the Public Utilities Board for a substantial rate increase. Whereas now, I genuinely believe that we will not

see this. I would like to say also I do not think that the cable companies could justify themselves in making an application for a rate increase at this time with the understanding that once this amendment is passed and becomes law their rates that they pay will be reduced by approximately 50 per cent.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) also raised the issue as a result of this new formula, if you will, that the rates being charged by Newfoundland Telephone and Newfoundland Light and Power would be increased to make up for the lost revenue. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have discussed this matter particularly with Newfoundland Telephone and they have assured me that they will not be looking for a rate increase based on the implementation of this formula.

In fact, I think somewhere in the report, or in the hearings, if the formula had been done away with or eliminated, the amount of revenue being received by the Newfoundland Telephone Company only amounted to about one half of one percent of the total revenue. Now, with the implementation of this formula, I suppose one could say it would be one quarter of one per cent and if you spread that throughout the consumers and the households if you will in the Province, it would not amount to very much.

Anyway I have been given some assurance, or every assurance, I should say, by Newfoundland Telephone particularly, that they will not be seeking a rate increase as a result of a few dollars in lost revenue. Indeed, in the long run they could very well benefit from it I suppose in that cable companies would expand

their services to smaller rural areas of the Province and thus more revenue would come into the Newfoundland Telephone and Newfoundland Light as a result of this.

The Leader of the Opposition also mentioned the appointment of Mr. Wells as the consumer representative to the Public Utilities Board. The member for Port de Grave (Mr. Efford) raised this issue in the form of a question a few days ago and at that point in time I responded to it and subsequently made a statement to the effect that we are satisfied with the representation that Mr. Wells is making. The fact that he is on the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, I think in the next few weeks or months that commission will end and he will not be involved with that kind of responsibility. The fact that he is on City Council is not a full-time position so he does have time to make a significant contribution to the Public Utilities Board.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it is not really relevant to this piece of legislation, but the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of the reorganization of Newfoundland Telephone and wondered if some of the time take up by the board members would take them away from their interests in the telephone system, as opposed to the other company, which they have called Newtel. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have been informed, and I have discussed this with Mr. Brait of Newfoundland Telephone Company, there will be two boards, the present board for Newfoundland Telephone Company, and another board for Newtel, as they have called their company. You may

have two or three of the same members on each board but, in essence, it will be a different board for a different purpose.

I am satisfied that Newfoundland Telephone Company's re-organization is above board and just another good business enterprise for them.

Mr. Speaker, I have hopefully answered the questions raised by the Leader of the Opposition and it gives me great pleasure to move second reading.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Public Utilities Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 51)

MR. MARSHALL:

Order 31, Bill No. 53.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Memorial University (Pensions) Act."

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

I propose to introduce this bill on behalf of the hon. the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) who has been taken from us on a very temporary basis because of matters that are in his areas of responsibility outside the House.

Mr. Speaker, this bill relates to those individuals who at one time were in employment whereby they were eligible for pensions under the various government pension plans but, subsequently,

transferred to the employment at Memorial University and hence became eligible for benefits under the Memorial University Pension Plan. Now in an arrangement like that, we split the cost of applying the pension. For the proportion of time that the individual was employed by government, that is government's responsibility. For the proportion of time that the individual is employed by the university, it is Memorial's responsibility.

For instance, if a member was employed, say, for ten years by government and then ten years by the university, obviously the pension cost responsibilities would be 50 per cent to the government and 50 per cent to the university.

Now, the only problem that has arisen is when there are increases in pensions applicable to that individual. The act did not specifically give authority for the increase in pension provisions of the various acts or the increase of pension act provisions; it did not give authority to government to apply these to individuals who were so transferred to another employer. It ended up that the university had to carry on its own the total cost of those pension benefit increases, not only its own proportion, but also government's proportion.

This amendment, Mr. Speaker, will rectify that so that now, when there is a benefit increase applicable to an individual who had these two types of employment, when that is the case, the government has the authority to increase the benefits from the public purse in that regard.

So with those words of explanation, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I would like to speak to this bill to see that there is going to be a constructive improvement made to the pension plan of Memorial University so that they do not have to bear the brunt of any percentage increases in the future. They have been under the gun for the past number of years when it has come to financial management or assistance and it is good to see at least one move, though it be slight, to make it easier for the university.

There are a lot of other suggestions that could be made and a lot of other things that the provincial government could do to improve the state of the finances of the university.

Recently there have been many comments made by people at the university about the funding for the university or the lack of it. The university is right now being strained right to its limit with the resources that it now has. It has been seeking increased funding for many years and for the last couple of years especially. Memorial's ability to provide a good education to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador has been placed in jeopardy. As this bill does address the financial part of the university, I think that the provincial government should be

looking at ways to improve financing in different areas of the university.

The university has grown over the years and has become a gigantic asset to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and has produced many good people who have come out and served Newfoundland and Labrador very well. The future of the university, I believe, in its effective education, is, and has been for the last number of years put in doubt because they do not have enough resources available to them to provide, as far as I am concerned, an effective education as could possibly be put forward. I think it can be a lot more effective if a number of things were done.

I came through the system a number of years ago and I have seen a lot of places where monies could have been allotted and properly managed. I think that the provincial government should look at trying to provide a proper amount of funding to the university so it can be an effective institution. A number of programmes are needed there and increased funding for programmes that they already have should be looked at as much as possible. I think we have to start looking at our priorities in this Province.

The university can be a very, very effective tool for the future development of this Province and I think it has been kind of downgraded over the last number of years. I would ask the provincial government and the minister responsible to look at that situation very carefully. I believe it can have a very effective role in the development of rural Newfoundland and also

here in St. John's and all over the Island. In order for that to be effective, its programmes have to be effective, its instructors have to be effective.

I believe that under the strain they have been under financially, the morale has suffered amongst the professors there because they do not feel that they have been given the proper amount of funding and the proper boost.

I feel that the provincial government should be talking to the federal government. From what I have been reading so far the federal government looks like it is going to be cutting back on its transfer payments which is going to directly affect educational institutions on this Island. As far as I am concerned, I would like to see the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) directing the federal government to bear in mind what the result of that is going to be. Again, we are already under a great deal of financial strain and I do not see how the federal government cutting back on monies to educational institutions in this Province is going to be an effective tool or make our educational institutions more effective in this Province.

I am sure that the Minister of Finance is going to lobby greatly with his counterparts in Ottawa to make sure that these cuts do not take place and that improvements are made to Memorial University's funding allotments and to other institutions on this Island. The future of Newfoundland, as far as I am concerned, is based on our education institutions and the people who come out of them. Right now, the product that is coming out of Memorial University, as far as I am concerned, is a

good one under the constraints that we now have there, that being financial, and it is time that an evaluation was done and a proper priority was placed on improving educational funding in this Province.

The future of this Province depends on the young people coming out of Memorial University and out of other educational institutions and going out in this Island and trying to improve the economic base and improve the life of people on this Island. From what I have seen over the past number of years, again, attending the institution and having been out of it for a couple of years, I can see that the quality of education is suffering down there. It has been expressed on many fronts, by professors, by administration, by a variety of other people and by the students themselves. They want to see a more active provincial government getting involved with Memorial University and improving the university situation. The cutbacks that have occurred there they have been battling and battling for the last number of years. We are well aware of the financial strain of the provincial government, but again a priority has to be placed on education on this Island and in Labrador if we are going to have improvements in the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is going to depend on the product that comes out of Memorial University and that product is in serious jeopardy when there is not enough money provided in labs or in recreation facilities or in any other type of programmes that are down there. Right now they under a great deal of strain. There have been some improvements made over the last number of years, but nothing that comes close to

providing, I do not think, the proper effective education that we are going to need for the future.

So when you bring in this bill I can see it is constructive and I like to see that. There are not that many things that come this way that are that constructive. This is a constructive bill. I pat the minister on the back for that. But I think it is one small step in the right direction. I am sure that we are going to see a lot more representation made to Ottawa to provide an improved funding scheme for educational institutions because, if that is the intent of the federal government in Ottawa, to cutback on educational institutions in this already suffering Island, I believe they are not doing the right job, that they are doing things for the wrong reasons, and that their sense of direction is completely gone away.

So I would only hope that the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn) and the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) and the Minister responsible for the University (Mr. Power) will pursue the federal government and their counterparts and also pursue them a lot more effectively than they have on a number of other issues so far. I believe that this era of consultation and co-operation will certainly come in handy with the provincial government now as they try to improve the educational institutions on this Island, especially Memorial University. If this era of co-operation and consultation, as has been stated, is there at all, then we will not have to bear such a brunt of cutting back on our educational institutions on this Island.

So I am sure with this era that

now exists as we have seen it come so effective, the only problem is I have seen it, I have very grave doubts about improving our educational system down here, especially if the way they have done it so far in the past, especially on the FFTs, etc. etc. If this type of co-operation and consultation goes on, we may have to get our backs up again and try to battle these cutbacks because, again, making one constructive improvement will be thrown out the window by the federal government not providing enough funding or cutting back on the funding for Memorial University.

So as far as I am concerned, a step in the right direction is good to see, but we may make take ten steps back with the federal government cutting back on monies. The Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins), I am sure, is going to make representation to the federal government which they get along with so very, very well as has been indicated so far over the last number of weeks. I am sure that the era of consultation I think is called hinting. I think, 'hinting' is the word now. They hint to each other what may happen in the future. I hope that the minister up there responsible for revenue or whoever gives us money down this way, Mr. Wilson, is going to hint to the minister responsible down here, that they are not going to cutback their money and that Memorial University will be able to strive forward and provide an improved education on this Island. At present, they are under a wicked financial strain that should not have to be. I think the priority of this Province and the Provincial government should be to provide them with at least a decent base

at which to educate our young people to go out on this Island and to improve the economy of the whole Island and Labrador.

If we do not invest in that education and make if we do not make it an effective education, then the future can be looked upon as being bleak. I am an eternal optimist and I am sure that by the representations made by the Opposition here and the government opposite that the educational institutions on this Island, especially Memorial University, are going to be provided with proper funding for the future.

On that note, I would like to thank you very much.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HISCOCK:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As it was pointed out by the member for Stephenville, with regard to having the same amount of money put in by the government as well as the university for pensions, one of the things that I am rather concerned about is that Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador was on the way to becoming a first class international institution. It still is in many of its departments but some of its departments, Mr. Speaker, are under fire.

We are finding out that are standards are being lowered all the time at the university and the main reason for this, Mr. Speaker, is that we are not getting top

international professors coming to Newfoundland like we did before. Many of them are leaving mainly because of the salaries being paid to professors at the university. There is great disgruntlement at the university among the faculty that over the past thirteen or fourteen years of P.C. administrations we are finding that this government has not kept up with the private sector and that many professors have left the university and gone into private business.

One I think about in particular is Dean Bruno of the Engineering Department and I can go on and list several others. It is a critical situation that is taking place at the university. I wonder what the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) and the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) are going to be doing about it. Particularly, as was raised by the member for Stephenville, with the cutbacks on equalization to the Province and post-secondary education, those two cuts are going to put more strain on the Provincial economy to have money and to put money in various departments. One of the departments that we have seen cut back with regard to the amount of money in the sense of real dollars is the Department of Education and the Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies, as well as the Department of Social Services and Department of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

One of the things that I would like to raise with this matter concerning the university is the vocational White Paper that was presented by the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies. I think it came out in a

most devious way. They are obviously afraid of input. Obviously the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) was afraid the same thing was going to happen to him as happened to the former Minister of Education. They brought Grade XII in without any proper planning and half way through bringing it in, what did they see happen in the Province? The school boards, the superintendents, the parents, the students, the teachers and the churches were all rather upset about the way the government handled bringing in Grade XII. They brought it in from the top and forced it upon the school system in this Province.

We have found out since then that they did not enlarge the schools. Many of them are overcrowded. They have had to use gymnasiums for classrooms, libraries for classrooms and laboratories for classrooms. We found out that they never had the proper equipment to deal with many of the courses; that students had to go out on bottle drives, walk-a-thons and engage in other forms of fund raising to pay for the typewriters, the computers, the video machines and other things that they needed for the new courses that were brought in. We saw, after the fact, the government putting in extra money towards high school construction. But, again, the Denominational Education Committee pointed out that they would need \$200 million to bring the high school and the elementary school systems, just in physical conditions alone, up to the standard they should be.

Again, what do we see the new Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies do with the vocational White Paper? He

released it in June, when everybody is on holiday in July, August - coming back in September - and told the public they could only put briefs in until the end of October. With regard to that, they did not provide any money for continued adult education in this Province who asked for money, by the way, to present and to organize meetings around the Province so they could have input into the reorganization of the vocational educational system.

The Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies himself denied that branch of government, continuing adult education, money to set up that. What did they do? They went to the Secretary of State for the Government of Canada, as well as their own selves, and charged people transportation costs. They organized several meetings around this Province in various trade schools because the vocational instructors and the communities themselves were rather concerned about the sly way, the under-handed way, that the Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies went about reorganizing vocational education. Bring it in, announce it while everybody is on holiday, then do not provide anybody with any funding but basically say, 'Okay, if you want any input, you can write.'

All the communities around the Province with vocational schools, everybody tried to find out who wrote the White Paper. Finally the continuing adult education people had their final conference in Grand Falls in November and the end result of that was that everybody found out who wrote the White Paper. I think one of the cruel things about this White

Paper, Mr. Speaker, is the minister and this government admitted defeat and failure. They have been in power for the past fourteen years. They have allowed the trade schools to get in such a situation of deterioration that, in the minister's words on TV the other night, "We need a revolution in the vocational education system," because courses are outdated, faculty people have not kept in touch with the training of modern technology and now, of course, they want to do away with certain courses.

Did this government call a Royal Commission on education? They called one for employment and unemployment to brush that matter under the carpet for a couple of years and put that on the back burner. They called one for health and, I may add, some very good points came out in that Royal Commission. The government did not accept them all but it accepted some. The ones that they should have accepted, of course, they ignored. But we have not had a Royal Commission on education in this Province for well over twenty years.

I am a firm believer that when it comes to Royal Commissions, for the most part, they are an instrument to use to take an issue, put it on the back burner and buy time. But there are cases, as in the Royal Commission on health and education that there are cases when a Royal Commission is extremely important to be able to find out, Mr. Speaker, where the education system in this Province stands; what direction we are going as a society; and what changes we need.

It was called a vocational White Paper. Did they have the top

learned people in our society, the President of the University, the President of Fisheries College, the President of the College of Trades and Technology, the President of the Community College out in Bay St. George, or the principals of the various vocational schools? Did the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) ask for their input into this vocational White Paper, to 'revolutionize' the vocational system of education in our Province? Did he ask for that input? No, Mr. Speaker.

Do you know who wrote the paper after everybody trying to find out for about four or five months? Do you know who wrote the paper on vocational education? It was the minister himself, along with the Assistant Deputy Minister, got together over a cup of coffee in their office and said, "Okay, now we need to reorganize the vocational education system in this Province and this is what we will do." So they both sat down, did the White Paper, released it at the end of June, cut off an arbitrary date at the end of October and did not give anybody any money to have any input in this White Paper that was taken off the top of the head. There was no research to back it up. No research was done to find out why certain courses were being chopped or why certain trade schools had certain courses dropped in their areas and other ones added on in other communities with the vocational school. There was no research whatsoever. It was just the minister and the assistant deputy minister deciding arbitrarily that Seal Cove was going to get this, Bonavista is going to get this, St. Anthony is going to get this and Bell Island

is going to get this.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the Minister of Career Development is doing a flip flop or if he is trying to misled the people of the Province or deliberately lying or having a short memory, I am not sure which of the above, but I remember quite distinctly out in Grand Falls when everybody asked who wrote the paper and the minister admitted it was himself and his assistant deputy minister. Another question came up. 'This is a week before the cut off date and there are a lot of people now who know they want to have briefs in. Will you extend the cut off date of October 31st?' The minister said quite emphatically, 'No. You have had up to October 31, like it or lump it, that is the cut-off date.'

Another question was asked. The minister said from the end of October until sometime early in January or February, the Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies would be bringing in and tabling in this House the blueprint on reorganization of vocational education in this Province. And, when asked could the vocational school instructors, the principals and the community influence the minister in any changes needed in that programme after it was implemented, the Minister of Career Development (Mr. Power), said, not only emphatically, but quite rudely and quite sharply, 'No, when we table it in the House of Assembly, you take it, like it or lump it, that is it.'

Last night on CBC the same question was put to the minister by one of the reporters: 'Come January or February when you have the report compiled and it is

brought into the House of Assembly, is that carved in stone?' The Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies said, 'Of course not.' Now, I find a contradiction there, whether he is deliberately trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the people in this Province, deliberately misleading the House, suffering from amnesia or deliberately lying. Relative to that, Mr. Speaker, he said in Grand Falls to all the instructors around the Province that there would be no changes in January and February. Now, last night on CBC, he suggests there will be changes, if necessary.

The other thing that came up - and the reason why I am speaking on this matter of vocational education reorganization with respect to Bill 53, "An Act To Amend The Memorial University (Pensions) Act" - is that in that meeting in Grand Falls, we found that it was not only the reorganization of the vocational education system that the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies had in mind, but the entire reorganization of post-secondary education in this Province, including the university, the community colleges, the vocational schools, the Fisheries College and the College of Trades and Technology. All of them are to be revolutionized to bring them up to 20th or 21st Century standards.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is this: I know the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies is a bright young man, but I think it is presumptuous of him, Mr. Speaker, to write a White Paper without any research, then to change it in mid-stream and to deliberately mislead the people of

this Province. Instead of the reorganization of vocational education in this Province, we find it is to be complete reorganization of post-secondary education. I think the people of this Province should have been aware of this and have been given an opportunity to lay the cards on the table and deal with the reality of the situation. Our trade schools are in a mess because this administration has allowed them to become so. They had no training programme to upgrade instructors. They have equipment in Goose Bay, St. Anthony, Bell Island, Placentia, Marystown and other places that is thirty or forty years old. They have typewriters in these schools that are twenty years old and people have to do these courses and go out into the public sector and find out the new advanced technology.

I say, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to reorganize post-secondary education in this Province, which we are doing, let us put it on the table and let us have a debate in this Province and let us have it openly, courageously, and have it done from the point of view of going and building a better Province for our people. As I said before, and I have said it time and time again, we are an Island with the mainland part of Labrador. We will always be exporting our people, always. I say this, if we are going to export them, let us do it first class and let us give them their graduation diplomas in medicine, in electronics, in their captain's ticket, let us do it that way.

We are finding now, Mr. Speaker, that this government is afraid of input, this government is afraid of the public knowing what is

going on. I would say to the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power), I predict this, this White Paper and this discussion is going to blow up in his face just like Grade XII did with the former Minister of Education, and there is no need of it, no need whatsoever. All the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies has to do is say to the people of this Province, 'We are going to reorganize post-secondary education.' He should have had the courage to call a Royal Commission. If he thought that would be time consuming he could have had a mini one and he could have had it made up of some of the professors at the university, some of the instructors of the College of Trades and Technology, the Fisheries college, as well as the vocational principals and instructors. He could have had input, but when the people of the vocational schools asked for the input, and asked for money so that they could hold these conferences, they were told no.

The vision of our people is not always going to be dictated by politicians, and one of the branches of education, adult continuing education, said, 'this is a major issue that is coming forth here. This is going to change post-secondary education for our Province probably for the next twenty or thirty years and what directions are we going to take in society. We should stop. We should think. We should debate and we should ask questions. If the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) and this government is not going to give us money, then we will find ways of doing it. They went to the Secretary of State of Canada and got money and held

their conferences around the Province, and held it in Grand Falls.

I would say this, Mr. Speaker, I am amazed at the power that the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) has taken upon himself, that he and his assistant or his department, is going to dictate to St. Anthony what they are going to have, what Bonavista is going to have, what Bell Island is going to have, Marystown, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Stephenville and Lewisporte, and all the other schools around the Province, what courses are going to be offered in their community. As I said the minister may be bright, but I do not think he is that bright.

I think it is being very, very dangerous to us as a society and a Province by not having that open debate. I give the credit to the fact that he is the minister and I give him at least the basic fact that he knows something but, I do not think, Mr. Speaker, he knows everything concerning such a delicate matter as the reorganization of post-secondary education. We should at least have a mini Royal Commission.

The other question I want to deal with, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister has admitted that he is going to take all the reports that were put into him all around the Province and by the conferences that were organized by continuing adult education people. Will the minister allow input from our learned people in this Province? Will he allow input now, from December until January, consulting with the President of the University, the President of Trades and Technology, the President of Marine Institute and

the various vocational Principals? Will he have dialogue going back and forth? What he said out in Grand Falls was 'no.' His officials and himself were the ones that were going to lay out this blueprint and when the blueprint was going to be tabled in January or February, that is the way it was going to be. I think that that minister has too much power if he thinks that he is going to be able to reorganize our post-secondary education system in this Province.

The other question, Mr. Speaker, is who is to say that so many Trades Schools should go under the wing of the College of Trades and Technology and that the other ones should go under the Marine Institute?

MR. BAKER:

The minister. He knows it all.

MR. HISCOCK:

Who is the minister to say that half of those schools go under that? There are learned people in our university, Professor Riggs who did the report on post-secondary education and how it should be modelled. The minister rejected that after that study was done and said that it was too expensive.

They had at that conference in Grand Falls a speaker from Vancouver who is in charge of a community college of over 44,000 people. He laid out five or six different plans of types of communities colleges and which way we should go. It was unfortunate that the minister was not there to listen to him.

MR. BAKER:

He does not listen to anybody.

MR. HISCOCK:

He was comparing how Quebec failed in its reorganization, how Alberta failed, how British Columbia failed, and some good points about Saskatchewan, but now the minister is taking it upon himself to bring in a system out of his own head. I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that it is good enough for our Province.

I hope the media will pick up on the matter and will follow this very, very closely over the next few months and do some research themselves and contact the principles of the major colleges, of Grenfell, of the Fisheries College, of Trades and Technology, and the President of the University, as well as the Principals of the Vocational Schools and find out their concerns.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, this government is afraid of open debate. What have we got to lose as a society if we do not ask ourselves every twenty years what have we accomplished in the past twenty years with our education system? Is our education system still meeting our needs? Will it continue to meet our needs? What changes have to take place? That is why I say, Mr. Speaker, that we need periodically to scrutinize our education system and have a Royal Commission or have a mini Royal Commission and have the learned people in our Province and other parts of Canada to have input.

MR. TULK:

They do not want to have anybody to have input.

MR. HISCOCK:

I will say this it is amazing that the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power)

has admitted on television and in this House several times that this government has failed with its job of carrying out a vocational system of education in this Province. They find now that there are too many courses being offered, that students are coming out of these courses and not getting jobs and have been for several years. They have known this for several years, but yet they continued to let them come on the job market and line up behind hundreds of other people. Now, finally they want to do something.

Now that they admit the mistake about the condition of the vocational systems in this Province, what have they done about it? Have they opened it up for a general philosophical debate in our Province? No, Mr. Speaker, they have not. They have closed the doors. They wrote the paper in secrecy. They gave notice while everybody was on holiday, they cut off an arbitrary date, and again the minister says, that when the blueprint is being presented in the Spring, that is the way it is going to be, like it or lump it.

MR. TULK:
Shame! Shame!

MR. HISCOCK:
I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that our people-

MR. SIMMS:
What has this got to do with Memorial's pension fund?

MR. FLIGHT:
No community college for Grand Falls, I will guarantee you that.

MR. HISCOCK:
I will say this to the Minister of

Forest Resources and Lands (Mr. Simms), with regards to the pensions in the University, if we do not nurture our educational systems in this Province, whether it be elementary or primary, high school, or post-secondary, and we do not pay top notch money to an international calibre of people, then we are not going to attract the type of people to our Province, we are not going to train our own people to be able to take on many of those jobs from those people who trained us. We have to admit we are only in our master's programme now. We have got over the bachelors level, now we are getting into the master's. We are not even into our doctorate level yet. We may be having fifty a year. I would say this to the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands, if we do not make more of a commitment to education systems in our Province, then we are going to find out as we have seen that many of our top people are not going into education because of the money they will get is a lot less than the private sector. We are going to find ourselves like New York and like other States in the United States and that is basically having a very, very low level of qualified people going into the teaching profession because they would make more in the private sector. That is a major concern that has to be addressed by us.

MR. TULK:
They do not care.

MR. HISCOCK:
Maybe, the attitude is, "well, we will not have to pay that much more pension then, by having to pay them top salaries." One never knows how this government's psychologically actually works. But the subsidy to our Province by

way of post-secondary education is being cut back, the amount of grants to students have been cut back, student loans are getting stricter all of the time, we have the lowest per capita student enrollment in post-secondary education in Canada, yet we have the highest unemployment, the highest taxation in our country, and we also find out that any industrial society or any society with any advancement is correlated and is tied to the education of its people.

This is one of the things that I find rather upsetting by this present Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies. Instead of allowing an open debate on our education system in the Province and allowing people to have input and come up with a first class document, he said no.

We have proven, Mr. Speaker, time and time again, when our people are given the resources, they can equal anybody in the world. An example of that now is that we have an international exhibition in London in Canada House by David Blackwood. We have an exhibition at Vancouver by another one of our outstanding artists, Christopher Pratt. We had a young artist, Scott Goudie, who went to Cognac, France and over 100 other people had exhibits there and he came first in those 100 artists from different parts of Europe, North America and Canada. What happened? Did they receive any help from this government? No. They had to raise their own money.

Listen to this: When the Director of Culture for this Province, Mr. Perlin, was in London helping organize the Blackwood exhibition at Canada House, when he found out that Mr. Goudie had won the award

in Cognac, France, he said to himself, 'Well, would that not be nice now for the Director of Culture in Newfoundland and Labrador to go on down to Cognac, France, because he should be there.' Do you know what the ten artists from this Province said, "Your department would not give us any money to come over here. You can stay in London and go back to Newfoundland." They boycotted him and they would not allow him to horn in. That is the caliber of our people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HISCOCK:

I would say to this, Mr. Speaker, again, when it comes to our people, when they are given the opportunity and given the resources, they can equal anyone.

I find it a little sad that the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) does not have the same faith in our people that he has to write a paper himself, present it while everybody is on holiday and then have a close off date and say, when the paper is finally done in February or March and presented in this House, there will be no changes.

With regard to that, Mr. Speaker, I will say this again, that we have to have open debate on the reorganization of post-secondary education. I will say this to each member of the House of Assembly, I do not want to hear any member of the House of Assembly ever getting up and talking about the White Paper on vocational education because the minister himself admitted in Grand Falls, it is not the reorganization of the vocational

system in this Province, it is the complete reorganization of post-secondary education in this Province.

That, I think, is sly, conniving and sneaky. The minister never had the courage to say that to the university, to say that to the vocational schools, to say that the College of Trades and Technology, to the Fisheries College and, instead, is trying to slip it through, a piece of legislation and have it reorganized, not have the people retrained and out of work before the rest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador woke up.

I will again get into one other matter and this is the idea of training and the idea of laying off so many of our people in the vocational system. We find out that the government allowed these people to become redundant, if you want to use that word. They allowed these people to become less qualified by not having sabbaticals in place; by not allowing them to go to conferences in other parts of Canada and North America to keep up with the modern technology; and by not having a programme in place so that the vocational instructors would be able to have input from private sector and private business and to keep them updated. Now they find the vocational system in such a mess.

Who are they putting it on the backs of? The instructors themselves! Yet this is going to be done within three years. In three years this programme is going to take into effect and I would ask this, what programme is in place now for sabbaticals? Which instructors are identified as being redundant and

non-trainable? Who is the minister to dictate to the vocational education people? Maybe he is going around to each vocational school and having a meeting with them and finding out if they are Liberals or NDP, "I am sorry, you are non-trainable. You are out of a job."

That is their attitude and that is the mentality this government has and I would not be surprised that it would do it at all. So who is to decide that these people are non-trainable? I do not know. Nobody else knows but the minister knows it is about eighty-six. He says sometimes sixty, and he says sometimes forty. I predict, unless the Minister of Labour (Mr. Blanchard) in particular, and this is where his skills will come in with the vocational instructors of making sure that they have job security or if they have not got job security, we are in for a strike in our vocational educational system in this Province and the main thing that they want is only job security.

They do not particularly care where they are working whether it is in that vocational school or whether it is at the university or whether it is at the Fisheries College. If they have to be retrained, they do not mind being retrained, but they want the opportunity to be retrained. They do not want to be told, "Sorry, you are forty-five, you are fifty-five years old, you are non-trainable. Go on welfare, go on UIC and find your own way. You have been there for seventeen years."

The other vocational people also want to know, "Where does seniority come in? Does that mean that the College of Trades and

Technology are taking over the vocational school and taking over the ones that are going to be combined? So many are going to go under the auspices of Trades and Technology and so many are going under the auspices of the Marine Institute. Does that mean the people in those larger institutions are going to bump the people in the vocational schools around the Province? Those are some of the questions that the vocational instructors are going to be wanting answers for. That is one of the things that the Minister of Labour has to find out.

One of the things that the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) and the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) has to do, as well as the Minister of Development (Mr. Barrett), has to make sure that there is money in place for these people so that they can be retrained. I question, and we will be raising it periodically, what the Minister of Career Development is doing to our educational system. He is turning over the typing, the computer science and other technical courses to the private sector, downgrading the vocational jobs in our Province and letting the private sector do it.

The other thing that I think that this government is doing deliberately is that they want to get rid of the high schools using the vocational schools. They want to get rid of that and they want to put that over on the school boards. They want to say to the school boards, "You look after these pre-vocational courses," or if you do not let the school boards do it, then the other courses in the Province, like

computers, clerk typing and other courses, allow the private sector to come in, the academies, the gougers.

We saw the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications (Mr. Russell) get up today and commend the federal government for allowing these gougers again, these financing companies, for taking up to 50 per cent of child tax credit and income tax. I put these same private sector academies in that same category. All they want is profit. They are not concerned with finding jobs.

I will give you an example. A friend of mine did that course, worked down with the Fishermen's Union, did the on the job training and then when it was over, what happened? "Sorry, no job here with the Fishermen's Union in computers." Why? Well, the main reason is, of course, next term they will get another student to come in on on the job training. That is what is happening, Mr. Speaker, all around this Province and all around this town. The private sector are taking these students and are using them for cheap labour and when they are finished their on the job training, "Go on and look somewhere else. Go to the mainland, go somewhere else." Then they take in other students to do on the job training. I expected a little bit more from our Fishermen's Union on that, particularly seeing as the person who worked with them was a fisherman at one time and was the son of a fishermen.

That is another thing that I think this government is doing deliberately and that is putting over on the private sector a lot of these jobs that the vocational

schools can do, Mr. Speaker, but is not.

So with regard to the educational system in our Province and our post-secondary and our university, one of the greatest legacies, I think, will go down in our Province to the Hon. J. R. Smallwood. That is laying the foundation in our Province for our educational system. That cannot be taken away from him. We found in 1949 when we went into Confederation the denominational schools had to fund 75 per cent, up to 100 per cent at one time, for schools. Gradually, over the years, we got into regional high schools. The school that I went to, Mr. Speaker, out in Foxtrap, Queen Elizabeth Regional High School, was the first regional high school and the first pilot project ever to take place.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I would ask the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies and I would also ask the government itself and the Premier, who is an educator, to allow an open debate on the reorganization of post-secondary education. I am concluding and the minister knows that.

AN HON. MEMBER:
By leave.

MR. HISCOCK:
By leave, thank you.

With regard to the organization of it, allow an open debate because it is something that is going to affect us and our young people for the next twenty years. If we do not have a proper debate on this, Mr. Speaker, we will probably fall into the same situation as Quebec did, with a top heavy administration community college

system, or we may have a weak one, like British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, we may not have all the money to give all these community colleges or the university or the technical college, but at least we can have all our heads together - the NDP, the Liberals, the Conservatives and nonpolitical people - to come up with ideas of finding out how and what is the best way to have the education system in this Province.

If we do not do that and this minister does not allow that free flow or intellectual exchange, then he is doing a disservice to everybody in this Province and he will be noted for it in the long run.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that members of this House of Assembly to put the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) on notice and ask him to allow consultation with the various learned people in our society. When he brings the blueprint in, he should not bring it in just from the top of his head, like he did with the White Paper.

The White Paper was known for the things that it left out, not what it had in it. Nobody knows the reasoning and philosophy behind why we are reorganizing vocational post-secondary education. Nobody knows why we are doing it. We know that there are courses that are outdated. We know that we have instructors that are not up to the technology of our modern society. We know that. But we do not know why we are doing it. Are we doing it for that reason or are we doing it from the point of view of heading our people in a

direction for the next twenty or thirty years?

I will be speaking on this in the future. I will say with regard to the university-

MR. SIMMS:

Was the hon. member given leave?

MR. HISCOCK:

Yes, I was and may I point out, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Grand Falls were very, very upset when the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) said that with regard to the community college, that the center for the forestry and research and other things would be in Corner Brook. He took most of the people from Grand Falls and Central Newfoundland right off base.

The Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies talked about various vocational schools throughout the Province, saying which one would get welding, which one would get business and which one would be something else. When asked by the people of Central Newfoundland about which community college that would be concerned mainly with forestry, the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies said Corner Brook.

So I say to the people in our Province and the media in particular -

MR. SIMMS:

What did he about the centre for the Central Newfoundland Regional (inaudible)?

MR. TULK:

He said sit in your seat and do your work.

MR. FLIGHT:

He said it was a bluff.

MR. HISCOCK:

Obviously, it would be in Central Newfoundland.

My question is: Are we not cutting up our education system too much and politicising it? That is one point that is pointed out by the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey).

One of the main things is to make education more accessible to rural Newfoundland. Does that mean to bring those institutions into those communities or does it mean allowing the students to go to the institutions? I would say this. We failed on bringing the students to the institutions by allowing it to be so complicated with student loans and grants. Now we think we are going to be able to bring post-secondary education by cutting up the university, cutting up the fisheries college and moving all little tiny campus all around the Province. I am not sure if that is the right way to go. Those are things that I think our people should be debating.

Are we going to have another university in Central Newfoundland? Are we going to have another university down in Goose Bay or in Wabush? Are we having another one over in Stephenville? We are 500,000 people. We cannot even afford to pay the instructors who are at the vocational schools now. We cannot even afford to pay our teachers. Now we are talking about getting into other vocational community colleges, universities or whatever idea the minister has.

It may be good politics for the people of Central Newfoundland and it may be good politics for the

people of Labrador and it may be good politics for the people of the Burin Peninsula, but I am not really sure if it is good politics for the general education and the well being of our Province.

We found out what Morris did in politics. Morris built branch railways all around our Province for political reasons and, because that was done, we lost a full railway. My question now is going to be, are we going to be doing that with our fine international centers of learning, with the university, with the marine institute, with the fisheries college? Are we not fragmenting them too much? I am not really sure.

As I said, I also know that if we are going to be associating St. Anthony with the fisheries college, who is to say that everybody in St. Anthony has to go and do fishery-related courses. Is that the only thing they can do in St. Anthony or down in Burin or over on Bell Island? I would say it would be better if we gave our people in this Province the advancement of the money so they could come in to St. John's, so they could come in to Corner Brook and other areas. I am not really sure, as I said, if the idea is to have a dozen campus around this Province. The main thing, of course, is accessibility and I want our people educated.

If the member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) was here, what I said was we are reorganizing post-secondary education in this Province, not just vocational. It is going to affect the member's district. The only thing that I am saying is let us have an open debate on the reorganization of education in our

Province.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I believe we did give leave to the hon. member to go on for a few extra minutes. Is that accurate?

MR. SPEAKER:
That is right, yes.

MR. SIMMS:
We did give the hon. member leave but we have a member over here now who would like to say a few words before six o'clock. So if the hon. member would clue up. He has ten seconds.

MR. SPEAKER:
Maybe the hon. member would like to clue up his remarks.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Speaker, once leave is given in this house it cannot be taken away.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. HISCOCK:
So with regard to the -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. TULK:
By leave!

MR. TOBIN:
No leave.

MR. SPEAKER:
There is no leave.

MR. HISCOCK:

A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

My point is this: I thought I was correct. I believe that once a person is given leave to speak -

MR. BAIRD:

You would believe anything if you believe that.

MR. HISCOCK:

- that you speak for the amount of time that is allotted for you to speak, or the government can get up and take leave away. The point I am trying to make on this point of order, Mr. Speaker, is if leave is given, who is to decide how much leave? They did not say two seconds, two minutes or whatever. Now that I am making points and now that I am upsetting them, they want to cut me off. We will have other points on it. But I would like to ask the Speaker what is the definition of leave and can it be revoked?

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, order has been given by leave of the House and that leave has been withdrawn. I will now recognize the hon. member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member believes that leave is for life, then he would also believe that the moon is made of green cheese. I invite the member to go out and have a look, the moon is full. Perhaps that is why we are having so much trouble from the other side.

MR. FUREY:

How long were you in Cabinet?

MR. J. CARTER:

The moon is full and I invite hon. members to have a look.

MR. TOBIN:

A lot longer than you will be in it.

MR. J. CARTER:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I only have a few minutes before I will have to adjourn the debate.

MR. HISCOCK:

I hope the hon. member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) will do a better job on this bill than he did in the Department of Education.

MR. J. CARTER:

I think this is the Memorial University's Pensions Act, and it calls for, what amounts to, I suppose, almost an indexing of pensions. I do not find that too offensive. Although some members may think I should feel that way about it, I do not.

The unfortunate thing is that a person can have a fairly good salary but will retire on a very meager pension. Although the pension may seem reasonable at the time of retirement, it becomes less so as inflation catches up with it.

I would like to make another point.

MR. TULK:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! A point of order, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

The member for St. John's North, I think, just a few minutes ago got up and seriously reprimanded the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock). I know that the hon. member for Eagle River is not smarting from that.

But I would suggest to the hon. member for St. John's North that he would not go any further and make a fool of himself. It is well known that a former Premier of this Province, when talking about educational matters, felt the member was so completely incapable of doing anything that he flicked him out of Cabinet.

MR. FLIGHT:
Three months.

MR. TULK:
Now would he sit down and not make the same fool of himself that he made when he was the Minister of Education.

MR. FLIGHT:
And unlike the House Leader (Mr. Marshall) he never got back.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

We will adjourn the debate.

Admit His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

Your Honour, it is my agreeable duty on behalf of Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, Her Faithful Commons in Newfoundland, to present to Your Honour a bill for the appropriation of Supplementary Supply granted in the present Session.

AIDE-DE-CAMP:

It is His Honour's wish that you all be seated, please.

Bill No. 26, "An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending The Thirty-First Day Of March One Thousand Nine Hundred And Eighty-Five And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

Bill No. 49, "An Act For Granting To Her Majesty A Certain Sum Of Money For defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending The Thirty-First Day Of March One Thousand Nine Hundred And Eighty-Six And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

(Hon. W. Anthony Paddon):

In Her Majesty's name, I thank Her Loyal Subjects, I accept their benevolence and I assent to these bills.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House at its rising do adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3:00 p.m. and that this House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3:00 p.m.