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(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Patrick McNicholas

Friday

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The House met at 10:00 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL:

Always there, Mr. Speaker, to protect consumers, contrary to what the member for Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight) said yesterday, I have a little bit of positive advice for them this morning.

Since the busy Christmas season is upon us, I would like to take this opportunity to offer the following advice for the benefit of all consumers in the Province.

Attention to basic shopping and safety tips by informed consumers will help contribute to a safe, more enjoyable holiday season.

The essential point to remember when Christmas shopping is to prepare a realistic budget and stay within that budget. The practice of using credit cards for expensive items and with regular frequency for everyday items should be carefully considered. Credit card balances, especially after the Christmas season, are often pushed beyond the manageable debt load of many families.

A wise consumer should take special care to examine all goods before buying and should read and understand warranties, especially

those covering expensive items. I should point out that some warranties are not in force unless a registration card is mailed to the manufacturer within a specified time after the purchase date.

Still in line with the philosophy of "buyer beware" consumers are well advised to check the "three R's" of a store's policy. A store's policy with respect to refunds, repairs and replacement should be clearly understood by the consumer before purchasing any goods.

It is also a good practice to retain all receipts, as many retailers will not accept an item for replacement, refund or repair without the original receipt and, in some instances, the original package.

Another important concern at Christmas is safety, especially as it relates to fires in the Province. The Christmas Season is often marred by unexpected yet sometimes avoidable tragedies. By exercising a little care this holiday season, homeowners and apartment dwellers can substantially reduce the chance of fire and thereby reduce the likelihood of loss of life and property damage.

Some precautions I would like to advise consumers to consider include buying only electrical decorations approved by the Canadian Standards Association or by the Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada, placing natural Christmas trees well away from all sources of heat and keeping them well watered and using fire-proof or fire-resistant decorations.

The prudent use of indoor and

outdoor lighting decorations will also serve to decrease the likelihood of fire. By restricting the use of these lighting decorations to a few hours each night and by using the correct voltage bulbs, the chance of a fire or mishap is further reduced.

One often overlooked safety practise with respect to the installation of outdoor lighting decorations, involves the positioning of the bulbs downward, facing the ground, to avoid water and corrosion from entering the sockets.

I would also like to advise homeowners that a small portable fire extinguisher should be located in a strategic area in the home and should be checked and/or recharged every year. I should emphasize that a fire extinguisher is not meant to be a substitute for calling the fire department.

MR. TULK:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

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

MR. TULK:

If the hon. gentleman would speak up, then, perhaps, we might have some quite on the other side so that we can hear what he is saying over here?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:

One final suggestion, which is appropriate all throughout the year, is to keep the telephone numbers of the Fire and Police Departments and hospital emergency units readily available near your telephone, should the need arise to request the services of these departments.

In closing, I would like to remind consumers if they require any prepurchase information on any item, especially the many high-ticket items often purchased this time of year, that my staff, through the four offices located throughout the Province: St. John's (576-2600), Gander (651-4555), Grand Falls (489-5771) and Corner Brook (637-2445) can provide information and advice in this regard.

I am currently finalizing the administrative details associated with opening our new regional office in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, and services should be available to consumers in this area early in the new year.

My department is also available to assist consumers with the usual problems of exchanges, refunds, and complaints which often occur after the Christmas period, and I encourage you to contact our office in your area should you require any assistance or guidance during the Christmas shopping period.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Over the last two days, I have been wondering why so many ministers over there have not been in the House. Now I know why they are all leaving the sinking ship. Because it is certainly a sign of a sinking ship when a minister has to stand here in this House on a Friday morning and show the desperation of members on the other by bringing in something like this to read out to thirty-five or forty consumers, because nobody else in the Province is going to read this or see it or waste their time with it. He is talking about Christmas lights when we have a situation in the Province where people cannot afford to buy Christmas lights, and if they could afford to buy a string of Christmas lights, they could not afford to use them because of the electricity bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:

From the few comments the hon. member for Port de Grave (Mr. Efford) just made, he has no concern for giving the consumers in this Province any sound advice whatsoever, in my opinion. He just does not care about the consumers of this Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, there is no point of order.

The hon. the member for Port de

Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, imagine the minister standing on a point of order here in this House and telling us that we have no concern for the consumer, when continuously, day after day in this House, we are bringing up situations where people are out there hungry, with no jobs, no money coming in. The fishermen of this Province are being totally neglected by the government, they have been without incomes for two and three months, living on a promise of \$9.5 million. Well, I would like to ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications (Mr. Russell), and ask the government on the other side, could they expect to go to a grocery store with a promise in their hand and expect to receive groceries?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

He stands there this morning and reads a bunch of garbage like this to people who are hungry, people who have children with no clothes to wear, and he tells us on this side that we have no thought for the consumer. It is the people over there who have no thought for the consumer.

We are in the Christmas season, when people need money, they need clothes, they need food, they need money to buy gifts, they need money for essential things, and this is what you bring up to them, and you tell the consumers of this Province that you understand their problems, that you are going to help them.

The people of this Province know how to prevent a fire, they know

how to set up their Christmas lights, what they do not know is how they are going to buy groceries, buy food without money.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications and all ministers on the other side, it is time they took the concerns of consumers to heart and began helping them instead of making fun and making a nuisance of themselves.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I make reference to the Ministerial Statement made by the minister a moment ago, and the Statement made a few days ago by the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) on Seafood Month. Now, I have nothing against Seafood Month. I have nothing against Christmas, but I appeal to the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) and to the Speaker to take this matter under advisement. This is becoming an absolute circus. It is useful information the minister has given but it is information that is going to be dispersed anyway. It is not going to make any headlines, so why he chose to make that statement to the House I do not know. I submit that he is abusing the rules of the House in the sense that he is going outside the spirit of what Ministerial

Statements are all about.

Now, I have no citations to bring to the attention of the House, but I would ask the Government House Leader, instead of shooting back in partisan fashion, to just hear the substance of the plea I make to him and that I make to the Chair, that this matter be taken under advisement to see if we cannot find some parameters, parameters such as apply in Ottawa and in Queen's Park and in Westminster within respect to Ministerial Statements. It has gotten out of hand here, to the point that I believe the spirit of these Ministerial Statements is clearly being abused and, therefore, the rules of the House are being abused, in effect.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, to that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, a comment to that. We have just heard a statement by a concerned minister, giving out information with respect to a concern of consumers, and I am quite glad that the minister is showing his responsibility and his concern for the duties that have been imposed on him under his department.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To that point of order, we are now on Statements by Ministers and the hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications made what to my mind is a normal, correct ministerial statement. There is no point of order.

Oral Questions

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe). I do not know if the minister is aware, but there has been a serious problem with freight deliveries along the South Coast for the last month. The CN Marine freight boat broke down the end of October, and it was replaced by another one which went out of service last week with problems. In certain communities, particularly Grey River, they have experienced a shortage of basic foodstuffs. The people in Grey River last week had to share basic foodstuffs such as flour, sugar and milk. It was brought about because freight that was ordered to be delivered the first week of November did not reach there until November 21. Will the minister contact CN Marine to ensure an immediate replacement for the vessel which is now out of service?

MR. DAWE:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DAWE:
Mr. Speaker, just to deal with the preamble, the community which the hon. member refers to is also serviced by the Provincial ferry system, and it is quite possible that people getting in their various commodities and food stocks and so on can utilize that

service as well as the CN service.

As I indicated a couple of days ago, I will certainly bring the matter to the attention of CN Marine to see if there is anything that can be done to alleviate what the hon. member suggests is the situation, and I will check in to see if what he is saying is correct. If that is indeed so, I will contact CN Marine to see if anything can be done about it.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. GILBERT:
What I said is correct. I realize there is a ferry service, but the freight service for the South Coast originates in Port aux Basques and that is where supplies are coming from, and there was a food shortage last week. Will the minister now assure this House, in view of the Christmas holidays that are coming up and the extra freight and passengers moving along the South Coast during the next several weeks, that he will contact CN Marine to immediately reinstate full service to the South Coast? They put the Motor Vessel Tavernor on there to provide passenger service, not freight service, until December 1. I talked to CN as recently as yesterday, and they do not at this time-

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member is making a speech.

MR. GILBERT:
At this time CN Marine has no immediate plans to put in a vessel

for freight services. Will the minister now assure the people of the South Coast through this House that he will intervene with the Federal Minister of Transportation (Mr. Mazankowski) to see that an adequate vessel is put on to give the service which is required on the South Coast of Newfoundland?

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the member representing the area took the opportunity to get himself in Hansard and I am sure he will distribute it to his constituents, but the question has been dealt with previously. Obviously, I cannot assure the House of action to be taken or not taken by a Federal Crown corporation, but we are continuously looking at the situation as it relates to South Coast services. As a matter of fact, there is a committee of Federal and Provincial officials in place now looking at the whole South Coast service as well as other services to see if we cannot, jointly with the Federal government, bring about a much improved service not only to the people of the South Coast but to the people of Coastal Labrador as well.

MR. GILBERT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member of Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:

I can assure the minister that my

Objections flow from my concern for the people on the South Coast and not to get my name in Hansard. Is the minister aware that his buddies in Ottawa have now made a proposal to C.N. Marine to cut out service to five ports along the South Coast of Newfoundland, the same ports they tried to cut out last year? Is he aware of that?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member is taking the opportunity to voice the same concern he did last year, and at that time, of course, we interceded not only with the Federal member for the area, who was on top of it right away, but also with the federal Transport Department, which contacted C.N. Marine and subsequently reinstated a number of services. However, as I indicated last year when the same question was asked, changes are occurring in the South Coast movement of people and freight as it relates to the introduction of improved Provincial ferry services, which have augmented, and in some cases taken the place of C.N. Marine coastal services, and improvements have been made in the roads network and so on. We are continuously looking at changes that will be occurring. Over the past number of years, under several administrations federally, a number of routes have been removed from service, much more substantially more in number than the four or five mentioned by the hon. member. But we are certainly looking at that and if changes occur to the service, I am sure they will be done in the best interests of the people of the South Coast.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Housing (Mr. Dinn). It is a rather involved question, so I would ask for a little latitude in my presentation of it. I am asking the minister if he is aware of what I consider to be an unconstitutional, scurrilous policy on the part of Canada Mortgage and Housing with respect to mortgage insurance fees? If I can be allowed to explain, Mr. Speaker, people who apply for and get a high ratio mortgage loan from Canada Mortgage and Housing are required to have a mortgage insurance placed on that loan to protect the lender against default on the part of the borrower. In order to get that mortgage insurance, a borrower must pay three per cent of the mortgage. So a couple with a \$70,000 mortgage, Mr. Speaker, have to pay a mortgage insurance fee of \$2100.

In the case where that mortgage is liquidated prior to its termination, is the minister aware that CMHC will not refund that part of the premium that has been paid by the borrower? I consider it to be an unconscionable act on their part, especially in view of the fact that the private sector in that particular area of business, the MICC -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member is making a speech now.

MR. W. CARTER:

- refund a part of the premium. So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: Is he aware of this policy? If he is, what action has he taken to put a stop to it? And if no action has been taken, will he then take action with CMHC to put a stop to that unconscionable policy of theirs?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Twillingate for bringing that to my attention. I will check it out with CMHC and see what if any action can be taken by them to correct the situation.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Stephenville.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Minister of Housing: Would he confirm rental increases are going to occur in Stephenville with the NLHC apartments? Would he also explain to this House the justification for the increases?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, there have been several rental increases announced by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing for 1986. The rental increases in Stephenville, of course, were made on the results of a survey was conducted in the

Stephenville area on the basis of economic rentals. I can tell the hon. member that economic rentals in Newfoundland and Labrador were never meant to be subsidized by the taxpayers of the Province. In the last year alone these units have been subsidized to the tune of about \$1 million. Of course, we think that that is not a normal situation. I would like to differentiate between economic rental units and subsidized rental units. Subsidized rental units in the Province are those units subsidized by the federal and provincial governments on the basis of a 75/25 formula and, therefore, go to poor people or lower income people.

The rentals that the hon. member is talking about, where we are having a rent increase in the Stephenville area, are for economic rental units. It was never the intention of any government to subsidize people in economic rental units. The object of the exercise, Mr. Speaker, is for those people to pay their way. These are economic rental units, they are not for low income people, and they should pay their way. In the last year alone in the Stephenville area, the people of this Province have been asked to pay to the tune of about \$1 million in the difference of what a good economic rental charge would be and what it costs the government of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to supply those housing needs.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. K. AYLWARD:

While I recognize people have to pay their way, Mr. Speaker, the increases for these economic rentals are going up anywhere from 14 per cent to 29 per cent, over \$100 on some units. One of the concerns I have is that we have had years of financial restraint, zero and zero, and in the last three years this is going to come to a total -

MR. MARSHALL:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

The hon. gentleman is not asking a supplementary question, he is making a speech.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the point of order is well taken. I ask the hon. member to ask his supplementary.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Would the minister confirm that the increases are from 14 per cent to 29 per cent, and would he explain how this can be justified in years of restraint, zero and zero?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the hon. member that the rental increases range up to the maximum of 25 per cent. Just to give hon. members an example, the rental on a one bedroom apartment in Stephenville right now is \$264, with heat, hot water, fridge and stove supplied. I think anyone in Newfoundland would be delighted to

get a one bedroom apartment anywhere in the Province for \$264 with heat, hot water, fridge and stove supplied.

Now, when we did a market review in Stephenville it indicated to us that the normal market rent should be somewhere around \$330. We did not increase it immediately to \$330, even though last year we lost, as I told the hon. member before, to the tune of \$1 million, which was paid for by the taxpayers of all the Province. We did not do that immediately. What we did was we graduated the increase over a period of time. The reason for the larger increase in Stephenville as opposed to other economic rental units in the Province, is because of the extreme pressure applied by the previous member for Stephenville through the Housing Corporation. As a result, even after the increase the hon. member talks about, the rental increase imposed will still not return to the Province the cost of operations.

MR. FLIGHT:

You are taking up time. It was a short question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DINN:

The hon. member for Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight) obviously is not interested in the answer, but I am sure the hon. member for Stephenville is interested in the answer because he is concerned about his constituents and what the rental increases are all about. When the rent increases are concluded for 1986, they still will not pay back to the Province the amount of money it costs to operate those units.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Stephenville.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

To that point, because of the lack of policy or sense of direction, over the last three years the increases run over 70 per cent. I am asking the minister why are they trying to do it so quickly? Why would they not even consider doing it in a determined fashion which would not hit these people out there so hard? Right now the economy out there is not in the best of shape, and people on fixed incomes are living in those places. There are places where heat and light is being paid for, and these people now, with the electricity rates in this Province, are getting nailed to the wall. I am asking government to come up with a policy that will be a little bit fair or a lot more fair. I mean, you just cannot have a 70 per cent increase over three years. These people are asking me: What is going to happen next year? Is it going to be another 20 per cent next year after another market survey? So I am asking government for an answer to the question, Will you consider lowering those rates of rental increases and also give Stephenville a sense of direction as to where this policy is going in the future?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make two points with respect to what the hon. member is saying. Number one: Does he think that it is justified for the people outside the economic rental units in Stephenville to be paying, by

their taxes, for those people who are inside? The hon. member cannot really justify to me that the people who are not in subsidized rental or low income units but economic rental units should be paying for the people who are inside. I think it is fair that they should pay their way. I do not think the taxpayers of the Province or the taxpayers of Stephenville who are outside the units should be paying for those people who are inside the units.

Number two: Are the rent increases justified?

MR. TULK:

Should this be allowed to go on in this House?

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. the member for Fogo is not interested in the answer, but the fact of the matter is I think the people of the Province are interested in the answer. The question that the hon. member asked was: Are the increases justified? Well, Mr. Speaker, if the increases are not justified, there is a Residential Tenancies Board in this Province that the tenants in Stephenville can apply to and the board will determine whether the rent increases are justified or not. If they are not justified, they will not allow the increases.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

As I understood the question, the hon. member was asking why the increases were done so quickly and could they be lowered.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, the reason why it was done so quickly was to bring it up

to a point where the people of the Province would not have to pay for people who are in economic rental units. We are not talking about poor people or people who are in subsidized rental units. That is the short answer to the question.

If the rent increases are exorbitant or too high, then they have an appeal process put in place by this government and, if they follow that appeal process and the Tenancies Board feel that the rent increases are exorbitant and should not be allowed over that short period of time, then they will make that determination.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Stephenville.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Would the minister confirm that the law firm that represented NLHC against the Harmon Tenants Association was the law firm of the former MHA for Stephenville?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:

I did not get the import of the hon. member's question.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Would the minister confirm - I know they have to apply the Western Appeals Board - that the law firm of the former MHA of Stephenville, represented the NLHC against the Harmon Tenants Association?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, I do not see anything wrong with that at all. The former member for Stephenville is a member of a law firm and I suppose there are only one or two law firms in Stephenville but to answer the question I am not aware that the former hon. member for Stephenville, who is an excellent lawyer, represented the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation in NLHC's appearance before the Residential Tenancies Board. There has not been an appeal on these latest rent increases to the Tenancies Board and I would assume the tenants out there will chose a lawyer, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation will chose a lawyer, and the Tenancies Board will decide.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

The Minister of Housing just asked if we expected the taxpayers outside the economic rental units to pay for those living in them. Well, I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Young) about the taxpayers of this Province. The minister earlier indicated that there was an overall consultancy fee for the interior decoration of this building and the annex. I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works what was that fee?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Public

Works and Services.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I will take the question under advisement and get the answer for the hon. gentleman. I cannot tell him right away what is the fee. I know the hon. gentleman wants to get up to show off to the students from Ascension Collegiate. I take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to welcome the students and teachers from Ascension Collegiate to this House of Assembly this morning.

Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

When a minister gets on his feet and makes an answer like that it just shows how much class he has.

Will the minister confirm that the interior decorating was done by one Suzanne Campbell? Would he also advise us on whose advise she was hired. Was it tendered?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Public Works.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey) asked me that question on Wednesday. It is only this morning I asked my officials if they had the answer but they said, no, it would take another couple of days. I will table the answer. It is unfortunate that the hon. gentleman for Port de Grave is not in the House often enough to know what is going on.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Minister of Public Works that I do not miss any time in this House of Assembly except when I am doing my constituency work, and that is a duty I owe to my constituents.

This is no joking matter. We have a situation in this Province where people are hungry and the government over there has a responsibility to tell the people where their money is going.

My final question to the minister: Is it the policy of the Minister of Public Works not to answer questions, or is it a fact that he just does not know what is going on in the Department of Public Works?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Public Works.

MR. YOUNG:
I appreciate the fact that the hon. member said he was out doing his constituency work. I wonder why am I receiving so many letters from his district if he is looking after his constituents? Mr. Speaker, I receive about three letters a week from his district.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Can you read them?

MR. YOUNG:
How can I tell the hon. gentleman what the interior decorator cost? I do not know who the interior decorator was, Mr. Speaker, but I told the hon. gentleman I will get

the answer for him.

MR. K. AYLWARD:
We know, we know who she is.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. YOUNG:
Well, why ask the questions? Why do you not tell the hon. gentleman so he will know? I will give the answer, Mr. Speaker, I will give the cost, I will give it all in the House of Assembly in answers to the question. But, Mr. Speaker, we did something like \$180 million worth of construction last year you cannot expect me to give you, just like that, what it cost to renovate this, that and the other thing, and how much paint when on hon. members' offices I cannot do it. I told him I will get the questions -

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Forget the questions! We want answers!

MR. YOUNG:
I will get you the answers.

MR. FLIGHT:
We would like the answers, not the questions.

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Energy responsible for the Petroleum Directorate, responsible for Hydro, President of the Council, hon. House Leader and Vice-Premier (Mr. Marshall). This question has been asked many times this sitting, Mr. Speaker, but I would

like to ask again it again. In light of the fact that the Premier about three weeks ago told the House of Assembly that legislation implementing the Atlantic Accord would be introduced into this House in the second week of November and it is now November 28, could the minister tell us why we have not seen the legislation implementing the Accord, particularly in light of the Premier's information to the House?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

I am sort of disappointed today. I thought that the Opposition would get up and note the outstanding leadership and direction that the Premier has given at the First Ministers Conference.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:

The fact is the hon. the Premier is being nationally acclaimed as the great Canadian that the hon. gentlemen were insinuating he was not for so many years. Well, Mr. Speaker, legislation with respect to the Atlantic Accord, as the hon. gentleman realizes, is going to be mirror legislation, it is going to be legislation that is passed in the House of Commons and here.

MR. SIMMS:

Explain that. He does not understand it.

MR. MARSHALL:

No, he does not understand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. MARSHALL:

Hon. gentlemen in the Opposition would look in a mirror and they would see a different picture of themselves than other people see by looking at them.

MR. MATTHEWS:

'Mirror, mirror on the wall.'

MR. MARSHALL:

So they would not understand. So to all intents and purposes it is identical legislation. That being so, it has to be passed in the House of Commons and it has to be passed in the House of Assembly. So it has to be coincidentally. I can report to this House that, as with all matters with respect to the implementation of the Atlantic Accord, everything is proceeding extremely smoothly. I know that the hon. gentlemen there opposite will be grateful to hear that, will be very happy to hear that. So we are in the process of doing that. I think next week I will be able to give the hon. gentleman a better timetable. Morning, afternoon and night, weekends, Sundays and everything, we work in this government. I am meeting with a high federal government official on the weekend and I will be able to give the hon. gentleman more on this on Monday or Tuesday.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

With regard to the hon. House Leader's comments on the leadership we are getting, we

indeed have been watching the Premier and we are proud of the way he is performing. We are particularly impressed with the way he congratulated Mr. Mulroney for his co-operation on the FFT issue. We are particularly impressed by that.

Mr. Speaker, there is a clause in the Accord that says that the legislation must be proclaimed within a year of the signing of the Accord, which I presume was late February. The Order Paper is blocked full, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister give us his guess on when are we going to debate that? Are we going to debate it before Christmas or are we going to come back in January and debate the Accord? Why is the minister refusing to bring in the Accord to this date, Mr. Speaker? Why? Can the minister tell us the reason? Is he waiting for Ms Carney to juice up, to improve Clause 54 for him? Why, Mr. Speaker, have we not got it? When are we going to get it?

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Speaker, with respect to the hon. gentleman's remarks with respect to the matter of factory freezer trawlers, how very proud we are that the Premier sticks to his guns!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:
He speaks for Newfoundland. He is not like the Liberals who speak out of one side of their mouth one

day when they are talking to Liberals, and the other side when they are dealing with somebody else. Mr. Speaker, I would imagine in the conversation, although I have not spoken to the Premier about this, he probably had to apologize for the fact that there were elected members in this Province who voted for factory freezer trawlers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Right on! Right on!

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Speaker, the Energy critic for the Opposition gets up in this House on the Atlantic Accord and he says the Atlantic Accord says that legislation has to be enacted and proclaimed within a year. Now that is what he says. Well, why does he not read the section? It does not say that at all. What is says is introduced into the House of Commons and introduced into the Legislation within a year, and it most definitely will be, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. gentleman purports to be the Energy critic and he gets up to speak on one of the most essential provisions of the Atlantic Accord and makes a statement which is completely and absolutely incorrect. What is says, Mr. Speaker, is that it be introduced before February 11 in both Houses, and it certainly will be.

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TULK:
I have a question for the Deputy Premier. It concerns The Conflict of Guidelines in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, in some provinces, for example New Brunswick, it is illegal for a Cabinet Minister to serve as a minister and practice his profession as a lawyer. Would the minister agree that this is the proper procedure for Conflict of Interest Guidelines to follow?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, would you not think that they would get up and talk about the issues of the day, like the First Ministers Conference? Did you notice the type of Question Period today? They tried to sieze themselves with public issues, today and yesterday, and how moribund and dead the Question Period was because hon. gentlemen there opposite have no appreciation of public affairs.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to respond to that particular question. I responded, I thought, fully. Now they cannot even invent their own questions, they have to rely on CBC and on On Camera. That question was asked of me on the programme and I think I responded fairly well and forthrightly with respect to it. I am not going to respond to the nonsense that the hon. gentleman raised. The hon. gentleman has had instructions from his leader to ask these questions so that the leader's attack would not appear to be so bitterly personal as it obviously is, and the deeply ingrained jealousy that he feels in his soul because he has not been able to match the achievements that this administration has been able to achieve over that period of years.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

I remember the television show the other night and I might say to the minister that he made the same fool of himself when he stood on his feet now as he made the other night. The Premier has said, Mr. Speaker, that he wants - these are his words - 'our Conflict of Interest Guidelines to be second to none in Canada.' Yet everything is left up to the Premier to decide whether it is a conflict of interest or not.

I would like to ask the minister, as he is one of the proponents of The Conflict of Interest Guidelines, one of the people who put them in place, does this fact indeed not weaken our Conflict of Interest Guidelines? Should not The Conflict of Interest Guidelines be administered and judged by an independent person? Or does he still want the Premier, that great political animal, to carry on the way he is now?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

I am proud to say that our Conflict of Interest Guidelines are second to none in Canada. As a matter of fact, our Conflict of Interests Guidelines were amongst the first to be enacted in Canada, and we have also carried it into practice so that we have an administration in this Province which for the first time is regarded as being completely open, completely honest and having the best interest of the public and the people of Newfoundland at

heart.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!

MR. TULK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier points out that the guidelines are the best in Canada. Indeed they may be, but let me say to him that the administration of them is probably the worst in Canada, and the administration is done by the Premier, himself a politician. So I would ask the Deputy Premier to stand in this House and tell us whether or not he is the great proponent of Conflict of Interest Guidelines, the Public Tendering Act and so on. I ask him now to stand in this House and tell us in view of the performance that we saw come out of the Premier the other day with his slimey little resolution, would he not agree that the Premier should be the very last person to judge whether a person is in a conflict of interest? Because the Premier is nothing if he is not a politician. Everything he does is political rather than for the interest of this Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to clarify something. There is no such position as Deputy Premier. A Deputy Premier is half a Premier and none of us could even assume to get to those heights with the present incumbent in office. Mr.

Speaker, there are not different grades of ministers, we are all the same, so there is no such position as Deputy Premier. Mr. Speaker, who is going to decide? The way the hon. gentlemen would have conflict of interest is that Leo and Rex would be the ones to decide. That is the way that the hon. gentlemen seem to wish it and God help us and save us from that particular fate. Mr. Speaker, I am glad conflict of interest has come up again. They abandoned it on Thursday, they have abandoned it today, they came back and tried to ask questions on the public affairs of this Province, and how moribund they are. The press have nothing to report as a result of it because of the way the hon. gentlemen acted.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest the hon. gentlemen get about the business they are elected to do, ask questions of public issues, and never mind taking instructions and coming in here and reading Rexographs every day.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has now elapsed.

MR. BAKER:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the purpose of Question Period is for members of the Opposition to ask questions of ministers regarding their particular responsibilities. The ministers have a choice of either answering or not answering, but when they answer, they should be specific to

the question. What we saw here today, Mr. Speaker, was an absolute disgrace. It went against all of the principles of Question Period.

The buffoons opposite, Mr. Speaker, are now trying to prevent me from stating my point.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. BAKER:

Could you ask the hon. buffoons opposite to be quiet, Mr. Speaker?

Now then, Mr. Speaker, what we saw today were instances where ministers, in trying not to answer questions, would repeat the same thing. I noted one instance where one minister repeated the same point five different times in his very lengthy response. The attempt is obvious and the semi-Premier over there - if he does not like Deputy Premier - gets off on FFTs and everything else. Mr. Speaker, make no wonder we cannot get any headway during Question Period on days like this when these ministers opposite are allowed to ramble on and on and on. We have lots of other questions which we wanted to get in today. I feel, Mr. Speaker, this is a deliberate attempt to prevent us from asking those questions and I would ask that you, Mr. Speaker, look back through Hansard over the last few days and take note of what has happened. Mr. Speaker, I appeal for your protection to ensure that the Question Period serves its function. These hon. ministers opposite are preventing that from happening.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! To that point of order, there is no point of order.

I would like at this stage to welcome to the galleries fifty Level II students from Ascension Collegiate in Bay Roberts, with their teachers Edward Neil and Corbett Newman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Answers to Questions
for which Notice has been Given

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS. VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to provide an answer to questions posed yesterday by the hon. member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick). I am pleased to tell the House that arrangements have been made for policing Rigolet in December and in the New Year which are satisfactory to the mayor of that town. This matter was actually being dealt with by the Department of Justice and the RCMP yesterday when the member posed his questions.

There will be an RCMP officer in Rigolet for several days during December, including the Christmas and New Year's period. An officer will be there on December 6, 7, and 8, which is a weekend, and from December 19 through New Year's Day inclusive.

During the New Year, officers will patrol Rigolet, staying in the communities several days each

month. As soon as the Winter ends, around June, a patrol cabin will be flown into Rigolet and set up there. The patrol cabin will contain proper accommodations for police officers and detention cell, which the community now lacks.

As I assume most members are aware, Rigolet is a community with a population of about 300. It is quite isolated, lacking road links to other centres in Labrador. Throughout recorded history, there has been a very low crime rate there. Unfortunately, this pattern was deviated from this Fall when serious problems arose. In response to those developments, the RCMP were quick to station an officer there full-time for the past two or three months. Prior to this Fall, police visited Rigolet only very occasionally. From now on, there will be a much stronger police presence there and there will be an officer there throughout the upcoming Christmas and New Year period.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to praise the RCMP for their responsiveness to the concerns of the leaders of Rigolet and commend the members of the force, the individuals officers, who have shown professionalism and dedication to their duty in volunteering to serve in Rigolet. On very short notice, an officer volunteered to work in Rigolet during the Christmas period and arrangements have been made for that officer, with his wife and young child, to stay at the Rigolet Nursing Station during the Christmas and New Year period.

Mr. Speaker, my final comment is that late yesterday afternoon, after these arrangements were made, the Associate Deputy

Attorney General phoned Mayor Henry Broomfield of Rigolet, discussed the proposal with him, and the mayor expressed delight at these plans for improving policing in Rigolet.

Orders of the Day

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Farm Development Loan Act," carried. (Bill No. 57)

On motion, Bill No. 57 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice to introduce a bill, "An Act To Remove Anomalies And Errors In The Statute Law," carried. (Bill No. 58)

On motion, Bill No. 58 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Labrador Linerboard Limited Agreement Act, 1979 In Order To Ratify, Confirm And Adopt An Amending Agreement Entered Into Between Her Majesty The Queen In Right Of The Province Represented By The Honourable The Minister Of Forest Resources And Lands And Abitibi-Price Inc," carried. (Bill No. 42)

On motion, Bill No. 42 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on certain bills, Mr.

Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Fisheries Loan Act". (Bill No. 21).

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):
Shall Clause 1 carry?

MR. TULK:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. TULK:
"An Act To Amend The Fisheries Loan Act", Bill No. 21. Mr. Chairman, there are many things about the Fisheries Loan Board that one could bring into this House. There are a number of questions that people are asking, particularly this year. In Committee of the Whole, of course, is the proper place for us to ask those types of questions. The Finance Minister (Dr. Collins) is gone, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) is gone, the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands (Mr. Simms) should be gone - no, he is in the wrong place again, as usual - the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) is gone, the Minister of Justice (Ms Verge) is not in her seat, the Intergovernmental Affairs Minister (Mr. Ottenheimer) is not in his seat.

While those people are all gone, we would expect the Vice-Premier, or the Deputy Premier, whatever his position is over there, one of his many, to answer certain questions about the Fisheries Loan

Board, in particular just what is being done.

We saw the Fisheries Minister make a couple of public statements as to what was going to happen with the Fisheries Loan Board, and it fell far short of what is going to be required this year for some of the inshore fishermen.

One of the proposals which has been put to government through our report on the inshore fishery, which they refused to have tabled in this House and they have refused to have read, of course, was that there would be a moratorium placed on loans from the Fisheries Loan Board this year. The minister responsible is not here, so we would like to ask the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) if, indeed, there is any consideration being given to putting a moratorium on fisheries loans this year from the Fisheries Loan Board? We would also like to ask him, and we objected to this when the member for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) was Minister of Fisheries, about the placing of loans greater than \$50,000 with the chartered banks. It has been proven, and I think the member for Bonavista South himself will agree now that he does not occupy that position of Minister of Fisheries - I think he will. Maybe he will not, because it was his bill, it was his idea to put them there in the first place and maybe he is too proud. But privately, I think, he would agree that the loans over \$50,000 should be placed where they properly belong, and that is with the Fisheries Loan Board itself rather than with the chartered banks. Because many of our fishermen in years of bad catches are finding themselves - this year in particular - in positions where the banks are now

threatening, in some cases, to take their homes, to take property which belongs to them, and many of them are finding themselves in positions where they are practically being forced out of doors.

So I would ask the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall), the minister responsible for everything, to try and answer some of those questions, those very real questions that our people have concerning the Fisheries Loan Board itself.

We are not criticizing the officials at the The Fisheries Loan Board. They are a very receptive kind of people, but they operate within the guidelines set down by this government and those guidelines, in many cases, are detrimental to many of our fishermen, particularly in view of the fact that we, in Newfoundland, are faced with, it seems to all people who work in the fishery with the exception of the federal biologists, declining stocks in the Province, the stocks are not building in the way they should.

As a matter of fact, it looks to us as if government, itself, has a deliberate policy, and this is very widespread throughout the Province and I would ask the minister to respond to it, because it is very important for our people to know where we are going, but it seems as you travel around this Province, as you look at the regulations which are in place and which are being put in place every day, that there is a deliberate attempt, particularly on the part of the Federal government and somewhat on the part of the Provincial government, to do away with the inshore fishery.

Of course, FFTs is another example of that. I do not want to have to show the minister my correspondence from Eric Nielsen, who was Acting Minister of Fisheries when the decision was made on FFTs, congratulating us on our correspondence to him concerning our opposition to FFTs, and stating that we aptly represented the people of Atlantic Canada - I think those were his words. I do not want the minister to get up and start on the FFT stuff because, if he does, I am going to have to show him a copy of that letter, and I do not want him reading my letters from Eric Nielsen. It was, perhaps, the kind of representation that should have been made by the Provincial government rather than by the Opposition. But I would like the Deputy Premier - oh, I am not allowed to call him that this morning, he is peeved.

MR. SIMMONS:

The Premier de facto.

MR. TULK:

Yes, the Premier de facto. He is peeved with Greg Stamp and CBC, he has been all upset for the last couple of days and I do not want him to stand up and make a fool of himself again, I want him to stand up and be some sort of statesmen and give some of the answers we need. Will he do that?

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. TULK:

Yes, he is going to do it. God bless him!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, I will respond to what the hon. gentleman has put before the Committee but the fact of the matter is, what the hon. gentleman is really doing, and let us be clear about this, is getting up and debating matters relating to the principle of the Bill that were appropriately brought up in second reading and which undoubtedly were fully debated at that particular time.

I can tell the hon. gentleman that the purpose of the Committee is to examine the Bill clause by clause, and the purpose of this is to determine whether there are any problems with respect to the Bill itself with respect to the clauses that have been drafted, and whether there should be any changes made with respect to that.

The hon. gentleman is talking about general issues with respect to the Fisheries Loan Board. As far as this government is concerned, it is going to provide, to the optimum that it possibly can, assistance to fishermen to purchase boats, as it has so freely done in the past. A little while ago, it was the Government of Newfoundland which entirely financed the Fisheries Loan Board but, because of the increasing demands on the Board, itself, and because of the necessity for greater loans and greater amounts by way of loans, it was thought to be more appropriate to have arrangements made with the banks and we made arrangements with the banks. They are the ones that finance the whole situation of loans which are over \$50,000, and we subsidize the interest rates, or what have you, and that has worked out fairly well.

Now, if hon. gentlemen want to get into a debate on the general

principle of the bill, nobody, apparently, can stop them because there is no such rule of relevance in the House. But we have already debated this fully and I think that on a clause by clause consideration of the Bill the purpose is to look at the clauses themselves to see whether any modification or improvement can be made to the amendment which has already passed this House in principle. But if hon. gentlemen have any real questions which were not brought up in second reading, we will be glad to respond to them. However, I would remind hon. gentlemen that there is a certain procedure and I would appeal to them to comply with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to have just a few words on this bill because I think the Fisheries Loan Board is probably one of the most important agencies in the Province, certainly insofar as the inshore fishery is concerned. I think the points raised by my colleague, the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) are good ones. This year there is a lot of unrest, a lot of misery in the rural parts of our Province, and uncertainty, especially in the fishing areas, where fishermen are still waiting to find out what is going to be available to them under the so-called emergency make-work programme. That has been dragged out and now, of course, the same thing exists with respect to what is going to happen this year concerning their payments to the Fisheries Loan Board.

I think the government is going to have to give some very serious

thought to imposing a moratorium on the payment of Fisheries Loan Board loans. The fishermen of our Province just do not have the money to pay them. I have talked to them in my own district, for example, where things look pretty bleak. It has been a bleak year for most of our fishermen and, in fact, most of them are preoccupied right now with trying to keep body and soul together, as it were, and I do not think we should add to their misery by allowing them to continue to wonder what is going to happen to their Fisheries Loan Board loans. If government has any compassion at all, or any interest in keeping the inshore fishery alive, and I am not fully convinced that they do, Mr. Chairman, but if they do, then I believe they should let the fishermen know now where they stand to at least take them out of their misery to that extent.

I do not altogether agree with the House Leader (Mr. Marshall) and his comments with respect to forcing fishermen who wish to borrow over \$50,000 to go to the chartered banks. We all know that banks can be very impersonal and, in fact, at times they can make unreasonable demands on people who borrow money from them. I am inclined to think, Mr. Chairman, that in a great many cases the banks are applying a lot of undue and unnecessary pressure to fishermen who have been forced to borrow money from them by virtue of that regulation which is now in place in the Fisheries Loan Board.

We all know what is happening in the Province with respect to a number of our fishermen who borrowed money to buy gear under the federal Fisheries Development Act. We know that in a great many cases these fishermen are being

caught in the middle, as it were. The guarantee that would normally be in place by the federal government, the limit is only 10 per cent of the amount borrowed. In a great many cases, a lot of fishermen are now being literally driven insane almost because bank managers are demanding payment on their loans and, in many cases, Mr. Chairman, are threatening legal action, threatening foreclosure action on their personal property.

Banks can be very cruel at times and very insensitive to the real needs of people, and that is what worries me about the policy of the loan board in forcing people, fishermen, to obtain loans in excess of \$50,000 from banks. I think these loans should revert back to the Fisheries Loan Board. At least the government is guaranteeing the loans, so I think they should revert back to the Fisheries Loan Board, as they were prior to the time that policy took effect.

Another problem, Mr. Chairman, that I think should certainly be looked into by the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) and the government has got to do with federal licensing. For example, it has often been the case where a fisherman will go to the Fisheries Loan Board, or to the bank, borrow money with which he will buy a boat and probably some fishing gear, and through circumstances beyond his control he might very well be forced out of the fishery for two years, maybe, as was the case this year, that fishermen saw fit to abandon their boats for a while and get a job elsewhere in order to keep body and soul together. Now, the policy of the Federal Licensing Division is that once a man has been out of the

fishery - I believe it is for two years - he will lose his full-time license.

I have a case in my own riding where a man has a fifty foot longliner, fully equipped at a considerable cost to himself, and I am sure the man is in debt to the Loan Board and probably to the banks. In 1984, that man saw what was coming, saw the prospects of maybe a poor fishery, so he tied up his boat and went into the lumber woods and cut wood, and I think he spent some time there this year, as well. Anyway, a little while ago he was informed by the federal Department of Fisheries that by virtue of the fact that he was out of the fishery for 1984 his full-time license had been cancelled and he had been reverted back to a part-time fisherman. I think the government should take some action to protect our full-time fishermen against the eventuality of that happening. That, too, is a very serious matter. Not only does it cause the fishermen a lot of concern, but if the fishermen are unable to meet their payments and liquidate their loans, then, of course, it is causing the Loan Board and the government serious problems as well.

Mr. Chairman, I am a little out of touch with the operation of the Loan Board, but I think they should be a little bit more receptive to the needs and the problems of the small-boat fishermen. I think they should, and maybe they do, I am not sure of this, arrange to have their meetings in parts of the Province other than St. John's, at Atlantic Place. I would like to see the Fisheries Loan Board, or certainly representatives from the Fisheries Loan Board, travel the

Province almost on a regular basis and make themselves accessible to fishermen who have problems, who want to sit down eyeball to eyeball, as it were, with the Chairman of that board or with a representative from the board. It is not enough to tell a man to put his complaints in writing. Sometimes that is easier said than done. I think the the Loan Board should be a little more personalized and the fishermen given a chance to sit down with officials or members of the Board to discuss their problems.

Certainly, Mr. Chairman, I would again urge the House Leader (Mr. Marshall) to make representation to his colleague, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout), and to the Premier, to, first of all, make a decision that there will be a moratorium placed on payments for this year. I think they might as well officially place that moratorium, because I do not think many fishermen are going to be in a position, really, to make their payments. I think fishermen and their families have gone through enough this year, and I am sure those of us who represent fishing districts can attest to that fact. Fishermen have gone through enough. There is probably more misery and more uncertainty and more despair today in rural Newfoundland, certainly in the fishing communities, than there has been there since the 1930's. I do not think they should be put through the added uncertainty and anxiety of wondering what is going to happen to their Fisheries Loan Board loans.

So I would ask the House Leader to recommend to his colleagues that the government make an early decision to place a moratorium on loans for this year and not to

keep the fishermen waiting and dangling, as it were, to let them know what is going to happen to them. Because, as I said, to keep them waiting is cruel and it is only adding to their great problems, and, believe me, they do have problems.

Mr. Chairman, before this Committee winds up I would hope the Government House Leader could indicate exactly what government's plans are with respect to this year's operation of the Loan Board, if, in fact, they will place a moratorium on payments, and what other little concessions they are prepared to make to the inshore fishermen.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, I can accept what the hon. gentleman said because I know the hon. gentleman is speaking out of concern, a concern we all share with respect to the financial condition which obviously will reflect the living conditions of people who are in the fishery.

The matter of the loans themselves, I do not think it is fair, really, to turn around and say the banks are moving in, and what have you, because all these actions would be taken with the knowledge of the Fisheries Loan Board. I can tell the hon. gentleman that the government has tried to administer that programme in a sensitive manner, and the Loan Board has received directions to administer it in a sensitive manner, as well, and we will be addressing and have been addressing these situations as they occur. They are obviously

most difficult for people who are affected. We are not just sloughing that aside by saying that it is a most difficult situation, we realize that the people who are most directly affected by it are really heavily affected by it.

But I can assure the hon. gentleman that the same degree of sensitivity that government has shown in matters of this nature, and that the Loan Board has shown in this and other matters, particularly with respect to the fishery, will be evident as we proceed into the days and the weeks ahead. I think the hon. gentleman's remarks are appropriate, appropriate from the point of view of an expression of concern we all share. I hope I have given him an answer with respect to it.

In the meantime, I am not criticizing the hon. gentleman's speech and I hope I have responded to it, but I would like to be able to see the House proceed with some order of business. The purpose of the Committee is primarily for clause by clause examination of bills, then we have to get back into second readings and there are many bills which have yet to be passed. This one has been fully debated and I would hope that we would be able to concentrate in Committee on the clause by clause way, which is the traditional purpose for the Committee itself.

MR. W. CARTER:

I have a question, Mr. Chairman, for the minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

I am not sure I heard the minister

correctly, but in his reply to my few remarks did I hear him say that in cases where fishermen do have loans through the banks that before any foreclosure action is initiated, or instituted by the bank because of a default in payment, that the government would have to concur, the Loan Board would have to concur with that action? Is that what the minister said?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Not necessarily, Mr. Chairman, and I am glad he is giving me an opportunity to respond. I do not think that would necessarily occur in all individual cases. I mean, it would occur if somebody is chronically in arrears and is not paying and has the wherewithal to pay. What I was trying to communicate to the hon. gentleman is that government and the Board, itself, is aware of the particular situation and is prepared to approach it in a realistic and sensitive manner, as circumstances require at the present time, because of the present circumstances.

MR. W. CARTER:

Will the minister then, Mr. Chairman, give some thought to giving an undertaking to fishermen who were forced to the banks to borrow money in excess of \$50,000 that government would use its considerable influence on the banks to ensure that foreclosure or other action against fishermen who are in default this year will be done only with their full knowledge and consent - and I underline - in cases where circumstances dictate that kind of consideration is warranted? Mr.

Chairman, I have constituents who have put the question to me, what is going to happen in February if I do not make my payments? Will the banks, as they are accustomed to doing in many cases, lower the boom, as it were, move in and maybe repossess the boat and then the fishermen will be held personally liable for any outstanding balance which could then, of course, affect his own personal assets?

I feel, this year especially, that government should insist - and they can do it - that before any kind of action of that nature is contemplated or undertaken they should be fully informed and it should be with their concurrence that that kind of action is taken. If they do not, they are going to have a lot of foreclosures this year, I think.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, I can only reiterate what I have indicated to the hon. gentleman. I am not going to get into specific commitments or specific statements at this particular time, but I can tell the hon. gentleman that the government is very sensitive about the situation. It is addressing this situation and will, after it has been able to take a full assessment of the problems that have been experienced in the fishery by those people who have outstanding loans, be prepared to act in a sensitive manner and in the best interests of the people concerned, as it always has in the past.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

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

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Chairman, I fear that the hon. the Acting Premier is trying to intimidate the Opposition. I cannot see the necessity of rushing a bill through just because it is in Committee if we still have some questions we are not clear about. I feel it is my duty and my obligation to ask some questions, because I am not completely satisfied with this Bill No. 21.

Let me just put the picture in context for the hon. House. You have a fisherman who owes a certain sum of money to the Fisheries Loan Board and that fisherman is encouraged to sign a form so that the company he sells his fish to can deduct certain amounts of money from the fisherman's income. In practice, Mr. Chairman, I am sure all hon. members are aware, this is not always an amicable situation, where the fisherman willingly goes and does this. Quite often he is coerced into doing it, he is forced into doing it, he is told, 'Either you sign this bill that we take your money or we are going to bring the courts against you and force you to give up your boat', or whatever the case might be.

I regret that the hon. the House Leader left the House, because all I see now are empty seats. Maybe the Minister of Justice (Ms. Verge) might be able to answer the question for me.

In Bill No. 21 it is stated that once the company deducts the money, then that money is held in trust. Now if the company goes into bankruptcy, for example,

there will be no problem with the interest because the explanatory notes explain that the interest can be forgiven, or may be forgiven and, I am sure, in most cases people of good will would forgive the interest portion. But supposing, Mr. Chairman, the company does go bankrupt, what will happen to the principal? If I am a fisherman and \$500 is deducted from me, held in trust by company A and company A goes into bankruptcy, the first explanatory note says that there can be a lien put against the company - in other words, the company's assets could be used to pay off this \$500 that the company deducted from my earnings. But supposing there were other claims on the assets of the company, you know, first mortgages and so on, it is quite possible that that company which goes into bankruptcy, after all its assets are disposed of, will not have enough money left to pay my \$500 which was deducted from me, the fisherman, whose money this company was holding in trust.

If it were just one fisherman I do not think it would be a problem, but when you have thousands of fishermen involved, it is quite conceivable that a company could go bankrupt holding in trust \$300,000 or \$400,000 of fishermen's money and because of other claims upon the assets of that company it would not be able to pay the money which is held in trust.

MR. TULK:

There could be higher priorities.

MR. DECKER:

Exactly. There could be other higher priorities. My question is, in the event that this happens, and it is quite conceivable that it can happen,

Mr. Chairman, will there be provision made to forgive the fisherman from paying his principal twice? He already paid the \$500 to the company to hold in trust, and assuming that company does not have the money to honour the commitment, is the fisherman then forced to pay twice? That is my question. Obviously, Mr. Chairman, I am not going to get an answer unless the member for Carbonear (Mr. Peach) would like to answer it.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. WINDSOR:

Obviously, Mr. Chairman, what this legislation does is allow the fish companies to collect the principal on behalf of government or on behalf of the Loan Board. And clearly, if a company subsequently went bankrupt, as this bill states, it is a lien, therefore, against the company and the board will take whatever action is available to them to recover from the company. But, clearly, there is no further responsibility on behalf of the fisherman, so you could not lien the fisherman. This states very clearly you would lien the company and regain whatever share you could of the amount that is owed in the case of a bankruptcy or an insolvency.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

A point of clarification. The member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker) brought up a good point. Let me run through it again with the Minister of

Development because I think he has provided the intention of what government would do, but I am not sure it is covered in this legislation, and that is, as he said, and to use his example again, if \$500 is collected from a fisherman and that goes into the assets of a company and is held in trust by the company for the government, and the company goes bankrupt, then there may be first mortgages and second mortgages and so on, other people having some claim on the assets of that company including, if you want to, their bank book. The question is should it not be written into this bill - yes, it should be written into this bill that at that point in time the government itself, the Fisheries Loan Board, will take no further action against the fisherman, because he has already paid once to the company that went bankrupt. That is not written into this bill at the present time.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. WINDSOR:

If the hon. gentleman would read the bill, it is clearly implied there, if not specifically stated, that "for remission to the Board on behalf of the fisherman as part of a repayment of a loan made by the Board" - "the processor is deemed to hold the portion accruing due to the Board in trust for the Board". The processor is deemed, so the processor at that point is therefore responsible. There is no longer any responsibility on behalf of the fisherman himself. He is deemed to have paid it to the company in trust for the Board, so he has paid it to the Board.

MR. TULK:

So you are saying that there will not be any further action taken against the fisherman.

MR. WINDSOR:
Absolutely.

MR. TULK:
Alright, as long as we have it on the record.

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):
The hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:
The hon. member knows the difference of that nonsense. It is not clear in the bill, Mr. Chairman. The companies in this case are limited liability companies. It is quite probable and quite common for limited liability companies to go into bankruptcy with bigger liabilities than assets. Now, you have a company which owes \$1 million and has \$500,000 to go against those liabilities. Among the \$1 million there is \$500,000 held in trust for fishermen, and I am quite certain, Mr. Chairman, that if the Fisheries Loan Board is unable to garnish enough assets from the company which has gone into bankruptcy to pay that \$500, that my fishermen pay, then the Loan Board has the right to go after the fishermen for the money. This has happened - I can give a case, Mr. Chairman: If I were financing a car and I sold that car and did not pay the finance company, because I did not pay the finance company the finance company has the right to go and take that car from the other guy although he paid me. The same thing could happen here, Mr. Chairman. I can pay the company my money; the

company goes into bankruptcy, and I can be forced to pay that money again. Sure, you might think it should be there. Well, if that was so, why did we bother bringing in the bill in the first place, Mr. Chairman? Men of good will are not going to make you pay twice, but once you commit something to law, then you have to be perfectly clear what you are committing to law. Because I would venture to say, as I said before, that there is no need of this bill in the first place, because surely, goodness, people of good will are not going to force people to pay their bills twice. But, once you put it in writing, the loophole is there. So, what the Fisheries Loan Board in effect is doing is giving itself more power. This is not for the fisherman, Mr. Chairman, this bill is being brought in so that the Fisheries Loan Board is covering itself. This is not because of concern for the fisherman, this is just giving the Fisheries Loan Board the authority to go after the poor fisherman and make him pay his principal twice. We are going to sacrifice a little bit of interest. So what! But the Fisheries Loan Board is going to get its money. That is what is happening, and the hon. member knows full well that is what is happening here.

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Chairman, I do not know how many ways we can say it to the hon. gentleman. The example he used of a person selling a car which has a lien on it by a

finance company is a good example because it shows clearly what we are doing here. In that particular situation, the contract is still between the original owner and the lien holder and nothing is transferred to the lien holder simply because the person sold that vehicle. That is what could take place today. If a fisherman was to pay funds to a fish company today and subsequently that company went bankrupt, then the hon. gentleman would be quite correct.

This piece of legislation makes it possible for the company to collect and, therefore, the company then would be liable. That is precisely what we are getting around by this legislation, doing what the hon. gentleman is saying. His fears at the moment are quite correct. That is exactly what would happen if a fisherman came to the Loan Board and said, 'But I paid \$500 to that fish processing company and they were supposed to pay it to you.' That is of no interest to the Board. The Board has no contract with the fish companies. What this does is make the companies liable. They are holding in trust any amounts that are collected on behalf of the Board from the fishermen, and this is relieving any further liability of the fishermen. What this act is doing is protecting the fishermen from exactly what the hon. member is concerned with.

MR. TULK:

On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

On a point of clarification, I suppose. I more or less want to

make an apology. I made a mistake. I have been used to seeing the member for Mount Pearl (Mr. Windsor) as the Minister of Development for so long that I think I made a mistake just now and called him the Minister of Development rather than the President of Treasury Board. I apologize to him for that.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed Bill No. 21 without amendment, carried.

A bill, "An Act To Provide For The Registration Of Psychologists". (Bill No. 12).

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

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Fishing Industry Advisory Board Act, 1975". (Bill No. 11).

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall Clause 1 carry?

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Chairman, I do not have a copy of that bill here, but I have an idea what it represents. Mr. Chairman, that is another Board that I believe could play a very meaningful role in the Newfoundland fishing industry. I am not sure exactly what role it does play now.

Maybe before this debate adjourns the House Leader (Mr. Marshall) could tell the House exactly what the mandate of the Board is. If he would table something that

would indicate exactly what their terms of reference are and just what they are doing. Again, I am not sure that they are doing all that they can be doing, in fact, having had an experience with them this summer, I must say I was not too impressed with their operation.

We all know that during the summer there was a lot of mackerel being caught and dumped for the want of a market. I recall having had occasion to call the chairman of that Board, Miss Peters and, I must say, I was not very impressed at all with the response I got to the problem which I presented to her on behalf of the fishermen in my district.

The Board, Mr. Chairman, was originally meant to serve a number of rolls within the fishing industry. For example, it was to concern itself with the sales strategies of other countries, sales activities of other countries, trends in consumer eating habits, the characteristics and trends of institutional demands, the location of major fish consuming areas, types of fish products eaten, consumption statistics, trends in competing food stocks and on and on it goes. The Board, I believe, can play a very important role.

It can also play an important role, Mr. Chairman, in terms of assisting both management and the union in supplying necessary data. For example, when the prices negotiations are under way and that too, certainly at one time was to be one of the main functions of that Board. I am not sure if they are involved in that now or not. I know that a properly functioning Fishery Advisory Boards can go a long way

towards maybe, heading off confrontations between the union and management by providing the right kind of data and I am not sure that that information is available.

We all know the shortcomings in the small inshore fishing industry. One of the more serious shortcomings in the industry is the lack of proper bookkeeping systems on the part of the fishermen and not being able to properly assess what their costs are and if they are in a profitable position or if they are bankrupt or insolvent or if they are viable or not. That is a very serious problem. We have seen cases where fishermen have been charged back on income tax, for example, and have had wages garnished by the Federal government. I think at one point it was twenty per cent of their earnings that the government was garnishing to offset balances owing to the Department of National Revenue on back taxes. My friend tells me that there is no limit now which makes it even more serious. At one time it was twenty per cent.

A lot of the problems, Mr. Chairman, that are being experienced today by the inshore fishermen is that fact that proper records are not being kept and the fishermen, more than likely, do not know where they stand. At one point I envisaged a role for the Advisory Board in setting up a proper economic and technical intelligence unit, for example, to work with the fish companies and provide forms and systems to obtain costing and other financial data from the fishing companies and the processing facilities around the Province, and then to monitor their costs.

I know in some countries, primarily Iceland, there are very few strikes because they have a good working relationship between the fishermen and the processors. That kind of a relationship can only be brought about if there is complete understanding and openness on the part of both parties. First of all, for the fishermen to have some idea and some knowledge and understanding of what it is all about to operate a fish company and, of course, conversely for fish companies to have some understanding and appreciation of what it costs today to catch fish.

I would certainly like it if the House Leader (Mr. Marshall) could indicate to the committee what the present role of the Advisory Board is and then, maybe, we can have a better understanding of what it is all about. At the present time, I do not think too many people know too much about that Board. It is a low profile Board. We never hear too much about it on the news media and I, for one, do not have a clue actually, what they are doing. I know it has a lady chairman, a person with a lot of background and a lot of experience in the fishing industry. I know it has a certain number of members around the Province, but I am not aware of their terms of reference, or exactly what their mandate is. Like I said, my encounter with the board some time during the Summer left me with a bit of a sour taste in my mouth in that the chairperson appeared to be willing to help, but I sort of got the impression that she was not quite sure of where she stood in the matter we were discussing.

So, Mr. Chairman, maybe the House Leader (Mr. Marshall) can do that before the debate ends.

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):
The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:
I am not in a position to give the specific terms of reference of the Fishing Industry Advisory Board now but I can tell the hon. member that we would be glad to get that information for him and supply it to him. I will certainly pass that along to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. W. Carter) and we will see that he has that information.

The Fishing Industry Advisory Board, generally speaking, as the hon. gentleman knows, is a board that has been set up for the purpose of having people knowledgeable in the fishing industry, from all over the Province, in a group, on a board, for the purpose of conducting research into various questions affecting the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador and give rendering advice to the government with respect to same, making comments, where appropriate, and conducting useful research with respect to it.

I know that is a very general statement of their purposes but if the hon. gentleman is interested in the specific terms of reference, we will get them, and we will supply them. I would be interested in any comments that he may have with respect to the possibility of strengthening it and expanding the terms of reference themselves.

That is all I can say at the present time at this particular stage.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Chairman, I will be rather brief with regard to the Fishing Industry Advisory Board. When it comes to the loan board itself, we see that larger boats are put out to banks and we have seen problems with the loan board itself. We have seen problems in the past where we had two fishery advisory loan boards on the go and various problems resulted there. I think it is commendable that learned and skilled fishermen throughout our Province give this service to the Fisheries Loan Board.

One of the things I would like the Fisheries Loan Board act upon is the fact that we do not have any insurance, if there are damages done to fishing gear because of storms, whales, or fire.

Last Fall, in the district of Eagle River we had a sudden storm come up. It wiped out a lot of the fishermen's sheds, boats, motors, nets, etc., all along the Coast. Some of the people had insurance while other people did not have insurance. Because they were individual sheds, the government took the attitude that they could not help. What they had to do was apply under Canada Works for a community stage and the government would help.

Through the loan board itself, you can get money for motors, you can get money for boats and that, but you do not really get money for supplies. I am wondering if it is not time now to change that. I say that because we have had the

failure in the fisheries this past couple of years. We have seen an example this year again, the second year in a row, where the federal government had to give emergency money for make-work projects, \$9.5 million this year, to tide them over and get them stamps. We have seen the start of a hunger strike, and I hope that is not the way our people are going to be going in the Province so that when an issue comes up and they want anything, they go on a hunger strike.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

I wish to advise the hon. member that he is speaking to the Fishing Industry Advisory Board Bill.

MR. HISCOCK:
I am speaking to the Fishing Industry Advisory Board, Mr. Chairman. I hope, and I will be recommending to the fishermen on the Fishing Industry Advisory Board, that they will make this recommendation to government, and that is to allow government to give them a loan for the outfitting of supplies, particularly when there is storm damage or whale damage, and also in hard financial situations. We are going to find again this Spring that there are going to be a lot of people having difficulty fitting themselves out. The merchants at one time would help these fishermen. I am sure the Fishing Industry Advisory Loan Board would agree that it is becoming more difficult all the time to get a line of credit, particularly when you have very low UIC and you have no money to carry you over in the Spring.

So, I ask the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall) to take

this under advisement and to look at it. I think it is a legitimate request to show compassion to those that are in need. The Fisheries Loan Board itself is a fine organization but it needs fine tuning. That fine tuning, I am sure the Fishing Industry Advisory Board would agree, involves some way where the Loan Board can and should allow loans to fishermen to buy supplies for fitting them out in the fishing season.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed Bill No. 11 without amendment, carried.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Insurance Companies Act". (Bill No. 6).

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

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Management Accountants Act". (Bill No. 48).

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall Clause 1 carry?

MR. BAKER:
Just a second, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Chairman, it is rather difficult to jump from Number 6 to Number 48 in two seconds, so I just want to hold it for one second.

All right, Mr. Chairman.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed Bill No. 48 without

amendment, carried.

A bill, "An Act To Convey Certain Trusts And Properties In The Province From Crown Trust Company To Central Trust Company". (Bill 47).

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

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Public Utilities Act". (Bill No. 51).

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall Clause 1 carry?

MR. HISCOCK:
No.

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

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Chairman, with regard to "An Act To Amend The Public Utilities Act." A question I would ask the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall) is: Does this involve the Public Utilities Board?

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

MR. MARSHALL:
It does in the sense. As the purpose of the bill says, and it has been explained on second reading, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may issue directions to the Public Utilities Board on matters pertaining to compensation for the use of utility poles owned by a public utility and by a licensed cable television system. So that is all really it relates to.

MR. BUTT:

That is only to accomodate Avalon Cablevision.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. HISCOCK:
With regard to this situation, it has received a lot of attention and Avalon Cable, in particular, feels that it is paying too much money for rentals for poles belonging to Newfoundland Tel or Newfoundland Light and Power. The Public Utilities Act itself is something that we in the Province are a little bit concerned with. That is the idea that if you have electricity and you need the poles and that, that you have to pay for them over and above a certain number of meters. Here we have a company that has to rent each pole and pay so much for rental to a company which originally made the investment and put up the poles. The company is the one that puts them up, charges the fee through electricity and then, thereby, gets its money back and eventually pays for its profit.

We find also the Newfoundland Light and Power Company, in particular, got a windfall, I believe, of \$3.5 million from storm damage done a couple of years ago. If it was not \$3.5 million, it was a couple of million dollars that the federal government paid out where the poles broke off on Bell Island and on the Avalon Peninsula. There are people who contend, of course, that a lot of these poles were rotten, particularly on Bell Island, and Newfoundland Light and Power was not keeping up their standards.

With regard to the Public Utilities Act, we find if a private individual wants to get power to their home, the first fifty meters is free and thereafter every meter is sixteen dollars. If you have a house built that is more than sixty meters away from electricity, then you have to pay this. I think that sixty meters is really not very much and that that should be raised. I ask the President of the Council to look at this matter with regard to the Public Utilities Act and allow the Public Utilities Board to change this.

I think it is good that finally the government has a consumer representative on the Public Utilities Board. I regret to say - and it is not questioning Mr. Wells's qualifications in any way - but Mr. Wells is like the President of the Council, he has many hats. I think that with regard to Mr. Wells being a private businessman, being on a Royal Commission and being on City Council, that if there is anything important in the Province to the consumers, it is having a full-time representative on this board to give due attention to the consumers issues so that the person can not only sit on the board and listen to complaints that arise, but do research himself or herself and read reports. I have intervned at the Public Utilities Board with Newfoundland Hydro and I had six or seven reports of quite a large volume sent to me. It is impossible to read them, but if you are being paid, as a representative and getting a basic salary of \$25,000, it is your job, not only to read them, but to know what is in them.

That is my concern. The

representative is not only there to sit on the board and listen, that person's job requires he do a lot of background work of research and reading, making himself or herself knowledgeable. I regret to say that I think that, even though Mr. Wells is qualified, I think it is a slap to the consumers of this Province to have a part-time consumer rep. I also think, with regard to the political stripe of Mr. Wells, that this again was a political patronage appointment, and, as a result, I question Mr. Wells' impartiality on this board, and whether he will stand up for the consumers or if this is not another pay off job to keep a very vocal person quiet. Is that basically saying, "Okay Andy, we put you on the Royal Commission at \$400 or \$500 a day plus expenses, now we will put you on this, so when things come up on Council and Mayor Murphy gets upset with the provincial government and all the provincial MHAs with regard to busing or other issues where the city versus the Province, let yourself stand up for the provincial government and take some of the heat for us and make sure that it does not get too embarrassing down there and you do not take us on as ministers and members for St. John's. We will put you in this job and do not get too carried away with your position. Be vocal now and then so you show some impartiality but, in the meantime, anything that goes before he Public Utilities Board is automatically a rubber stamp because it has to come to Cabinet. We do not want things coming to Cabinet. We are using the Public Utilities Board as a buffer zone, so realize that you are on this for that reason. Take your \$25,000 and more money will come accordingly, and be quiet."

With regard to that, Mr. Chairman, I will let the Public Utilities Act pass but, as I said, I hope that the ministers will see fit to appoint a full-time representative to the Public Utilities Board.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. RUSSELL:
In response, very briefly, to the a few remarks made by the hon. member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock), he questioned Mr. Wells' qualifications to act on that board and then he goes ahead and gives all the reasons why he thinks he should not be there. I would just like to assure him of a couple of things.

Mr. Wells was not a patronage appointment to that board. There was a recommendation made by the Federation of Mayors and Municipalities that Mr. Wells be appointed to that board and it was done taking that into consideration.

The hon. member for Eagle River is basically correct when he says that whoever is the consumer representative on that board should have some time to devote to research and reading reports and things like that. I am confident that Mr. Wells has done and will continue to do that. In the recent hearings, for example, involving Newfoundland Hydro at the Public Utilities Board, and I talked to Mr. Wells subsequent to that, after that was all over and done with so to speak, he met with the NewLab people who attended the hearings and discussed the whole issue with them and the procedures

of how it all worked and tried to assist them in better understanding the whole thing.

I am satisfied with Mr. Wells' representation on that board. He will soon be finished, in another few weeks perhaps with the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment. He will thus have some more time then to devote to this position. I think we should give him a chance and I think he will do a good job for the consumers on this board. Certainly, down the road, I am going to take a look at appointing somebody to the board on a permanent basis.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before I make the three points I want to make on this bill I would like to say to the Minister of Consumer Affairs that the impression he creates that Mr. Wells appointment was almost at the insistence of the Federation of Municipalities is not quite correct. Mr. Wells was one of several recommendations that they made, also Mr. Wells I think was recommended by other agencies other than the Federation of Municipalities, if I am correct. So, he was one of several that they recommended.

I would like to make three points on this particular bill, Mr. Chairman, I think three. First of all, the necessity of this hon. House directing the Public Utilities Board to do something. I think this is something that the

Public Utilities Board, as far as I am concerned, already has under its jurisdiction. They should be addressing this without the direction of government. I am wondering if this request is coming from the Public Utilities Board, in other words, are they saying that this is outside our jurisdiction therefore we need the authority to do it? Or is the situation where the Public Utilities Board is not dealing with this and government is now saying to the Public Utilities Board that you must deal with it, period. You must do this.

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MARSHALL:
Let me begin by saying that type of attachment on poles is a new type of mechanism, relatively speaking, in recent years. It is not the House directing really, it is the House giving the Lieutenant-Governor in Council power to make regulations that would apply and appertain to ensure that there is a balance maintained. The rules are made so that the Public Utilities Board addresses it so that there will be a fair balance between the rights of the Public Utility, either Newfoundland Light and Power or Newfoundland Telephone Company to have a reasonable return and, at the same time, maintain a balance where the cable companies throughout the Province will pay, also, an equitable amount. So, that is purely and simply the only purpose of it.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Chairman., I would like to

respond very briefly to the point that the hon. the member for Gander (Mr. Baker) made.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

MR. RUSSELL:

With respect to us directing the Public Utilities Board or they come to us, kind of thing, prior to this report, we talked to the Public Utilities Board about what was in the report and so on and they advised us that under their present Act, they could not implement the formula anyway. So that is the reason why we had to do this.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Now that I have established that they did not have the authority to do it under the present situation so now they need this new authority, my second point is, the way that this has gone about is that they are being directed to follow the directions of the Cabinet, in essence. It is written in a way that maybe the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) could understand. I am not use to legal terminology and I am wondering about this section here, "The Lieutenant-Governor in Council, by order, from time to time, may issue directions." Does this mean that from now on, there will be periodic changes in the rates and so on and that everytime that there is a change in the rates having to do with the use of these poles that the Cabinet will make that decision and not the Public Utilities Board? That is

what I am wondering.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

That is a normal terminology in legislation of this nature because when it reads "from time to time," it means that the Cabinet may direct and if there are any needs for amendments to the regulations as time progresses, they can issue others. That is what from time to time means. The Cabinet does not set it because it will issue directions to the Board that shall be binding on any matter pertaining to compensation. So really, it would be sending to the Board, the criteria which would be based on expert advise of the hon. minister's department would get and Transportation and Communication would get. That is what "from time to time" means.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

So in essence, you are not passing over to the Public Utilities Board, the right or power to do something. What you are saying is that Cabinet will decide in future what these rates are going to be. Is this it?

MR. MARSHALL:

No, the criteria will that will be applied in assessing the rates, so you can maintain a fair balance.

MR. BAKER:

Do you have, if I can ask the

minister, a particular criteria? Have you determined what rates you are going to order the Public Utilities Board to charge?

MR. MARSHALL:

I am sorry. I did not get it.

MR. BAKER:

Have you determined what is the equitable rate for pole use?

MR. MARSHALL:

No, the Board will determine that but, they will be given criteria to follow, which they do not have before hand.

MR. BAKER:

I thank the ministers for straightening out that. My final point is simply this, and it is largely a consumer matter. It was brought up before but, I would want to bring it up here again before the Bill passes this Committee stage.

We have situation now where the utility company is going to get less money, albeit not a lot of money in relation to the total budget, but it is going to get less money. At some time in the future, in an appearance before the Public Utilities Board, are we going to see this used as a reason or part of a reason to increase rates? I know that in any presentation before the Public Utilities Board, the utility itself puts a lot of time and effort into making their presentation and trying to justify their increase, thousands and thousands, tens of thousands of dollars are put into a presentation to justify the increase. I can picture, after this is straightened out, the next time there is an application they will use this as one of the reasons asking for further

increase in electricity rates.

There is nothing here to guard against that. The government is not saying to them "you are getting a loss of revenue, therefore, you cannot go to the Public Utilities Board to ask for more money." Will they, in fact, collect this in some way from the consumer? The other side of the question is, now the cable companies will not have to pay such an outrageous cost - and I agree that the costs were really high for the use of those poles - but now that the cable companies will not have to pay these high costs, then they are going to, in effect, have some savings. Let us take Avalon Cablevision, if you want to. This is a viable company, making money and so on. Now it will not have to pay as much for the use of the poles. Is this saving going to be passed on to the consumer that uses Avalon Cablevision?

I really think that this point has to be made. There has to be some provision that if we are, on the one hand, going to allow a utility company to make a presentation to the PUB asking for rate increases, and one of the things they use is the loss of income from the poles, and on the other hand, have this extra money stay with the cable companies and not go back to the consumer then, I think, that is a bad situation. So I wonder if the minister could address that?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

MR. RUSSELL:

There were two points raised by

the hon. member for Gander (Mr. Baker). One had to do with whether there be a rate increase to the consumers as a result of the decrease in revenue about to be provided to the Telephone Company as a result of this. After receiving this report from Mr. Andrews, it was one of the concerns that I had, but upon reading the report I think you will find in it that, as I mentioned I think in second reading when the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) raised the same point I think, if, for example, government were to do away with any pole charges whatsoever to cable companies, it would only account for one-half of 1 per cent of the revenue and if is reduced obviously by 50 per cent it would start with one-quarter of 1 per cent. That is not very much money. The Telephone Company in the hearings that were held by Mr. Andrews practically admitted that it is kind of insignificant.

However, the point was well taken by the member for Gander. Subsequent to receiving this report, I sat down with the officials of Newfoundland Telephone Company, in particular, and we talked about the report. I raised that point with them. They indicated to me verbally that somewhere down the road they would have to go for a general rate increase in telephones, but they would not be using this 50 per cent reduction to go for a rate increase.

This kind of ties in to the second point that the hon. member raised. Ironically, I suppose, or coincidentally with the reduction in the rate and the formula and the savings, if you will, that the hon. member referred to, it could

really result in the Telephone Company in the long run receiving more revenue. What will happen and I mention this as well, for example, there is a company now calling themselves N1 Cable T.V. Limited who has made an application to the CRTC to service 151 communities throughout various parts of the Island. They have told me that had this proposed reduction in the formula not been instituted, perhaps that number of communities would not be 151 but might indeed be 100, for example. So if we get 151 or 50 or 60 more communities getting the cable service and using the poles, then this would result in the extra revenue or other revenue to the Telephone Company. I do not think that there will be any actual money in the form of a rebate passed on to the consumers. But, as I mentioned in my remarks introducing this bill, if this formula had not been introduced I think what you would have found would be the cable companies, be it Avalon Cablevision or Phonix Cablevision out in my area or Gander or whatever, you would see them come to the Public Utilities Board for quite a substantial rate increase. I do not think there is any way they can come near justifying that now. They have told me that they have no intention of looking for a rate increase at this time.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:
Just to continue along that line just for one minute, in discussions with cable companies, and I have gone to conventions of cable companies called to discuss

local programming and all this kind of thing, and at one point got rather heavily into it, one of the reasons they use for them not being able to get into a lot of local programming was this very thing. Somehow there should be some mechanism whereby, if we are going to give them the break that they want on those poles, then we can say to them, "This will allow you to get into more local programming that an awful lot of people in this Province want."

So I would simply like to make that point, that maybe this will allow them to get into the local programming and maybe there should be some mechanism - and I know there is because they have to go back for their license renewals all the time - but at that point it - should be said, by the Department of Consumer Affairs or by me or anybody, that "now that you have had that break, why have you not gone into the local programming? Why have you not developed good local programming?" I think that that is something that has to be done in the future.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. RUSSELL:
I agree with the hon. member for Gander. Now that the formula will see a reduction in the rates, it should enable the cable companies to get involved in more local programming or a community channel, if you will. I have had some discussions with the association along those lines as well. They have indicated to me that they will be doing that. I

guess we will have to wait and see if they live up to their word or not.

Not specifically related to this bill, but kind of related to what the hon. member said in local programming or community channels - maybe next week I will probably make it a press release - there were some monies in the budget to allocate some dollars, which was done by the University education people, to go to various parts of the Province holding workshops which will bring in the cable people with their equipment - I think there was one held at Gander - to give them a bit of expert advise on the best kind of equipment to have and to get the best use out of it. Thus, along with this decrease, that should enable them to do the kind of thing that the hon. member for Gander is talking about. I agree with him. I think they should do it and I would like to think that they will.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman, I would like to have a few words to say on this bill. First of all, I think that some kind of legislation was necessary to regulate the cost for the pole attachment or the renting of poles, whatever the case might be, with respect to cable television. I know that it has caused a lot of problems and I suppose is still causing problems. Hopefully this legislation will iron out some of the problems.

I say the legislation was

necessary. I am not sure that the structure that we are recommending is the proper one because, again, I am not sure of the effectiveness of the Public Utilities Board in terms of regulating prices in other areas. It seem as though it is almost a perfunctory body, that it is a rubber stamp. I have not known any occasion when the Public Utilities Board has turned down a request for an increase by any of the companies that appear before them. That makes it a questionable operation.

The question I would like to ask the minister - maybe it was asked before, but I was not here for all the debate - is whether or not this is parallel legislation with respect to other companies that the Public Utilities Board deal with, is this similar? For example, is this the kind of legislation that is in place with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro? Is this the kind of legislation that is in effect with Newfoundland Light and Power? If it is, it looks as if the Cabinet also have the final say. Therefore, if either Newfoundland Light and Power or Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro are requesting an increase, let us say for example, on their rates, then it is the Cabinet who have the final say. They can say no to the increase or they can say yes. That is how I read this. It is the same with the rent for poles, or whatever the terminology is. The Cabinet have the final power. Obviously, they give the Public Utilities Board certain guidelines. Would the minister indicate in all of these cases whether it is the Cabinet who have the final say. They are the ones who say to the Public Utilities Board, 'Yes, we will grant this increase', whatever it is, or 'No,

we think it is too much.'

So, is this parallel legislation, the same applying to Light and Power and to Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, or is this different legislation? If it is different, could the minister say how it is different and why it is different?

I want to echo some of the concerns of the member for Gander. I was certainly hoping that maybe this arrangement might result in some little reduction in the cost of cable television to people in this Province, but particularly people in rural Newfoundland. I do not know whether hon. members are aware. I do not know, Mr. Chairman, if I could be granted leave just to comment on this. I will not be very long, because it is relevant to the bill. I was hoping that if there were any reduction in the rental of poles, then we could see that reflected in the prices that customers are paying for cable television. As I said, I do not know whether hon. gentlemen are aware, but rural Newfoundland, and it seems that it is always rural Newfoundland, the smaller areas, are really being discriminated against with respect to cable television in this Province. Do hon. members know that they pay the highest price for cable television in the Province? I think it is called Television for Rural and Remote Areas, or it might be the other way around. I know it is not under the hon. gentleman's jurisdiction, but I am sure, from where he sits, that he can take these concerns to the CRTC and to his federal counterparts, that in rural Newfoundland - and I expect other rural areas of Canada, too, but in a lot of areas in other parts of

Canada we are not restricted to the area that we are in, we can tune in to other areas - but in rural Newfoundland we only have what is provided.

They are forced to take this package from CanCom. They have no choice. Now, why is it that they cannot be afforded the same television that we are looking at for the same price? In rural Newfoundland today, they are paying double the price that you and I are paying for cable television and for them, the quality is not there. They are looking at programmes from B.C. and other parts of Canada and the time slots are not the same. For example, they are looking at a programme that is geared to noontime watching, for children, for example, and in Newfoundland they get that eleven o'clock at night. The example might have been an extreme one, but that is what is going on. Programmes that are geared for children, let us say, for nine o'clock in the morning and they are getting them at say, ten or eleven o'clock at night because of the different time zone and all of this kind of thing. So the programming is certainly not geared to the viewing audience. Somebody must speak up for these people. Why they have that forced on them, why they must have to take this package, I do not know. But it seems to me again it is just to promote the company, CanCom. It is certainly not for the benefit of the viewers.

We have the people paying exorbitant prices, Mr. Chairman, and the programming is certainly not geared to the interest or the liking of the viewing audience. So why people should have that perpetrated on them and have to

pay such a high price, I do not know. I believe the rates in rural Newfoundland are something like \$20 a month, I think that is what it is for this CanCom package and the programming is not geared to the time slots of this Province and the quality of the programme is something else, but they have no choice. They have to take this. They have to take it. You take that or the cable television, the company, does not get the licence obviously, if you do not take this CanCom package that is designed for rural and remote areas or rural and Northern areas, whatever the terminology is.

Why does it have to be structured that way in this age of technology? Maybe there is something I do not understand. I see no reason why the people of Gander are looking at the same television we are, but I am not sure about that, whereas the people in Gambo, twenty-five miles away, have to be forced to take this package, which is twice the price. As I say, it might be a little off the topic, Mr. Chairman, but I believe it is a concern. We do not always get the chance to raise these issues and from where the minister sits and I realize that the minister does not have a lot of power in this area, but again, these concerns we can only raise them at whatever time we get, at the appropriate places. I do not very often get these appropriate places. I am sure the minister - this must have come to his attention because I am sure he has the same problem up in his district.

But it is not a problem with the people in a lot of areas because they do not know any differently. When it comes in and they are paying \$20 a month, they do not

know that the people in St. John's are viewing a different type thing for \$10 a month. They do not know it. We have to raise those concerns. So just by finishing, if I could make that point; here they are in rural Newfoundland taking this programming, paying double the price for, and the quality of the programme, or the interests of the programme certainly does not fit in with a lot of these areas because of some of the factors that I have raised. I certainly hope that the minister will express his concern and indicate that he will make these feelings known of rural Newfoundlanders through the appropriate channels.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. TULK:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Greening):
The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:
Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Russell) has brought in a bill there which should help the people in this Province. It is not like the statement we saw him make this morning about Christmas trees and lights and all that kind of stuff, when we know our people hardly have money to buy food those days.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Irrelevant.

MR. TULK:
That is very relevant because this bill, hopefully, is saving some money. I want to ask the minister another question that is very important this morning for him, and that is that after the outfit in Branch the other morning I understand that we now have a

series of hunger strikes. The Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn) must have expected this when he got the programme approved on the basis of a hunger strike. Our people are in such desperate straits that they are breaking out all over the place.

I understand this morning for example that we have got one in the Minister of Fisheries' (Mr. Rideout) district. As the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Russell), the person responsible for the consumer in this Province, I wonder if the minister would indeed in cluing up this bill, assure the House that he is going to contact the people of Fleur de Lys and see if some assistance can be passed on to them in the same manner as was passed on by the Minister of Education?

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. RUSSELL:
Further to the comments made by the hon. member for Fogo, certainly they are not relevant at all to this piece of legislation so I will not comment on them.

MR. TULK:
You are not going to comment on that!

MR. RUSSELL:
I am sure the Minister of Fisheries, who represents that district and represents it well, is more than capable of looking out for the affairs of his district.

Comments made by the hon. member for Bonavista North (Mr. Lush) I

guess it was about parallel legislation. This piece of legislation will specifically enable the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to tell, I suppose, the Public Utilities Board to implement change upon the basis of the criteria they have the formula derived from the report submitted by Professor Andrews. As I mentioned earlier, we contacted the Public Utilities Board and they do not have the authority, under the present Act, to implement this formula, and so there is a need for that legislation. The reduction of rates, Mr. Chairman, I have already dealt with that. I think what we would have seen was an application to the Public Utilities Board for substantial rate increase which the cable companies can no longer justify.

With regards to the other comments made by the member for Bonavista North in terms of the CanCom package -

MR. TULK:
(Inaudible).

MR. RUSSELL:
Well, if I did I certainly would not hire the member for Fogo.

With regard to the rescheduling of programs and the CanCom package, for example, in Central Newfoundland being different from that offered here, I suspect that the CRTC makes this decision and the companies who apply for the license, say to the CRTC that they are going to provide the CanCom package. If another group makes an application for the same area, willing to provide another package, then I suppose the decision would have to be made eventually by the CRTC as to which one they would authorize for the

license. But the rescheduling of the programming that we see, for example, maybe in Central Newfoundland, that we should be seeing lunch time and we are seeing maybe eleven o'clock at night, is a good point. I do not know if the cable companies themselves would, if they can, take a look at the rescheduling of these programs at the appropriate time.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question?

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

MR. LUSH:
I thought I understood from the minister, I may be wrong, that companies applying could apply for different packages. Did I understand the gentleman properly? Again, my understanding is that they only have the one choice. If the minister is in a company and I am in a company, then we can only get the one choice. The selection is based on other criteria, whether you are looking at the financial situation or that kind of thing but, in terms of programming, the company has no choice. They have got to take CanCom in rural and northern areas. So there is no choice or that is my understanding.

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

MR. RUSSELL:
That is what I said, and subject to being corrected, I will certainly check into that for the hon. member. As he said, and I am not trying pass the buck, but the whole decision for this is made by the CRTC. If there are some

points raised in some other area, about rescheduling or the content of various packages or having a choice or not having a choice, I think he is correct that that is something that we should take a look at and when there is another hearing before the CRTC, maybe it would be a good time for somebody to make representation along the lines that he mentioned but, I could be corrected on the point of the choice of a package. I will clarify that for the member.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. LUSH:
I am a little vague and hazy on what I am saying here now but, I think in the beginning it was related to in the system by which we brought it in. For example, the television that we watch here is brought in by microwave and the system in other areas is brought in differently. Because these people did not get in in time, we were not able to get in on the microwave. I am just making that point. There is some kind of a technicality or something associated with the process by which it was brought in. Whatever it is, I think that these little things can be ironed out. The point I want to make is that most of the people who are receiving this television do not know that they are being duked. They recognize the programming not fitting into the right hours, and this kind of thing, but most of them think that what they have is what we have. They do not know that they are onto a different system and, furthermore, they do not know that we are getting our

television here for half the price that they are getting theirs.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Where to?

MR. LUSH:
In all of rural Newfoundland. I just mentioned, in rural Newfoundland, because we are forced to take the CanCom package, we have no choice. If we go into an area to bring in cable television, we must bring in the CanCom package designed for rural and northern areas or rural and remote areas. They have no choice. And, in order for the cable company to be able to carry that television, they have got to charge twenty dollars a month.

AN HON. MEMBER:
What is it here?

MR. LUSH:
Ten or somewhere around there. That is for the similar package. You can get into paid television and it is a little more obviously, but for the equivalent package in the urban areas, we are paying somewhere in the area of ten dollars a month and in the rural, in Musgravetown in in the hon. member's district, if you get it there, it is twenty dollars. So they are paying double, basically. The rates may be a little off, but it is double in rural Newfoundland and for a programme that is more inferior to what we are receiving in the urban areas.

I thank the Chairman for allowing me to get into this. I have no influence at all in the matter because we do not get that kind of opportunity but the minister meets with his federal counterparts and I am sure can raise the thing.

To get a CRTC - and I will not get into that - which a bureaucratic body that is almost untouchable.

MR. TULK:

Are you saying this is caused by the fact that we are forced to buy CanCom?

MR. LUSH:

Yes, we have to buy CanCom. There is no choice. Not only that, we have to buy CanCom because it is designed - because I think it is all CanCom, I am not sure - for rural and Northern areas. As I say, it is inferior programming, plus the fact that wherever it is people have to pay double the price that we have to pay in the urban areas. So that is the point. Again, I appreciate Mr. Chairman allowing me to pursue that and hope that I have made the point to the minister so that at the appropriate time and in the appropriate place he can take this matter of gouging almost - I do not know if that is the right word, certainly discrimination, that is certainly the word - discrimination against the rural areas of our Province.

As I say most of our people are not aware of it. I became aware of it, of course, because of the controversy in Glovertown where the company there was using a different system.

MR. BAKER:

Are you looking out for the Chairman's district now?

MR. LUSH:

I am not looking out for it but I am sure Mr. Chairman knows that I was around when this thing developed and, as a matter of fact, I appeared before CRTC on behalf of the cable company in Glovertown.

MR. TULK:

Are you thinking about going back to Terra Nova to run?

MR. LUSH:

No. Mr. Chairman, that is a matter we will have to discuss in future.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. LUSH:

I am not a prophet, Sir. I would say that is determined in large part by Mr. Chairman whether I go back there or not.

So, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I just hope that again the minister gets the drift of what I have been saying, this discrimination to rural Newfoundlanders, and that he will raise it at the appropriate time in the appropriate place.

I hope that as a result of my speech today that I am sure is going to get reported far and wide throughout the Province that the people of rural Newfoundland will realize that they are being discriminated against and that they will rise up against this tremendous discrimination that is perpetrated on them by bureaucracy in the federal government particularly, but I do not think in the provincial government.

I will make this point. I do not think at the provincial level that we have been fighting this primarily because I do not think a lot of members are familiar with it. I do not think that they themselves are aware. That is not meant to be derogatory because if a member has not been approached

with the problem, then he has no way of knowing. As I say, I happen to be a little bit different. I was in the community where they ran into problems with the cable television, where we were showing great television and the gentleman was forced to take it off the air by the law and go the CanCom route. We ran into a great problem there.

So, Mr. Chairman, with that, I finish my remarks.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. RUSSELL:
I think one of the reasons for the rate difference, perhaps, in St. John's, for example, and rural Newfoundland under the CanCom package might be related to the penetration, the density -

MR. TULK:
A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
A point of order, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:
This is a very important question and I wonder if we could get the government members into the House so that we can have a quorum in this place. He is on a very important issue and the people should be in here listening so get them in here. Quorum call, Mr. Chairman.

Quorum Call

MR. CHAIRMAN:

We have a quorum.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Chairman, just very briefly, I have responded to most of the points raised by the hon. the member for Bonavista North (Mr. Brett). I was about to say that I think one of the reasons for the different rate structure, if you will, between the CanCom package and what has been seen here in St. John's has to do with the density of the population. Whereas in St. John's, for example, you might be able to hook up, I do not know, ten, twelve customers to a pole, in some cases of course in parts of rural Newfoundland you can only hook up one and the cost of doing that, of course, is more expensive than here in the city.

There are a few other technical points raised by the hon. member for Bonavista North about why people have to choose CanCom or why they were not able to get on the microwave system? I am not sure of the reason for that. But in any event, there will be some meetings with the Federal Minister of Communications in February and we are presently putting together some kind of a policy package and items to discuss with him at that conference. I am sure that the issue of the CanCom package and cablevision generally will be one of the topics which we will have some discussion on.

On motion clause (1) carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed Bill No. 51 without

amendment, carried.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Memorial University (Pensions) Act". (Bill No. 53).

MR. TULK:

What is the bill?

MR. MARSHALL:

The University Pensions, we did it yesterday.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall clause (1) carry?

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Chairman, I will just be very brief and reiterate the things that I said the other day.

I think it is appropriate that we are passing this bill while the First Ministers are meeting in Halifax and we are finding out that there are going to be dramatic cuts in post-secondary educational funding. We will find as a result of that, of course, university will be under that much greater pressure in the future. We will have to see cutbacks in wages, probably a freeze on wages at the University and other post-secondary educational institutions. We will probably also see students fees increase and we will also see the building programme at the University curtailed severely over the next decade.

In regards to that, one of the other things that I am concerned about is that the Premier has admitted, and he is on the public

himself, that if the federal government continues the same attitude of cutting back money for post-secondary education, then Newfoundland and Labrador are going to suffer greatly and our institutions will suffer greatly. I would offer a word of caution. The Premier knows it is going to be done unilaterally by the federal government. Here he is now embarking on a very ambitious programme of reorganization of the full post-secondary educational system in our Province, the vocational schools, the marine institute as well as the University, under the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power), and I do not think enough of thought has been put into this reorganization.

I will say again. We need an open debate on this matter. One of the speakers a recent conference in Grand Falls, the President of a Community College in British Columbia which had 44,000 students, stated the premise that if you are going to reorganize your post-secondary education or just your vocational educational system, what is most important in order for that programme to be a success is to have continual funding over a period of time and for those institutions to know that a certain amount of money is going to be coming each year. I can say now that with regard to the cutback in post-secondary education by the federal government, if we are going to embark on reorganization of our vocational school system and not have the money there to put in place to continue with the programme that needs to be done, then we are probably going to end up doing more damage than good.

I also say to the President of the

Council (Mr. Marshall) and to the Cabinet ministers, that with regard to the reorganization of post-secondary education in this Province, an advisory board should be set up in the interim to advise and to assist the minister and his officials in his department and that this should be a standing committee of learned gentlemen and women throughout our Province. When legislation is brought in, or the blueprint is brought in, this coming Spring by the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power) it should be open for debate throughout the Province and necessary hearings be held.

The White Paper that was done by the minister, who wrote the White Paper off the cuff himself - and many learned people throughout the Province said what was most important about that White Paper was not what was in it but what was left out - and one of the main things that was left out was the philosophy behind the reasons for reorganization of the vocational systems in this Province. The minister admitted, it is not only the vocational institutions being reorganized, but all post-secondary educational institutions.

I would again like to focus on post-secondary education in our Province. We have seen within the past month and a half some fine institutions come on stream. The music school at the university, again, I have to thank, and I think this House in actual fact should send a letter of thank you to the former federal minister for Newfoundland, Mr. William Rompkey and thank him for his input with regard to the music school and with regard to the Marine Institute.

MR. MARSHALL:

A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

He is debating the bill in principle again and he is into areas that are not germane to this particular amendment.

MR. HISCOCK:

To that point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

I am quite aware that I am going off a little bit from the bill but I am sure that the Chairman will allow me a little bit of latitude since the bill is cluing up. All I was mentioning, and I will probably end up dropping the name, but what I was basically mentioning is that we have had fine, first-class institutions brought on stream in this Province within the past month and a half. We should give some credit to the federal and provincial governments for getting these institutions on the go.

I would hope that with the reorganization of the vocational system in this Province, and the other institutions, we will see proper funding in place. There is a question now as to whether or not that proper funding will be in place because of cutbacks in federal post-secondary education allocations. That is the point I was trying to make, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Does Clause 1 carry?

MR. HISCOCK:

That was to the point of order. I addressed a point of order. I was not finished.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

To that point of order, there was no point of order.

The hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In concluding, we have the Marine Institute, we have the music school and we have had several come on stream in the past month and a half. The other part is that I again commend this government. After ten years of recommendation that a fine art school be set up in Corner Brook, the Province has seen fit to go with this.

I will again ask the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands (Mr. Simms) to put pressure on his federal counterparts in Ottawa to make sure that the federal government moves their Forestry Research Center from St. John's to Corner Brook. The Minister of Forestry is not concerned with this matter, but I can see the day when the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College will be a first class university in itself and it will be noted in North America for its fine arts, for its general arts, and also, for its forestry programme, if we could get everything put in the area from the federal and provincial governments, as well as having the private industries of Abitibi-Price in Stephenville and Kruger in Corner Brook.

We have an opportunity of contributing to the viability of a

renewable resource in this Province, but we also have the opportunity of contributing research to forestry, not only in Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada, but in Canada and North America as a whole and the full world generally with regard to research, if we could only get our act together.

I hope that the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands will put pressure on the federal government to make sure that the center is moved there and that the university can start developing a forestry department and start building on that. Within the next decade or so, we could see it coming up to first class international standards.

We know, Mr. Chairman, with regard to that, the University Pensions Act, if we do not get these institutions to first class international standards, we are not going to be able to attract first class scholars to our Province. We are not going to be able to raise the standard of education for our own people by having top people in those positions. If we do not do that, Mr. Chairman, then the end result is, we are not going to be paying that much out in pensions as a result because we are going to get second class educators coming to our Province and our top educators are going to be leaving the Province.

We know what is happening in the medical profession in our Province. Once the students are educated at the University, they leave. It is the same thing with other qualified people. If we do not raise and contribute financial compensation to the professors at these institutions and vocational

schools, they will leave. One of the things that is happening, Mr. Chairman, is that the University professors feel that they are underpaid. A lot of them staying there because of research that they are doing and also out of a sense of duty, those that came there in the 1960's and pioneered the University. Many of them are getting older now. But I am wondering whether the young people who are around the world with the latest views and knowledge and technology, will they be committed to the idea of self-sacrificing when they come to the University?

So, Mr. Chairman, with regard to "An Act To Amend The Memorial University (Pensions) Act," if we do not pay our professors first class salaries and give them first class facilities, the end result is we are not going to be getting top qualified people to come into our Province. As a result, the one that is going to suffer is not the institute itself, but the young people throughout our Province and the opportunity they could provide for them.

It is said, and I am sure the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) has heard it many times, that we are a fishing Province. As a result of being a fishing Province, many of the communities around our Province here, a lot of the younger men and women, cannot get jobs in the fishery anymore because of the limitations on entry and other problems. So the only thing that we can give our young people is a ticket and that ticket of course, Mr. Chairman, is education.

If we do not provide resources to our institutions, then we are not going to be able to have first class international standards of

learning at our facilities. If we are not going to strive for that, if the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands (Mr. Simms) is so concerned about getting a learning centre in Central Newfoundland just for the sake of having it there, and not for the sake of excellence, then the end result will be negative, Mr. Chairman.

In concluding, before I am chopped off at the knees, Mr. Chairman, I would say that this government has to be cautious, and this Opposition will be ever vigilant to make sure that post-secondary education in this Province is not going to suffer as a result of the federal government trying to balance its budget and eliminate waste and mismanagement that the federal government in the past and in the present government finds in its system. Suffering will take place if, in trying to balance its budget, the federal government passes it on to rural areas of our Province and Atlantic Canada in general.

We have the lowest per capita student rate of participation in post-secondary education, and if the federal government is going to be cutting back in Ontario and BC and Alberta where these provinces, by the way, already have a limited enrollment - there are more people applying to these institutions than they can handle and they have cut off the entrants - if the cuts up there apply here, trouble will result. Our Province, of course, still is not at that stage of limiting entrants and will not be at that stage in a long while.

So, Mr. Chairman, I will ask the ministers on the government side not only to pass Bill 53, "An Act To Amend The Memorial University

(Pensions) Act," but to put pressure on Ottawa, like the Premier is doing, to make sure that cutbacks in post-secondary education in this Province do not become a reality.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed Bill Bo. 53 without amendment, carried.

MR. MARSHALL:

I move that the Committee rise and report progress, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

The hon. the member for Terra Nova.

MR. GREENING:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bills No. 21, 12, 11, 6, 48, 47, 51 and 53 passed without amendment.

On motion, report received and adopted, bills ordered read a third time on tomorrow.

MR. MARSHALL:

Order 13, Bill No. 56.

MR. SPEAKER:

Debate on Bill No. 56 was adjourned by the hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying yesterday when debate on this

particular piece of legislation adjourned, I think Your Honour ruled early in the debate that there was a certain amount of flexibility allowed because it is, to a certain extent, finance legislation. I trust Your Honour is still feeling in the same gracious kind of mood today because I made some very pertinent points in the few moments I had remaining yesterday. I think there were only five or six minutes left, and during that five or six minute period, I tore strips off the members of the Opposition for the obvious reason. They spoke for about an hour and a half in total, three of them in particular, my friend from Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons), my friend from Bonavista North (Mr. Lush), and there was one other character over there...the member for Gander (Mr. Baker), I believe -

MR. MARSHALL:

They are all characters!

MR. SIMMS:

Those three gentlemen, who made the only speeches, are all extremely well educated, they are very knowledgeable, they are experienced in various levels of government - municipal, federal and provincial, and what I found most disappointing, Mr. Speaker, was that in the hour and a half they discussed this particular Bill, not one of them made a point that was pertinent to the Bill itself.

MR. HISCOCK:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

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

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with Bill 56, "An Act to Amend the Department of Finance Act". The member for Grand Falls spoke for ten or fifteen minutes yesterday and all he did was chastise the three members on our side for not saying anything pertinent to the bill. Now, of course, he is up again doing the same thing. Is he going to address the Bill, "An Act to Amend the Department of Finance Act", or is he just up to rehash things which have already been said by our side? We know what was said on our side, it is in Hansard today. And if the member for Grand Falls wants to know what other members did, then, of course, he can read it. Mr. Speaker, I ask that you direct the member for Grand Falls to direct his remarks to Bill 56.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Right on! Good point!

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, I did mention yesterday that being a Finance Act there would be a certain amount of leeway, but I think the point is well taken, that the hon. minister was straying somewhat too far. The hon. the Minister for Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do apologize to Your Honour and to the House, but I feel that I should have spoken to the point of order. Of all the people to raise a point of order about my being relevant to the Bill. We just heard the hon. member speak for a half hour on the Memorial University Pensions Act and he talked about the Forestry Center and everything else that came into his head.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I talked about this Bill yesterday and pointed out to hon. members that if they took the time to read the explanatory notes and, of course, the clauses, which are very explanatory and clear, they would surely see that this is not what they are worried about. There is no doubt that this is a piece of housekeeping legislation. It is straightforward, it is clear, it is meant to help speed up the process and it will be done under the strictest of guidelines, as outlined by Cabinet. Monetary limits, terms, conditions, and so on, will be determined by Cabinet, so there really is nothing for them to fear. It is a piece of housekeeping legislation.

Let me also add, Mr. Speaker, in view of your ruling to allow some flexibility into the debate, that if I wander too far, I am sure Your Honour will interrupt me. But I do want to make a point. When I was speaking yesterday, at some point during the debate the member for Windsor - Buchans (Mr. Flight), my old friend who seemingly wants to attack me every time I am on my feet - I do not understand why - made a statement. He said, Mr. Speaker, 'In Grand Falls they called him' - referring to me, of course - 'old landslide Simms.' He said, 'Forty-one votes'. Then, Mr. Speaker, and here is the pertinent quote - now, the hon. member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) should not leave because he is going to love this one - 'Forty-one votes and it took' - this is from Hansard - 'the University to deliver those. It took 130 kids who do not know what is what in Grand Falls to deliver that victory.'

Now, Mr. Speaker, I consider that

to be a considerable slur on the students who attend that University. It certainly is a slur on the people who supported me in that particular election. I would suggest to the hon. member that by the time this appears in The Grand Falls Advertiser, in the next week or so, it will give him a chance to consider his thoughts and what his response will be to this particular charge and to these particular comments. I will tell him this is going to come back and haunt him, and haunt him right up until the time - of course, he will not be elected the next time anyway, it is every second term that he gets a crack at winning. But I think those comments, Mr. Speaker, are terrible comments to make in the middle of a debate, especially.

To get back to dealing with Bill No. 56, which is "An Act To Amend The Department of Finance Act", I call on the member for Windsor - Buchans (Mr. Flight) to apologize, Mr. Speaker. This was brought to my attention, by the way, by university students from Windsor - Buchans, who are constituents of his. He should apologize to those students, he should apologize to every student over at that University, because he is suggesting that any student who attends the University does not know what is going on in his own particular constituency. He should be ashamed! I am not surprised that he would leave the House, Mr. Speaker, at such a time as this. He cannot defend those kinds of comments, and he should be ashamed of himself and embarrassed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, getting back to Bill No. 56, having made those particular responses to an attack which the member for Windsor -

Buchans is very capable of making - nobody usually pays any attention to him, but he gets some kick out of it. Somehow or another he gets a kick out of it, out of attacking individuals, and he has no more - well, I will not say it, Mr. Speaker, for fear he will attack me again.

Anyway enough about the member for Windsor - Buchans. We all know what his capabilities are.

MR. FLIGHT:

I am now going back to Grand Falls to spread it all over The Advertiser.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, he better take at least seven or eight days because he is going to need them to explain himself out of this one, I can tell you. I will have some fun by the time I am finished with this, boy. I might even do it in The Evening Telegram. I do not know if there is anybody here from The Evening Telegram. Ha, ha, I see some people up there from The Evening Telegram who might be interested in making a story out of this. Imagine accusing the students of the University of not knowing what is going on in their ridings.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame! Shame!

MR. SIMMS:

He should be ashamed of himself.

MR. BAIRD:

He should be horsewhipped.

MR. LUSH:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, if he is going to raise a point of order, he should certainly do it from his own place not from his Leader's place.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue with my debate. I only have a couple of minutes left. They are obviously being stung and they want to take away my time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. LUSH:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

I was a little too early for that chair. I will be there but not this week.

I think the hon. gentleman is taking the statement out of context. I clearly remember the day that the member raised this. I think what he was suggesting was that circumstances surrounding that particular election were such that the students were so harassed by workers of the Progressive Conservative Party to get them out and vote that they did not know what was what. That is what the member meant.

MR. SIMMONS:

They were mesmerized.

MR. LUSH:

They were mesmerized. They were totally mesmerized by the Tories, getting calls and being harassed by the workers to go and vote when many of them did not want to go

out and vote. What the member meant was that they were so mesmerized and so hassled that they did not know what was what. I think that is the context in which it was said.

MR. SIMMS:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

For the hon. member for Bonavista North to have to get up and explain what the hon. member for Windsor - Buchans (Mr. Hiscock) meant is strange enough in itself, but whatever the member for Windsor - Buchans meant, here is what he said: "It took 130 kids who do not know what is what in Grand Falls to deliver that victory." There was no point of order, Mr. Speaker. He is totally out of order himself.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To that point of order, there is no point of order. Also, the hon. minister was getting considerably away from the particular subject.

The hon. Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway, having made those comments, I am prepared to conclude -

MR. DAWE:

Move second reading.

MR. SIMMS:

- and move second reading of the bill.

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DECKER:
I have so much to say and time is so brief, I will now adjourn the debate, 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, Monday, at 3:00 p.m. and that this House do now adjourn.

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