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Speaker: Honourable Patrick McNicholas

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The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TULK:
I rise on a point of personal privilege. Last night in Committee, the MHA for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) - the story was subsequently carried in today's paper - claimed that I had threatened him with physical violence. Mr. Speaker, in actual fact this is what went on, and this is a serious matter from two points of view. The MHA for Bonavista South came into the Committee at some point earlier on and stated in Committee that the Opposition did not even care enough about what was happening in Committee to be present, and went on to say that the Labour spokesman, who happens to be the member for Fogo, was absent. He was absolutely right. The member for Fogo was absent from the House on Monday and, therefore, was not at the Labour Estimates Committee meeting hearings.

Consequently, I went across the House to the member for Bonavista South, while the member for Mount Scio (Mr. Barry) was in the Chair, and explained to him my reason for not being at the Committee meeting. It was very personal. I told the member for Bonavista South what the reason was, and I will not repeat it in the House, because it is personal and I do not intend to bring things that affect my family, whether it is my distant family or otherwise, into this Legislature. That is not my

purpose for being here and I will not bring that kind of thing into the Legislature, although I did explain to the member for Bonavista South what the reason was.

I then went on to point out to him in what I thought was a most gentlemanly fashion - the Telegram, I think, carries the story that I pointed my finger at the hon. gentleman and indeed I did, that is a habit, perhaps, that I have - that the member for Bonavista South, before he makes those kinds of accusations in the House, should check with members as to why they are not present, because to do otherwise is to say that in some way a member is derelict in his or her duties. The reason I was out of this House on Monday, I feel there is no reason why that should be misconstrued as being derelict in my duty.

The member for Bonavista South then said, "Oh, I was not aware of that. What are you doing here tonight?" Again, when I walked across the House I pointed my finger at him and said, "Because I am interested in what goes on in this House."

Mr. Speaker, let me say two things: First of all, and let me say this very seriously, I do not intend to get into the kind of squabbling, the kind of media-seeking attention that the member for Bonavista South carries on. I do not intend to get into squabbling with members on the opposite side as they seek to obstruct the Opposition from asking certain questions. Furthermore, I am asking my colleagues on this side of the House to not even address this point of privilege any further

than my addressing it.

MR. MORGAN:

I guess you do not want that, that is right.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

MR. TULK:

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) was wrong. I will not accuse him of being untruthful because that, again, is the same as calling a person a liar. You cannot do that in this House, and I will not do that. But I will say this to him, and I will say to this House, that there was in no way any threatening of violence, and the member for Bonavista South knows what I am saying to be correct. I will stake my credibility against his any day of the week, that I did not in any way threaten him with physical violence, neither did I intend to.

Secondly, in regard to the story in The Telegram, the member for Bonavista South went on at some length. I sat in my seat and refused, to be quite frank to you, to dignify the statements of the hon. gentlemen with a reply. I would not even reply to his statements that he was making. The Telegram consequently carried the story, 'Morgan claims Tulk threatened he would beat my mouth in.' Now, Mr. Speaker, without being overly critical of The Telegram, I think it would do well for me and this Province, including The Telegram, to, at times when those kinds of things go on, perhaps at least interview the member who is being accused by a member. Because you do not reply to something or make a rebuttal in the House, that does not mean that you do not have a

point to make to the media of this Province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my point of privilege is this, that we are being impeded by this kind of verbal abuse, and it seems, at this point, that it has reached out into the press and that the Opposition is being asked to be quiet and say nothing. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is very serious and it has reached the point, to be quite frank with you, where you can hardly trust yourself to speak to the member for Bonavista South because, if you do, you are likely to be accused of physical violence in some form or other.

MR. SIMMONS:

Unless you have witnesses.

MR. TULK:

Unless you have witnesses, Mr. Speaker, and you need a good many of them.

The member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) apparently backs up his colleague, according to the paper and in this House last night. I say to the member for Burin - Placentia West that he cannot stand in Committee, that he cannot stand in this House, and I will stake my credibility against that of either one of the two gentlemen or against both of them, that they cannot stand in this House and say with a clear conscience that I in any way threatened the member for Bonavista South with physical violence. If they wish to do it to try to score some cheap political points and to get some cheap media, then please go ahead. Because in the process, I say this to them and I say it to them in all sincerity, -

MR. MORGAN:

That is not true, 'Beaton'. If you do not stop -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. TULK:
- they will do nothing but lower the dignity of this Chamber, which is very important to democracy in this Province.

MR. TOBIN:
I know what you said.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order! Order, please!

MR. TULK:
Yes, the hon. gentleman knows what I said, or at least as he said last night in the House, 'I heard part of the conversation.' I say to the hon. gentleman that he does know part of the conversation because he was sitting next to the hon. gentleman, and he also knows that the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) threatened him with no violence at all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MORGAN:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
The hon. the member for Bonavista South.

MR. MORGAN:
Mr. Speaker, over the last number of days I have been accused of rising on spurious points of order, but now I am rising to respond to what I think is a very spurious point of privilege. The fact is that I give, number one, full marks to the accurate story in today's Evening Telegram on what occurred yesterday evening, and may I point out to the House, members who were not here

yesterday evening, that I was sitting here just to the immediate right of my colleague, the Minister of Career Development (Mr. Power), in the Minister of Justice's (Ms Verge) chair; sitting next to me was the member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin), and sitting right behind me, Mr. Speaker, right where the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn) is now sitting, was the reporter who wrote the story which is in this paper today. I give full marks to the reporter for her story, because she, herself, saw what happened. She was sitting right behind me when the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) walked across the House last evening, when I was gibing his leader during the estimates debate on Energy. I was not gibing the member for Fogo, I was going after his leader. He did not like it and he came across the House, Mr. Speaker.

I was not going to rise today on a point of privilege, I made the point last evening in Committee. Now, Mr. Speaker, I rose yesterday evening on a point of privilege when I was being physically threatened by a member of the House, coming over and threatening he was going to beat my mouth in, smash my mouth in if I did not shut up about his leader. That is what it was all about.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me finish my point, because it is a serious one. For the past number of days, the Opposition have been trying to shut me up in different different ways, through the whole Committee process, but now they have gotten down to this very unparliamentary tactic, 'if we cannot do it through procedure, then we are going to try to do it through bullying, physically threatening a member of the House.' I rose on a

point of privilege yesterday evening and sitting in the Chair at the time was the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry). He had just sat in the Chair to replace my friend from Carbonear (Mr. Peach) who had gone for a cup of coffee. I rose on a point of privilege and I asked him if he had seen what had occurred. Mr. Speaker, Hansard will show that the Leader of the Opposition, who was sitting where the Clerk is now sitting said, 'No, I did not see the man walk across the House or go back.' He did not see him. Now, I know the member for Fogo is not very small, and maybe the Leader of the Opposition has bad eyesight, but, Mr. Speaker, for the Leader of the Opposition to say he did not see his colleague, the member for Fogo, walk across the House and threaten me, and then he said, 'I did not see him sitting in that Chair.'

So we called back the official Committee Chairman, the member for Carbonear (Mr. Peach), and it was discussed. The Opposition took part, but the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) chose not to say a word because he knew I was right, Mr. Speaker. He knew I was right! He chose not to say a word in that discussion last evening. Today, when he sees the story carried accurately in the media, he tries to squirm his way out of it.

MR. TULK:
Sure! Sure!

MR. MORGAN:
Yes, Mr. Speaker, because the fact is last evening, and maybe it is because of reasons beyond explaining, I do not know, but I said nothing against the member for Fogo. I was gibing his Leader, he became disturbed about it, and came across the House and

physically threatened me. Mr. Speaker, that kind of action did indeed constitute a point of privilege on my part. I chose not to waste the time of the House today. I dealt with it last evening. For some reason, last evening the member for Fogo would not get involved in discussing it, last evening after it occurred, he chose to waste the time of the House today in rising on a point of privilege. In fact, Mr. Speaker, he left approximately two minutes after this occurred last night.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

I think I have heard just what the hon. member has to say. He seems to be repeating himself.

MR. MORGAN:
Okay, Mr. Speaker. I agree we should not waste time on these points of privilege. I want to say there is no point of privilege, because the story in today's paper quite accurately describes what went on yesterday evening. The member for Fogo did, indeed, physically threaten me yesterday evening in this House.

MR. SIMMONS:
To the point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Fortune-Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) is correct when he asserts, in concluding his remarks, that the story is accurate, because the story says, 'Morgan claims', and there is no question that that is an accurate account, because he is

claiming it once again. Now much of his argument in the last few moments was based on the fact that the reporter from The Evening Telegram was physically near where the alleged incident took place. It is interesting that she chooses not to say that in the story. She does not say, "I saw", or "the reporter witnessed" or "this happened". Here is what she says word for word: "When Jim Morgan claimed that Beaton Tulk," etc., and so the whole story is based not on her eyewitness account of what is alleged to have happened but on what the gentleman from Bonavista South -

MR. PEACH:

Did you get a legal opinion on it?

MR. CALLAN:

Have you?

MR. MORGAN:

No, I did not raise the issue.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

The story in The Evening Telegram is based on what a gentleman in this House claims to have happened, my first point. My second point, Mr. Speaker, is that I have had an opportunity today to discuss this matter with my colleague from Fogo, who is quite upset with the headline, and that is what prompted him to raise this issue.

MR. PEACH:

Ha, ha!

MR. TULK:

You were Chairman.

MR. MORGAN:

He would not say anything last night.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

I understand from my friend from Fogo that what happened was he went, as a courtesy to the gentleman from Bonavista South who had wondered where he, the member for Fogo had been during the previous day's Estimates Committee, and he gave him an explanation about how he had been absent on some personal family business, and that was the extent of the conversation.

MR. MORGAN:

That is why he left.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. MORGAN:

I know that is why he left.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BARRY:

Name him!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

I heard from the gentleman in private today as to what had transpired. I accept his word, and I submit that there may not be a point of privilege but that the member has been misrepresented in the public press, though not in this Chamber, and in so doing he has -

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible) point of privilege.

MR. SIMMONS:

Must you talk all the time?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, what I am doing, I know, is foreign to the sheep on that side. I am saying that while he has raised a point of privilege, in my view it may not be a point of privilege but is a matter that he should have aired to draw to the attention of the House what happened, to give his version of the events. I support his right to do that and I believe it should be allowed to rest there.

MR. TOBIN:

To that point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to get drawn into this, but I feel what has taken place in this House and in these Estimate Committees is disgusting, disgraceful and absolutely uncalled for.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, we have seen the Opposition try to paralyze -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

We are speaking about a specific incident now, not incidents in general.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, so am I. The member for Fortune - Hermitage got up and quoted from the paper, and I think I have the right to set the record straight. He said, 'Morgan

claimed.' What the paper said, Mr. Speaker, is, 'Tulk and Morgan talked briefly in low voices before Tulk shook his finger at Morgan, turned around and went back to his seat.' Mr. Speaker, that is not Morgan claiming anything, that is the fact. Last night I happened to be sitting where the Minister of Career Development (Mr. Power) is now sitting, and the member for Bonavista South was sitting where the Minister of Justice is now sitting. I would suggest there is a reason why the Leader of the Opposition is not here. Despite the fact that the Leader was in the Chair, he said he did not see - can you imagine, Mr. Speaker? - he did not see the member for Fogo cross the House. I agree, with the Leader of the Opposition in the Chair, he did not hear what the member said, and I submit that I did not hear all of what the member said. Your Honour, I was not concerned last night about what the member said. I moved my chair back, because the member, Mr. Speaker, was not the member who sits in this House and laughs across at us, he was vicious. Your Honour, I was concerned not by the language but I thought there was going to be a physical attack made here in the House. That is how close it came last night, Mr. Speaker. The conduct of the member for Fogo last night was uncalled for. We did not raise points of order in the meeting last night. I did not raise points of order last night or yesterday morning, nor can any member there accuse me of getting involved in this. I have intentionally, Mr. Speaker, not subjected myself to what has happened at these Estimates Committees.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member is getting away from the point of privilege.

MR. TOBIN:

The point of privilege raised by the member for Fogo is not a point of privilege. My colleague from Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) was verbally abused and, Mr. Speaker, was on the verge, I would suggest, of being physically abused by the member for Fogo.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

On numerous occasions over the last week I have stated that the Committee should look after its own affairs. I must rule that the hon. member has not made a prima facie case of breach of privilege.

I would like, at this time, to refer to the point of privilege raised by the hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) the day before yesterday. Clearly a prima facie case of breach of privilege was not established. The matter raised was more in the realm of a point of order, and I would rule, in that particular case, it was a disagreement between two hon. members.

MR. SIMMONS:

On a matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage on a matter of privilege.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Do not be wasting the time of the House, boy!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to waste the time of the House, but if members on the other side keep interjecting, I will wait until

they are through to make I make my point. That might take up some time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege unrelated to Mr. Speaker's ruling, unrelated to the previous incident. Last week in one of the Estimates Committees, the Resource Estimates Committee, my colleague from St. Barbe (Mr. Furey) put a question to the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) in his capacity as the Minister responsible for the Offshore Petroleum Board. The question was whether Mr. Cabot Martin, who is under contract to the government as a consultant, had any connection with any companies associated with the offshore. The answer was an unequivocal no. Indeed, it was repeated two or three times.

The minister this morning in Committee had it brought to his attention that Mr. Martin is indeed a shareholder in one of the companies whose bid for acreage has been accepted by the Petroleum Board. In other words, my point of privilege -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

I find it impossible to hear what the hon. member is saying.

MR. MORGAN:

I am not talking to him, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. FUREY:
Name him!

MR. SPEAKER:
There are a number of members there in the back row on the left who have been talking, and I find it absolutely impossible to follow the discussion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. MORGAN:
On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, I am on a point of privilege right now.

MR. MORGAN:
One would never know it. You are not talking.

MR. SIMMONS:
No, Mr. Speaker, I am not talking as much as I would like to on this point, but I am having great difficulty. I am going to try, and I am going to take all of the time it requires.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:
I am on a point of privilege. It is a time-honoured tradition that when a person rises on a point of privilege we give the member at least some time to make his point, as we gave the gentleman for Bonavista South yesterday, about ten minutes to make his point, without interruption.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister told the Committee a week ago that Mr. Martin was not involved in any company related to the offshore. He informed the Committee this morning that he has been aware for a month who the shareholders of North Atlantic Petroleum are, and they include Mr. Martin. So, Mr. Speaker, at least unwittingly the minister responsible for the Petroleum Board misled the Committee and therefore the House. That is my point of privilege. There are ancillary issues related to possible conflicts of interest, but that is not the issue I am getting into here. I am getting into the particular point relating to having misled the House through misleading a Standing Committee of this House. I would ask the Speaker to take this matter that I have drawn to his attention under advisement with a view to finding a prime facie case. If he so does, I am prepared to put down the appropriate motion.

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MARSHALL:
I find it regrettable that the hon. member would rise on a point of privilege. He is rising not on a point of privilege but really a point of emphasis for the type of poison that we are used to seeing the hon. gentleman trying to spew and to spread from time to time, which he is quite helpless to prevent.

First off, there is no point of privilege because what goes on in Committee is another matter, and Your Honour has ruled on that. It

is fresh in his mind this morning where we had the particular discussion, where the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey) asked me that particular question and the hon. gentleman tried to make that particular point. As I said as, I was responding within the context of the Hibernia development that we were discussing at the time. First of all, Mr. Martin has absolutely no connection with the partners of the Hibernia development, for which he is charged with advising the government with respect to matters on the offshore. It is confined primarily to the Hibernia development and, secondly, it is a mean and indirect action on the part of the hon. gentleman. Mr. Martin's involvement with that company, I think, is very minimal and it was quite clearly and, I thought, very pointedly put before the Committee this morning that he may be in a company, and I do not even know what, if any, interest he has in the company; it is immaterial. But if he is into that particular company, it is only a 20 per cent shareholding. Shell Oil was given, really, the award, and this was done by an independent board, the independent Canada/Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board. With the types of mouths the hon. gentleman has and the way in which he operates from time to time, they are going to get nobody in this Province to do anything in the business world, or in the governmental section. We will end up having representation of people of the likes of the hon. member and then we will be doomed forever and a day.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

As I mentioned earlier today and

many times before, these matters should be dealt with by the Committee. There is no prima facie case established.

There are about three minutes left for Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:
It is thirty minutes.

MR. SPEAKER:
I thought on Wednesday we started at 3:30 o'clock.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Four o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER:
That is right, I am sorry, we start at 3:30.

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question was intended for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer) but in his absence it is probably related as well to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Butt), so maybe he could respond. There has been a disaster at the Chernobyl plant site, just 100 kilometres North of Kiev. This is the first time in history that there is an uncontrollable core meltdown occurring. I understand that recently it has spread to the core of a second nuclear plant and within hours after the core meltdown radiation levels ten times normal were detected 1000 kilometres away, in Scandinavia, and the reports coming out of that area are simply horrendous. I would ask the minister if he has

made any contact with his counterparts in the federal government to examine the implications for this part of the world?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of the Environment.

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker, my department has been in discussion and consultation with Environment Canada and Health and Welfare Canada on this major problem. It is a big problem, obviously. I think I can allay any fears that the hon. member may have. From the scientific advice that I am getting, Newfoundland and Labrador is not in any immediate danger from this fallout. The hon. member is quite right in that the prevailing winds over there right now are taking this contaminate over Poland, Sweden and the Scandinavian countries, and Finland. There is a possibility that it could go into Arctic Canada, but in fact when it goes outside of about a one thousand mile radius it dissipates so much that there will be a problem in actually picking it up. That is the advice I have been given as late as an hour ago.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Minister, if the information that you are giving is correct as far as people know from what limited knowledge is available of one core meltdown. I understand now the second plant is on fire, there are things happening in the second plant, and there are a

total of four cores in that immediate area that could be suffering meltdown in the next few days and it is a situation nobody knows how to handle. Under those circumstances the radiation levels, particularly of -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Would the hon. member pose a question, please?

MR. BAKER:

A new question, Mr. Speaker. This would mean huge increases in the amount of particulate matter that can be carried by winds and therefore the situation the minister describes is probably only a temporary situation. Would the minister assure this House that he will be in constant contact, as the situation changes, with the federal officials and that track will be kept of whether or not in fact there could be some problem in this part of Canada?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of the Environment.

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member and members of the House that the monitoring programme is being stepped up now on a daily basis. Samples are being taken in all of Eastern Canada, in particular in Newfoundland in St. John's and Goose Bay; in Greenwood and Digby, Nova Scotia; and in Fredericton, New Brunswick. There is a Dr. Taylor, I believe, with Health and Welfare Canada who will be making a public statement Friday and one every day thereafter. Also, the Department of the Environment will be consulting and informing my Assistant Deputy Minister on a

daily basis, so I can assure the hon. member that everything that can be done is being done. I repeat again that our Province, fortunately, and Canada I guess as a whole, with the exception of a small amount getting into the Arctic area, is in not imminent danger.

You know, the hon. member made some statements about the care of other reactors catching fire and that. I am not aware of that. I guess the federal government, through Mr. Clark, the Minister of External Affairs, will be talking to our embassy officials in Moscow, Russia, and keeping an eye on that situation. It certainly does not come under the purview of the Minister of the Environment here in Newfoundland.

MR. BAKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the minister would check out the rumour at this point that the second plant is starting to melt down. There are in fact four reactors. He will probably find that on the news tonight.

I understand that there are some Canadian students at the University of Kiev. Has the minister, also in his talks, asked if there are any Newfoundland students who may be attending that university?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of the Environment.

MR. BUTT:

Of course, Mr. Speaker. But I can tell the hon. member as late as this morning through the federal government rumors to that effect were let out that there were some students over there in Kiev, in that area, but in fact they have not been substantiated. That process is ongoing. They are monitoring the situation of all Canadians abroad, who would be in that immediate area, where there would be some imminent danger. So that process is going on through the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. Barbe.

MR. FUREY:

I have a question for the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Russell). Could the minister tell the House whether any department stores in this Province are selling imported electric radiators which are contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:

I am not aware. I have not had any direct inquiries or telephone inquiries about it. I did not get a chance to write down the nature of the stove, was it, the member was talking about? If you give it to me, after the Question Period I will check with my department immediately and see if they have had any complaints about it.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for St. Barbe.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, five days Environment Canada issued a bulletin to all provinces saying that imported electronic radiators from Italy are filled with oil which contained dangerous PCBs - 500 parts per billion I think they said - and that 40,000 of these electric radiators are being recalled.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Question please?

MR. FUREY:

A new question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

This is a supplementary that hon. member was recognized on.

MR. FUREY:

My question is, Mr. Speaker: There are 40,000 of these electric radiators in the country. Could the minister tell us what action he has taken to protect Newfoundland consumers from these very dangerous products?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues here, the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Butt), has indicated that they have been recalled. It is difficult for me to do something to protect the consumers if nobody contacts my department or people, such as the hon. member, do not bring it to my attention. I was not aware of the document that the hon. member referred to but I will certainly

check into it.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. FUREY:

The Minister of the Environment tells us that it has been recalled. This is true, Mr. Speaker, but a lot of consumers still do not know this. In fact, I had a call from a lady yesterday who enquired about it and had to bring one back to a local store here. This is a very dangerous item and I would ask the minister, through public advertising or whatever, in concert with the Minister of the Environment, to ensure that no Newfoundland consumers are hurt by this product. Will he do that?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member is making a statement rather than asking a question.

MR. BAKER:

He asked a question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that I will discuss the matter with my colleague, the Minister of the Environment. If it means a press statement, or a public release through our regional offices or whatever, I will certainly see that it is done.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Doyle). This morning I had a call from a Mr. John Hill, who is the president of R.J. Hill Construction. He said there was a contract awarded for explosives on the Port aux Basques subsidiary water supply, from Gull Pond to Reservoir One, and he wanted to know why was it not awarded to the lowest bidder?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that question as notice. I am not aware that any contract has been awarded in that area, but I will get the information and give it to the hon. member.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

The gentleman who called me was the president of R.J. Hill Construction, which bid on that, and he was told, in conversation with the Department of Municipal Affairs this morning, that he had the lowest bid but the contract was awarded to Western Construction. So I ask him if maybe he should check his departmental officials who are telling people that it is going to be awarded to someone else.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the hon. gentleman I will check that particular contract out. Obviously, I am not aware of it. We have hundreds of contracts being awarded on a weekly basis, so that particular one, again, I would have to check out and get back to the hon. member. Sometimes there is a very good reason why a particular contract might be awarded to other than the lowest bidder, but at this point in time I am not prepared to say what the reason might be. We will have to get back to the hon. gentlemen on it.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins). In my continuing effort of making practical and progressive proposals and suggestions to the Minister of Finance, which if accepted would result in economic growth and development, I therefore ask the minister would he agree to suggestions which have been made by various business groups throughout the Province to reduce the present level of retail sales tax?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

As hon. members know, we have had a recent budget in the Province

for the new fiscal year and, as is the practice, I am sure, in all jurisdictions, certainly it has been the practice in this jurisdiction, each time during the work-up to the budget we review all our tax statutes to see if appropriate changes should be made in them not only to make sure that our books are in the best order possible but also to make sure that we are using the tax system to the greatest extent we can to promote economic activity in the Province. I can assure the hon. member that we did review the retail sales tax revenue source during this budgetary process and we decided that we cannot change the maximum, overall level from the 12 per cent that has been in place for some time. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I should point out something that perhaps everyone does not carry in the front of their minds, and that is that there are many, many exemptions, total or in part, from the maximum retail sales tax level. And if you worked it out over all consumer goods, I would suggest that the average retail sales tax would probably work out to something like 6 per cent to 8 per cent rather than 12 per cent, because 12 per cent is on - I will not say narrow basis - a relatively restricted basis, it is not on the total basis of consumer goods.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Finance. Why is it that the minister persists in his obstinacy and in his intransigency

in rejecting these proposals, in trying to give a tax break to the business community and to the consumers of this Province? Why is it, I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the minister persists in denegrating and rejecting these proposals? Is he afraid that he is going to overheat the economy?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure members of this House that there is no collusion between the hon. member and myself. He is not asking these questions so that I can give these wonderful answers. He is not creating these openings for me so that I can come forward with these statements that are so acceptable to the people of this Province. I can assure hon. members that is not the case. But, nevertheless, I do have to take up the opportunities presented to me, and I will say that we put on taxes for one reason only; we put on taxes so we can gather revenues, and we gather revenues so that we can exhibit services and other activities which the people of this Province want. They want health services, they want education services, they want social assistance services, they want industrial development services, and so on. To exhibit those services we have to collect revenues, and the main way we can collect revenues is through the taxation system. So we put on the least taxes as we can,-

MR. LUSH:

Twelve per cent. The highest in Canada!

DR. COLLINS:

- but, nevertheless, sufficient to give rise to the revenues we need

to exhibit those services.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:
My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout). I understand that the countervailing duty of close to 6 per cent on whole fresh fish has now been confirmed by another agency in the United States. Could the minister give us some indication which programmes have been pointed out by the Americans as ones that they feel are unfair competition for our fish being exported to the States?

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is partially correct in the preamble to his question. The American authorities confirmed yesterday that the 5.82 per cent tariff imposed some months ago had been imposed on round Canadian fish going into the American market because it was deemed injurious to American fishing interests. They further ruled that it was not applicable on filleted fresh fish going into the American market. So they differentiated, or made a difference between the two forms of fresh product going from Canada into the American market.

In terms of Newfoundland while we have maintained a consistency of being against tariffs, and have fought very bravely with the rest of Atlantic Canada and industry

against the imposition of tariffs, from a Newfoundland perspective the imposition of this tariff basically means nothing in that we do not allow any fresh round fish to go from this Province into any market, let alone the American market or the Nova Scotian market or the New Brunswick market or any other market. We have a regulation here which says the fish must be processed to a filleted state in our Province thereby creating jobs in our own Province.

We are though, of course, as we have consistently said, worried about the trend here. It was salt fish last year, fresh round fish this year. I suppose it could conceivably be, although the markup was not very much, fresh frozen fish next year. So in that context we are worried about it and will continue to participate with industry and with the Canadian government in taking advantage of the couple of remaining appealable solutions that are now open to us.

MR. FENWICK:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Menihek, a supplementary.

MR. FENWICK:
I am pleased that the minister gave us that information although the question did not ask for that particular information. The Americans actually look at specific programmes that we have in place and say, 'These are the unfair ones that you have to get rid of.' It is my impression that the boat building subsidy was one, and that has already been removed by the federal government, and that we also are looking at

regional economic expansion programmes as well. Does the minister have any idea whether these regional economic expansion programmes are now to be dismantled by the federal government in order to appease this kind of countervailing duty?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, a very interesting question that has to be, I guess, looked at in the overall context of the way we do things in Canada. The fact of the matter is that U.S. authorities found that a total of fifty-four federal and provincial programmes were found to be countervailable, ranging from boat building subsidies to the loan guarantee programme that we have on for fish companies which have cash flow problems and so on.

Also, of course, on the other side of the coin, the American authorities ruled that the Unemployment Insurance Programme, for example, was not countervailable, was not therefore open to have an import duty put on. If they had done that, it would have resulted in perhaps a tariff of somewhere between 15 and 20 per cent placed on Canadian fish, and that would have been a real disaster for the industry because it would have encouraged American authorities then to go after frozen fish. There would have been no doubt about that.

On regional development programmes, the American authorities have ruled that, as a result of funding of such programmes, tariffs can be put on. The Canadian government and the Newfoundland government have

argued very strenuously that, in the strict definition of what is countervailable or what is not, regional development funding under those regional development programmes is available to forestry as it is to the fishery as it is to farming as it is to infrastructure for public development and so on, so therefore, because it has a general applicability right across the board in Canada, you cannot argue that the people involved in the fishing industry get an unfair advantage over everybody else. So far the Americans have not bought that argument but no doubt that is one of the arguments we will push further in the couple of remaining avenues that are open to us to appeal this decision.

MR. FENWICK:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. FENWICK:

My final supplementary is for the Minister of Fisheries, although but there may be a more appropriate minister, but it leads out of the answers he has given. Since we now have seen the boat building subsidy in the Department of Regional and Industrial Expansion's programmes as programmes considered to be unfair competition, what does this now mean as we enter into an era of free trade negotiations with the Americans in terms of the kinds of programmes we have seen fit to put in place? Are we now looking at a whole litany of programmes we have that may be considered unfair in terms of this broader question of negotiations for free trade?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what it means. It means that if there was ever a reason for us in Canada to get our act together and enter into serious negotiations with the Americans on a comprehensive trade package, here is the prime reason for it. One of the problems, Mr. Speaker, is that one of the avenues open to us now on appealing this particular decision is the GATT. There were over ninety countries in the world involved in GATT negotiations, but only twenty countries signed the GATT. That means we have to go in there now and pitch it out among everybody else in trying to address the peaks and the valleys of trade between Canada and the United States. If we had that comprehensive trade agreement between Canada and the United States, there would be two countries only trying to work out the peaks and valleys, just as it worked out very well in the two countries, the United States and Israel.

So if there is a reason, Mr. Speaker, for us to get our act in gear between Canada and the United States, the reason lies in the decision that we saw in the United States yesterday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier and the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe), let me

ask the Deputy Premier a question. I want to ask the Deputy Premier a question, Mr. Speaker, relating to the Newfoundland Railway and the future thereof. A prominent Newfoundland Tory, Mr. Speaker, was quoted a few days ago as saying, "There are developments around the corner which will improve job prospects in the Province including," he insisted, "the dismantling of the railway and the construction of a four lane Trans-Canada Highway."

MR. SIMMS:

Who is that?

MR. CALLAN:

This prominent Tory said yesterday, "It is inevitable, the railways dead."

Let me ask the Deputy Premier or the Minister of Transportation, is this now the philosophy and the stance of the Government of this Province? Does he agree with that prominent Tory?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker, over the past number of weeks the members in the Opposition and primarily the member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan), have been asking repeated questions based on what someone supposedly said. "Do you agree with what was written in The Globe and Mail"? "Do you agree with what was said in The Evening Telegram? "Do you agree with what is being reportedly said between one individual and another?" Mr. Speaker, the position of this Province and this administration has been very, very clear and concise as it relates to

the railway in this Province and all other transportation issues.

I have over the past number of months consistently put forward the Province's position. The Premier in Question Period in this Legislature, and outside the Legislature, have consistently put forward the position of the Province as it relates to the railway.

The hon. member is fishing. He is looking in the media, in newspapers and elsewhere, trying to try to get a quote from someone else, to ask the same question they have been asking and, Mr. Speaker, the answer is the same as it has been all along.

MR. CALLAN:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A supplementary, the hon. the member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN:
Mr. Speaker, let me tell the hon. the Minister of Transportation that the quote that I just read can be found in Hansard. It was the Party Whip on the Government side, who, before the Social Services Committee on Monday, I quoted word for word. It can be found in Hansard, not a newspaper, *The Globe and Mail* or anything else. Mr. Speaker, let me ask the minister again, is the Party Whip on the government benches speaking for government when he says that 'The railway is dead. It is inevitable' and that the railway will be gone? Is that what the member for Placentia (Mr. Patterson) is doing, speaking for the government? I ask the minister that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker, the member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) has been in this Legislature off and on, intermittently, perhaps longer than I have, and he knows the procedures that are to be followed; he knows who on this side, in the ministry, speaks for the government. He knows, as well, that private members are free to voice their opinions on a wide range of issues. The member whom he referred to is quite free to express an opinion on any matter. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that it is probably his right and his duty to express opinions on behalf of his constituents on a wide range of issues. But the member for Bellevue knows very well that the policies set forward by the Premier, myself and others in the government as it relates to the railway, are the official policy of government.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just a very brief question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications (Mr. Russell). The Minister of the Environment (Mr. Butt) indicated there had been a recall on a very dangerous item, dangerous to consumers in this Province, and this has been public knowledge for quite some time. I would like to ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications how come? What kind of mechanism does he have in

his department that he is not aware of a dangerous consumer item that has been subject to recall that other ministers know about in this government? How come the Consumer Affairs Department does not know about it? What kind of mechanisms does he have that allows this kind of ignorance?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, number one, the subject in question is an environmental problem or a potential environmental problem and like any other minister of any other person, I can only deal with things when they are brought to my attention either by officials in my department or by anybody else.

MR. BAKER:

What is your mechanism?

MR. RUSSELL:

That is a rather stupid question, Mr. Speaker. I have a Deputy Minister, an Assistant Deputy Minister and a Director of Consumer Affairs, and they all have certain responsibilities. I assume if this information is brought to their attention they would bring it to my attention.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, these electric radiators are consumer products, sold, available in stores throughout the Province, readily available. I ask the minister does he get those recalls? Do

they come to his department or are they ignored by his department?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, over the last number of months there have been certain matters, recalls and articles that have been brought to my attention by the officials of my department, and I see no reason now that, if they had received this information referred to by the hon. member, they would not have done the same thing. As I indicated in my answer to the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey), I was honestly not aware of it and I will certainly check into it immediately after Question Period.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This time I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Doyle). I do not know if he is aware of it but for the past the community of Norris Point in St. Barbe district has been experiencing trouble with the sewer system. They have made repeated attempts to have the minister provide funds to clean up the problem and, because of the minister's position that they are not going to help, council members are resigning en masse. Could the minister confirm this and what he plans to do about it?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal

Affairs.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I am very well aware of the sewer problems in Norris Point. We have been in touch with the council, as a matter of fact, on that particular issue. We have indicated to the council as well that this problem will be looked at in light of available funding when the capital programme is dealt with. When it has been dealt with, Mr. Speaker, we will be in touch with the town of Norris Point to let them know if they have funding or not.

MR. FUREY:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for St. Barbe, a supplementary.

MR. FUREY:

This was brought to the minister's attention over a year ago. A month ago I told the minister that the council was so frustrated they were preparing to resign. He said he would give us a commitment within three weeks, and that was a month ago. The council is planning on resigning en masse tonight because they feel they have lost the confidence of the minister. Will the minister step in now and do what is morally right and just and provide the funding to clean up those sewer systems which are flooding the meadows and creating environmental problems? In fact, the Department of the Environment has threatened to take them to court on a number of occasions.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House the hon. gentleman should be aware that we will not be making any announcements on capital funding until the estimates have cleared the House of Assembly. That is the process. We have approximately \$180 million worth of requests before us from approximately 350 municipalities all around the Province. Norris Point is no different, Mr. Speaker. Their request is before the Department of Municipal Affairs and it will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Bonavista South.

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Speaker, I have not heard any important questions this afternoon. Most of the questions are of a very provocative nature. I want to refer a question to my colleague, the Minister of Career Development (Mr. Power), with regards to something of importance to all the youth in our Province. Some weeks ago a major programme of over \$7 million was announced, called Challenge '86, to employ our students and young people around the Province this Summer. I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, from the minister, if his colleague, the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands (Mr. Simms) would let him pay some attention -

MR. CALLAN:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

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

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker, at twenty-seven minutes past three, I remember Your Honour saying that there were three minutes left in Question Period. Now going by that, Mr. Speaker, at three minutes before four, the half hour Question Period should have been over. So, Mr. Speaker, my point of order is that the Question Period is over and the member for Bonavista South should not have any right to ask a question.

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:

It is obviously a deliberate attempt by the hon. gentleman to bring the clock up to four o'clock so that the member for Bonavista South will not be able to ask his question. I would hope Your Honour would be able to recognize the member for Bonavista South on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To that point of order, there is no point of order. The Chair is keeping tabs on the time, but the time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

This is Private Members' Day. There is a motion in the name of the hon. member for Humber West (Mr. Baird), who is not present. Some other member, by leave, could

introduce this.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, I believe, as we had provided leave before, in a similar matter, leave may now be given. The member for Humber West (Mr. Baird) is unavoidably out of his seat today, but the member for Lapoile (Mr. Mitchell) has agreed to introduce the motion. So I would ask that the member for LaPoile be given an opportunity to introduce the motion on behalf of the member for Humber West understanding, of course, that the member for Humber West next Wednesday be able to close the debate.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

As the government provided leave under a similar circumstance for the member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons), we on this side give leave to the member for LaPoile to do that.

MR. SPEAKER:

By leave, the hon. member for LaPoile.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is indeed a privilege and a pleasure for me to rise in this hon. House to present this motion that was presented by my hon. friend from Humber West. I would like to read the motion:

"WHEREAS the Nielsen Task Force Report has recommended the

elimination of Federal subsidies on gulf and coastal ferry services; and

"WHEREAS the Nielsen Task Force Report recommends these services be governed by a User/Pay System; and

"WHEREAS this would cause undue economic hardship for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this hon. House go on record as opposing any elimination or reduction of Federal ferry and coastal boat subsidies for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador through the User/Pay Concept."

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this is a very important and timely topic in view of the ongoing review of all transportation modes in the Province by the federal government. The Nielsen Task Force Report is the most comprehensive evaluation of federal government services ever undertaken. Its recommendations are all-encompassing and certainly cause for great concern as each department evaluates the impact of reduced federal services to this Province.

At the outset, I would like to indicate that I share the federal government's desire to eliminate the duplication of services to control expenditures towards the goal of reducing its deficit. I think all members would agree that our national debt must be addressed in a forthright and determined manner. However, I must also urge that, in its rush to curb federal spending, the federal government does not seriously impact upon the Province's programmes and

services, particularly, in this Province which is so dependent upon the federal support payments. While Ontario and Quebec might feel some uncomfortable pain from the Nielsen Report, I fear that our Province would suffer considerably and face a considerable amount of agony if many of the recommendations in that report were implemented, Mr. Speaker.

We must then resist any effort to reduce or eliminate federal support, financial or otherwise. This resolution is but one example where our need outweighs the desire to curb the deficit. To eliminate the federal subsidies on our Gulf and Coastal ferry services would be to discourage the development opportunities in a wide variety of provincial programmes, most notably, Mr. Speaker, in our tourism industry. Any reductions would have severe implications for our already high cost of living and would serve to isolate our people at a time of renewed national unity and optimism for a reduction in regional disparity.

It is perhaps true to say that the Coastal ferry service, for all its deficiencies, had, in the long run, a more profound impact upon rural Newfoundland than any other government source or service.

Mr. Speaker, living on an Island we look to the sea as a vital transportation mode providing the goods and services that we consume, the mail service and, of course, the vital passenger link to the mainland centers of Canada. Let us look at the costs our people are already faced with when they are planning a trip to the mainland, costs, which despite established federal subsidies, are

still a deterrent to potential tourists and domestic traffic.

If you want to travel, Mr. Speaker, to the mainland of Canada, an adult will pay eleven dollars; a child, five dollars; a car, thirty-five dollars and a trailer, thirty-five dollars. Thus, Mr. Speaker, a family of four travelling the Port aux Basques - North Sydney route with a modest camper trailer would be forced to pay out \$103.10 or \$206.20 for a round trip, over \$200 to travel the 100 mile sea crossing, which is surely the most expensive journey one could make by an conventional transportation method.

Travelling with a larger family, a car or a trailer, would, of course, significantly increase the cost, even before one's vacation begins, Mr. Speaker. To drive the equivalent on any highway in North America would cost roughly twenty dollars or less, which is one-fifth of the cost to travel on our already subsidized Gulf ferry system Mr. Speaker.

Currently, costs are without a doubt a serious deterrent to increased tourism. People vacationing in Nova Scotia or New England will surely consider the \$200 ticket to our shores. While many will pay the cost, many, many more will pass on by and the valuable tourist dollar will go with them to other mainland centers. One can only imagine the dramatic drop in the tourist traffic should the present fares increase. At a time when our Gulf service is being enhanced and expanded through the introduction of the Caribou to the Gulf ferry route, it is most perplexing to see this potential impediment being placed in our way. Mr.

Speaker, on a user/pay basis, we will surely be paying limousine rates where only the privileged will be able to afford to travel. Mr. Speaker, we neither can afford nor expect this treatment as members of the Canadian family.

We are geographically and psychologically separated from our Canadian cousins, not to mention our economic status within Confederation. To eliminate the ferry subsidies is to further relegate us to the farthest reaches as an outpost where we are confronted with an insurmountable burden to inter-provincial travel and trade. Mr. Speaker, Canadian unity, a feeling of belonging, would certainly suffer where fairness and equality would mean different things to different people, depending on where we live or where we reside.

There are ways to overcome our geographical reality. One way, Mr. Speaker, which has been advocated for some time, is to treat the Gulf of St. Lawrence as a natural extension of the Trans-Canada Highway. While it would be an expensive bridge to the mainland, it would maintain benefits that would be well worth the expenditures. If we are to become a Canadian Province in the truest sense of the word, we must be provided with that tangible symbol, the bridging of our geography. The Nielsen Task Force, which is purely an economic blueprint, does not address these important issues.

Rather than build higher walls around the Province to save dollars, we should seek to build those bridges which are the cost of family memberships. These costs would be offset by increased tourism, inter-provincial trade

and increased consumer spending. The benefits to Canadian unity would be immeasurable, Mr. Speaker.

We must resist this unrealistic proposal at all costs. It cannot work and it will destroy our marine transportation network. We need cheaper, not premium prices. The Gulf ferry is not only a mode of getting from Point A to Point B, it is a symbol of our association with our fellow countrymen. It is our highway to North America. Our farmers do not utilize the trains on a user/pay basis; Via Rail is not a user/pay system; our highways are not a user/pay network; our domestic navigation system is not user/pay; our national transportation system is a government responsibility, Mr. Speaker, paid for by the taxpayers of our Province and other provinces. I believe our national government will uphold its responsibility despite the Nielsen Task Force recommendations.

In a recent editorial in The Evening Telegram it stated that the Churchill, Manitoba decision gives our Premiers and the Transportation Minister (Mr. Dawe) grounds to argue for a generous deal with regards to improved transportation facilities and services. Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to read from that editorial.

"Churchill, Manitoba is a small port city of 1,200 people about 1,100 kilometers North of Winnipeg on the Hudson Bay. The Nielsen Task Force on government efficiency contends that this port is a drain on tax money and will never be profitable. Churchill is not now economically viable and probably never will be. Churchill

is in competition with Thunder Bay, Ontario to be an exit point for grain destined for Europe. There is a regular air service and a rail line to the town but no roads.

"Ice breakers are paid for with federal dollars and they are being used to extend the shipping season by one month. The normal shipping season for non-reinforced vessels is from July 23 to October 25.

"This week Transportation Minister, Don Mazankowski, made a decision to ignore the Nielsen report and provide \$14.5 million dollars to upgrade the port. This brings the total to \$93 million contributed by Ottawa during the past five years to upgrade the port." I would say that is not too shabby for a port that is not economically viable and one which never will be. "We wonder if Mr. Mazankowski will be as generous to Newfoundland. The Nielsen report suggests the Newfoundland railway should be abandoned claiming, as it did about the port of Churchill, that it is not viable and never will be. The report also suggests that sweeping cuts be made in the subsidies for ferry services.

"If accepted, the Nielsen report would have a far greater effect here than in Manitoba where only one small town would be affected." In our case, Mr. Speaker, an entire Province would suffer.

"Does our government have as much clout as Manitoba? Will Premier Peckford and his colleagues be able to convince Mr. Mazankowski that the railway should be continued at least until this Province has a road system capable of handling the increased traffic

the abandoning of the railway will create. From the initial remarks by Mr. Mazankowski, it does not appear so. While he did not say he would order the shutdown of the railway, he did indicate that Ottawa has a certain amount of money in the transportation envelope for this Province and that it does include extra cash to subsidize the railway. The Churchill, Manitoba decision, gives Premier Peckford and the Transportation Minister, Ron Dawe, grounds to argue for a more generous deal." That is the end of the quote from The Evening Telegram, Mr. Speaker.

The federal authorities have indicated that the Nielsen Task Force Report is not cast in stone and certainly the recent development at Churchill, Manitoba and elsewhere bring this point out. The very response and the purpose of subsidies is to provide for the transportation of freight, passengers, mail and motor vehicles at reasonable rates which would not leave the island communities at a gross disadvantage vis-à-vis their Mainland neighbours, Mr. Speaker.

The MacPherson Commission of 1961 indicated in its report on transportation that the situation in Newfoundland is a special case, distinct from the rest of Canada. Because of the lower level of the economy as compared with the rest of Canada and because of its geography, transportation costs are high and the people concerned cannot yet assume the full cost of moving goods from the Mainland to the Island of Newfoundland.

The MacPherson Commission argued that Newfoundland should be excluded from basic transportation policies which are appropriate for

other regions of Canada and should be treated as a special case, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting to note that these very issues are still being debated twenty-four years after the findings and the recommendations of the MacPherson Report.

The Sullivan Royal Commission of Enquiry into Newfoundland Transportation reaffirmed the special case argument for this Province, Mr. Speaker, noting that the objectives of commercial viability, therefore, is appropriate under certain circumstances and it is clearly inappropriate in others. In Newfoundland, at the present time, most transportation services fall within the latter category. That is to say, they are either social services or are required for essential economic development but are not commercially viable.

Under these circumstances, it is not to be expected that the user/pay philosophy should prevail. The commission reiterates its view that most of the Newfoundland transportation system requires substantial subsidy. It further stresses that it is obvious that certain forms of transportation, for example, the Gulf route, will require a continuing subsidy for the foreseeable future. Indeed, the costs involved on that particular route are such that they should not be recovered by direct charges except at astronomical expense to the consumer. The travel of passengers across the Gulf will continue to be subsidized and the amount of the subsidy may well increase in the foreseeable future.

The report therefore recommended that government accept as a

principle that the concept of user/pay is not at present appropriate to many aspects of the Newfoundland transportation system and that all policies and procedures take this fact into account.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when we are spending millions of dollars in tourism, planning development and promotion, we now have this fear of astronomical ferry rates which I believe will, if implemented, shut down tourism industries and drive our already expensive consumer goods completely out of reach. This Nielsen Report recommendation, Mr. Speaker, is ill-advised, ill-conceived and must be rejected outright.

The sea is our highway to the world and vice-versa. We cannot allow that highway to be closed as will surely follow any subsidy reductions. I condemn this disturbing proposal and I reject the Nielsen Task Force authors that neither understand nor identify the far reaching and devastating effects such action would have on our Province and our people.

Mr. Speaker, I would like conclude with an article that I read in one of the evening papers by Nellie Strowbridge. At the end of the article, I think, it sums up the feeling of most Newfoundland and why we love this Province of ours so much.

"Outside her window she hears the faint strains of an anti-confederate song: 'Hurray, for our own native Isle Newfoundland/Not a stranger should hold one inch of her strand/Her face turns to Britain, her back to the Gulf/Come near at your peril Canadian Wolf.' She shakes her

head and an oil-tingled tear drips down her face. This is not what she wants. She needs to be part of a family, equal with here nine brothers and sisters. She is willing to share her wealth but it is hers and she has a right to have some control in its distribution.

"She is through with having her sons and daughters lick up the crumbs that fall from the rich Daddy's table. She will not take her cup like a beggar and hold it out to her oilmonger brothers for a smidgen. Though her insensitive brothers may try to strip her of her black threads of gold running through her skirts, she is far from beaten. She will survive as long as grass grows and water runs. Her children know this and take heart."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this House today to unanimously support this resolution that has been put forth by my good and honourable friend, the member for Humber West (Mr. Baird).

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):

The hon. member for Fortune-Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, it is entirely appropriate that the gentleman for LaPoile (Mr. Mitchell), and I, the member for Fortune - Hermitage, should participate right off the top in this particular debate because our two districts, together with Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir,

in particular, depend very heavily on the coastal boat service.

Not only is it appropriate that he should lead off in this particular debate but I think it is entirely appropriate that he has taken the approach he has. I want to commend him for that. I would have been surprised if he had taken a different approach because he knows better than most people in this House the vagaries of the coastal boat system. At the same time, he knows better than most in this House the dependence of rural people such as those from Petites, if they could only get the boat in there, for all the people on the South West Coast, he knows better than most the dependence that rural people, coastal people, have on the coastal boat system.

I remember some years ago when I was the member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir, we had a number of people from CN Marine at a transportation seminar in Burgeo. One of the senior people from CN Marine, trying to be empathic with the people, exercising all kinds of patience in an effort to understand the concerns of the local people, blurted out at one point that he understood the frustration of people missing a boat because the boat did not stay in the harbour long enough. That was the issue at the time. He understood, he said, because he has had the occasion to miss the bus.

A lady from Francois shot back, the difference between the bus and the boat is that the bus might come every fifteen minutes but the boat comes about once a week. She went on to point out that there were other differences. A person who is in a position to wait for a bus has probably got other

options, like a train, like a taxi, like his own private car. It allows me to make a point and to reinforce the point that the gentleman for LaPoile has made, that the coastal boat service is not a luxury, not one of several options that people in Petites, Rose Blanche, Rencontre East or MacCallan have, it is their only option. That is the difference.

If that boat cost becomes prohibitably high, it effectively constrains their ability to travel, to have access to educational facilities, to medical facilities, and to shopping facilities, in many cases. It is crucially important that in terms of those people, the people who live in those communities and others that I have not mentioned, it is crucially important that the deal salted away in the Terms of Union be protected.

I want to say to my friend from LaPoile (Mr. Mitchell) that while the issue here relates to coastal boat services, we ought to link up with another issue which is linked, and appropriately so, in the Terms of Union. Because in the same clause in the Terms of Union it talks about an undertaking of the Government of Canada to ensure the continuity in perpetuity of the coastal boat service and the railway. They are both in the same phrase, as he will know. That is why, I submit, it is entirely appropriate that we talk about the two together, as I propose doing.

He made another reference which strikes a chord for me and that relates to the adverse impact on tourism and on small business development of higher rates for crossing the Gulf. So there are two prongs to this: There is the

impact on the way of life, the impact for the cost of living of people who live in coastal communities and, secondly, there is the potential impact, the potentially adverse impact, on tourist development in this Province. Because if people cannot come into the Province because of prohibitively high tariffs on the boats, then it is understood we cannot get their tourist dollars.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have great pleasure in supporting the motion put down by the gentleman from Humber West (Mr. Baird) who is inadvertently absent today. I have great pleasure in supporting that particular motion. I believe it is an opportunity for the House to go on record as being opposed to the Nielsen Task Force Report on this particular issue.

The motion reads, "That this hon. House go on record as opposing any elimination or reduction of federal ferry and coastal boat subsidies for the Province of Newfoundland through the user/pay concept." Now, I am quite genuine in my commendation of the gentleman from LaPoile. I believe he has spoken today from his heart on this particular issue. What I have to say in the next few minutes is not meant to drive wedges, not meant to isolate him in any way, but I hope that he is speaking for the administration on this one. I hope he is. Because if he is, it represents a very significant departure from the practice of the administration, particularly over the past few months.

When the Task Force Report was made public, Mr. Speaker, there was not a single peep from this administration. When the Minister

of Finance in his first budget, some months ago, May of last year I believe, announced that the federal Tories were going to cut back transfer payments by \$2 billion by 1990, there was not a peep from this administration. The record of this administration since the Tories came to power in Ottawa is to take everything lying down; take the iniquitous Task Force Report from Nielsen lying down, take the iniquitous provisions as they relate to transfer payments and unemployment insurance in the Wilson budgets, take those lying down. That has been the stance. The stance has been to lie down on all those issues.

Today we have a refreshing approach from the gentleman from LaPoile. He has put his own concerns for his people ahead of what is clearly the party policy on this particular issue. Either he has done that or he has done something equally significant. He is sending us a signal today that they have had a change of heart over there and that they are going to do their bit to gang up on Mr. Nielsen who wants to shut down Newfoundland. If you read his task force report literally, he wants to shut her down here altogether. He has given notice that this administration is going to gang up on Mr. Wilson who wants to remove transfer payments, wants to tamper with family allowance, wants to tamper with old age pensions, wants to tamper with the amount that we are getting for post-secondary education and health services in this Province.

I say to him he sends a new and encouraging signal to us today. He gives us an opportunity to band together. Because whatever our politics in terms of partisan

label, we all believe that a \$2 billion cutback in transfer payments would be the death knell for Newfoundland; to have family allowances and pensions tampered with would be the death knell for Newfoundland; to have the monies available for post-secondary education and health services cut back would be a death knell for Newfoundland and, to the point at hand, to have the subsidies for coastal boat and ferry services reduced would spell real, long suffering for the people of rural Newfoundland. To have those subsidies reduced, Mr. Speaker, or eliminated altogether would spell the death knell of our tourist industry in this Province, because we have to face the reality that most of the people who come in this Province for tourism reasons come across the Gulf. So any adjustment of that subsidy will affect the rate that these people pay to get across the Gulf and will directly affect the numbers of people who come into the Province to enjoy a holiday.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I take great encouragement from what the gentleman for LaPoile has said today. I hope he has the support of the administration, because it gives us an opportunity as Liberals and Tories and Independent, gives us an opportunity, both parties in this House, to get on the record on an important issue that crosses party lines completely. It is our opportunity to send a strong signal to the federal government that we are not going to stand by and have Nielsen and have Wilson monkey around with our way of life, as they proposed doing in their budgets and their task force reports.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I said earlier

that this motion by the gentleman for Humber West represents half a reference in the Terms of Union, the full reference relating to the coastal boats and railway, and we would like to link the two together, where they belong, and in that spirit, Mr. Speaker, I want to move an amendment to the motion of the gentleman from Humber West, a motion which is entirely in character with the resolution and which will add to it. Mr. Speaker, you will notice that in the resolution, Motion No. 8 on Today's Order Paper, there are three 'whereases', the third one ending with the word 'Labradorians'. After that word I would like to add two other 'whereases' as follows:

"WHEREAS the Nielsen Task Force Report recommends the elimination of the Newfoundland railway; and

"WHEREAS the continuance in perpetuity of the Newfoundland railway is guaranteed by the Canada/Newfoundland Terms of Union' I would like to add those two 'whereases' there. Then if Mr. Speaker would follow me to the end of the motion which ends with the words 'User/Pay Concept', I would like to add after that the following words: 'BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House go on record as opposing the elimination of the Newfoundland railway.'

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):

Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:

Part of that amendment, Mr. Speaker, is quite out of order,

because I would argue that the Terms of Union, unfortunately, do not guarantee that the railway be kept here in perpetuity and I would call upon my hon. friend, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe), who can elucidate on this matter much more cogently than I can, to come to my assistance here. But this amendment contain a misstatement, not intentional I am sure. Just because the hon. gentleman is ignorant of the facts does not mean to say that he is not a sincere person, but his facts are wrong and I do not think this House should debate something that is incorrect and wrong. It is abhorrent!

MR. DAWE:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):

To that point of order, the hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DAWE:

I would like to concur with my colleague from St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter). Perhaps if I could just see a copy of the amendment. Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the second 'whereas', "WHEREAS the continuance in perpetuity of the Newfoundland Railway is guaranteed by the Canada/Newfoundland Terms of Union," I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps is taking somewhat great liberty with the section of the Terms of Union that refers to the railway. I do not believe the word "perpetuity" or, in fact, the intent in that particular clause that relates to the railway involves anything that would resemble perpetuity. I would just like to ask Your Honour if he would have a look at the Terms of Union and look at that

'whereas' as it relates to that section of the Terms of Union before you make a decision on whether this particular amendment is in order. If it does not, in fact, coincide with the article in the Terms of Union, then I would suggest it is very much out of order and I would ask Your Honour to have a look at that part of it.

MR. SIMMONS:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Further to that point of order, the hon. the member for Fortune-Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

I notice that both gentlemen confined their submissions to the second 'whereas' I had proposed, and rather than put the Chair through the business of having to determine what the Terms of Union say on this point, which is a fairly onerous assignment, I would suggest, the purpose of my amendment is served without that 'whereas' and I would be prepared, if the Chair would allow, to withdraw the second 'whereas' and move the amendment otherwise.

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, further to that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

Further to that point of order, the hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:

Whereas I agree that it is very generous of the mover of the amendment to agree to withdraw his amendment, nevertheless he has made the amendment and I see great danger in the procedures of this House if an amendment can be made

and withdrawn. An amendment, once it is made, is made and the mover cannot withdraw it, at least this is my understanding of the rules of the House, and perhaps if we were to recess and check with the authorities, we might be able to resolve this.

It seems facetious, Mr. Speaker, but there is a much greater point here: You cannot just make amendments and then withdraw them and make another one and withdraw that, it is quite illogical and quite wrong.

MR. SIMMONS:

Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Further to that point of order, the hon. the member for Fortune-Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker will be aware that in deliberating as to the acceptability of motions the Chair has the right, and has often exercised the right, to change wording or to suggest deletions, and I would like the whole amendment to stand. I think I made that clear, but I said if it would facilitate the acceptability of the motion to the Chair, then I would not be at all aggrieved if the Chair elected to strike out the second 'Whereas' that I had proposed. That was the spirit in which I put it. Otherwise, I concur with the gentleman from St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter). The Chair might want to recess the House for a few moments to deliberate on the matter.

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):

Before I rule on that point of order, I will recess for a couple of minutes and check this out.

MR. TULK:

Yes, that is fine. But, as the member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) has said, with respect to an amendment or any motion, the Speaker has the authority to change words to make the motion in order if he so chooses, and the word 'perpetuity' may very well be taken out by the Speaker and certain clauses of the Terms of Union put in.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair is aware of that. The House will now recess for a couple of minutes.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

To the point of order raised by the hon. the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter), the amendment would be out of order. First of all, I wish to draw the attention of all hon. members to Page 153 of Beauchesne, Paragraph 424, Subsection (3): "It is the Speaker's duty to call the attention of the mover and of the House to the irregularity of a motion; whereupon the motion is usually withdrawn or so modified as to be no longer objectionable. If the motion is of such a nature that objection cannot be removed, the Speaker may refuse to put the motion to the House." The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) did agree to withdraw the second 'Whereas', so therefore, the amendment would be in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, please.

MR. SPEAKER:

On a point of order, the hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DAWE:

I realize Your Honour has ruled this particular amendment in order. I would just like to point out that I still believe, and would contend, that it is out of order, based on the fact, Mr. Speaker, that Private Member's Motion 21 deals with the issue.

MR. SIMMS:

It is already on the Order Paper.

MR. DAWE:

It is already on the Order Paper as a Private Member's motion, dealing with the Newfoundland Railway. And, Mr. Speaker, if we are, from time to time, allowed to alter a motion put forward to coincide with a motion that, for whatever reason, an hon. member could not get on earlier and debate it in that context, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps we will be into a very different form here on Private Members' Day. I would suggest to Your Honour the intent of the amendment is on later under Motion 21, moved by the member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan), as it relates to the Nielsen Task Force and the Newfoundland Railway and essentially goes on to do exactly what the member for Fortune - Hermitage is suggesting we do now in an amendment to a resolution that is dealing with the coastal boat service and a user/pay concept of the Nielsen Task Force. In that context, Mr.

Speaker, I would suggest that it is not out of order, it is certainly highly irregular and something that we would be very wary about as it relates to Private Members' Day and picking up resolutions that are some ten or fifteen resolutions down the way.

MR. SIMMONS:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, first of all, the matter has been dealt with by the Chair, and in that context, to that degree, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) is questioning the ruling of the Chair. He knows very well there is a proper way to do that and it is not by raising points of order.

Speaking to the substance of what he had to say, Mr. Speaker, I have to assume, first of all, and the House has to assume, that Mr. Speaker took into account all the factors, including the fact that Motion 21 is on the Order Paper. And I would suggest, without putting thoughts in his head or words in his mouth, that when he considered that matter, he would have realized that while Motion 21 deals with the same subject, i.e. the railway, it does not resolve the matter in the manner that I proposed resolving it. The resolution that I have proposed in relation to the railway is that we oppose the discontinuance of the railway. Here in Resolution 21, it talks about a fairly complicated proposal that would trigger over the next ten years and, at that time, a determination

would be taken.

Resolution 21 is a very different resolution than is the one that I propose, though it deals with the same subject. On the general argument of having resolutions on the same subject, that would very seriously tie the hands of the House if we could not debate two motions on the same subject.

For example, the motion following the one that we are debating today deals with the issue of unemployment. Now surely the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) is not suggesting that we may have no other resolution on unemployment while that one is on the Order Paper. That would be too ridiculous to contemplate.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

To that point of order, once again the Chair rules that the amendment is in order and I refer hon. members to Beauchesne, page 120, paragraph 342.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage's time has elapsed.

MR. DAWE:
Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DAWE:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am very pleased to stand and support the resolution put forward by my colleague, the member for LaPoile (Mr. Mitchell) on behalf of my colleague, the member for Humber West (Mr. Baird).

Mr. Speaker, we will be very happy to debate the amendment as put forward. However, I believe that it does not go far enough as an amendment with regard to this particular administration's recommendations and ongoing support for the Newfoundland railway.

Mr. Speaker, as hon. members will remember, one of the options, if you will, that were touched on when Mr. Mazankowski was in Newfoundland as it relates to the Newfoundland railway - there were basically three kinds of scenarios that he wanted to put forward - one dealt with the status quo or, in the same context as the resolution, opposing the elimination. They would not eliminate the railway, they would keep it in a status quo position.

One of the options dealt with the possibility of looking at additional support for infrastructure for other transportation modes, highway, marine and so on.

Of course, the province's preferred option - and it said that very forcefully to the minister and has been subsequently supported in comments by the Premier and by myself and by others in the administration - is that just the maintenance of the railway is not sufficient, that, in fact, we want a railway that is a functional, modern, vibrant railway, capable of handling the necessary freight movement that it should handle.

Unless those improvements, unless those very serious financial upgradings both in capital to the roadbed, in capital to the engines and new locomotives and so on, improvements generally throughout the system, improved marketing procedures that require extensive capital expenditure, unless those things are put in place, then just the status quo is certainly not acceptable. That is the Province's position. Because the Province's position is for not only the continuation of the railway but for the improvement in the railway to a point where it can indeed provide a meaningful freight transportation system within this Province. Unless that happens, it is certainly not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I could not support an amendment which does not go beyond a status quo situation for the Newfoundland railway. It would be irresponsible, Mr. Speaker. What we are talking about is going on record as opposing the elimination. I am assuming that is all that means, Mr. Speaker, the setting up some kind of a monument to make sure that we have tracks, to make sure that somewhere in the system there are trains, to make sure that somewhere in the system there may be a dozen or two dozen people looking after an obsolete system. In that context, Mr. Speaker, I could not support a resolution that does not go along with what this administration and what this government has been saying for months and essentially years as it relates to the railway.

We do not want a status quo situation. We want a railway that is capable, modern, efficient and that has the required capital infrastructure to make sure that

it retains a significant share of the freight movement in this Province so it is, in fact, a viable, competitive and efficient mode that is to the benefit of the residents of the Province, not only as it relates to the employment factor involved in the railway, but also as it relates to a control on consumer goods prices in its competitive position within the whole total framework of transportation movements.

So, in that context, Mr. Speaker, I will be going on record as supporting, fully, the main resolution put forward by my colleague for LaPoile (Mr. Mitchell) and indeed be voting against the amendment, which, Mr. Speaker, does not go far enough. It certainly does not go anywhere with regard to the successful continuation of a viable railway in this Province. It just deals with the lack of elimination.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that points out the kind of mentality that is present in the Opposition in all its dealings with regard to the railway in quotations and misquotations, as was in the case of the first amendment, as it relates to the Terms of Union, quoting people from newspapers, quoting hearsay, not developing a policy themselves as it relates to the railway. Is this their policy as it applies to the railway, a status quo, a railway that is not an efficient, vibrant and successful railway? Is that their position or is their position as is outlined in another resolution on the railway dealing with many improvements and suggestions about re-evaluation at a certain point down the road and all those kind of things? Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition, as usual, do not really know where they are

coming from.

In support of the main motion, without the amendment, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say there a number of things outlined in the Nielsen Task Force on transportation. Some months ago, before the report was finalized, I made a presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transportation as it relates to a new legislative thrust by the federal government, based on a document put forward by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) some months before on a 'freedom to move.'

At that hearing I outlined the principles that this government were putting forward with regard to transportation, not only in rail but, as well as in road, air and marine. Mr. Speaker, that is on the public record and is available for hon. members to have a look at, to read, to digest and, just for clarification, to identify the position that this administration has been taking on a wide range of transportation issues.

Obviously, from time to time some of them have because I see quoted in newspapers direct quotes from my presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee and the quote supposedly said by members of the Opposition. So I am glad that some of them at least, both federally and provincially, have taken the opportunity to read my presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee.

Transportation in this Province, Mr. Speaker, is a very, very important item. Transportation nationally is a very important item. I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that last year the

ministers responsible for regional and economic development had several meetings. From their last meeting they put forward an intergovernmental position paper. It said, if I may quote from this document, "adopted as principle the recognition that transportation is the key to regional economic development."

It went on to state that all regions of Canada are highly sensitive to the use of transportation as an instrument of economic development, and furthermore, that transportation is essential to the growth of the nation and has a key role in any regional development policy. These statements, Mr. Speaker, were echoed in subsequent meetings by the first ministers who identified, again in a resolution from their meeting held here in St. John's last Summer, transportation as perhaps the key element to the development of regional and economic expansion in this country.

It is moreso important, Mr. Speaker, in this Province because of our geographic location, our existence on the extremities of a very, very large nation. It becomes of paramount importance to us not only because of our geographic distance but also because of our small population base. It is extremely important, as the MacPherson Report indicated a number of years ago and it is still relevant today, that Newfoundland and Labrador is a special case as it relates to funding assistance and subsidy assistance in all its forms of transportation. It is unique; it is on the extremity; it has a small population; it is marine serviced; air serviced; and through marine, road serviced; and

through marine, rail serviced. It is a special circumstance and should be recognized as such. It has been recognized as such in a number of subsidy arrangements in freight movement, in people movement, and so on.

The Nielsen Task Force suggests, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps we should look at existing constitutional marine transportation areas in the same way as they are now addressing other marine transportation aspects and I use for example the Bar Harbour, Maine ferry boat service.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we cannot look at it in that context. It is not reasonable, nor is it acceptable, nor will it ever be acceptable to try and place the constitutional obligation for the provision of transportation services in the marine area in this Province in the same area that you can place a tourism development or some kind of a business venture going between the United States and Canada.

It is perhaps the most essential aspect of all developments. It is indeed a right. It is a right for a Canadian to expect that those kinds of services are provided in what is, in the national context, an acceptable Canadian cost. Mr. Speaker, the reason that we have entered Confederation, the reason that all provinces are in Confederation, is so that we can share some of the benefits in the country and also share some of the burdens of less affluent or less advantaged areas of the country with some of the more advantaged areas.

In that context, Mr. Speaker, we have to consistently and very,

very dramatically oppose in its context user/pay, in that the people who would use the service pay directly for all its operation. We have to oppose that. We have to oppose that very, very vigorously, and this particular administration and this government will do so. I have gone on record, Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions and will continue to go on record as opposing that particular concept.

Even now, where the revenue return from the Gulf service is somewhere in the range of 20 per cent of the actual cost of running this service - 20 per cent is gotten in the form of revenues through charges on freight and charges on people movement - even that, Mr. Speaker, is putting an extreme burden on the people in this Province that have to do the necessary business, who have to travel or who want to travel for social reasons or for economic reasons to do business outside the Province. That is as far, Mr. Speaker, as the rate of return on that particular service should go. I would advocate, Mr. Speaker, that it should be lessened.

On the coastal Labrador service the return revenue versus the cost of providing this service is somewhat less than 10 per cent. If we carry the argument of being on the extremity, of being a very large geographic area, of being a very small population, then the people on coastal Labrador that depend so much on a marine service should not be and should never even be imagined as being responsible for paying totally for the service that is provided.

It is a constitutional obligation. It is an obligation

of the federal government, of the provincial government and governments generally to make sure that transportation is used as a tool for social and economic development, and that the revenue or the charge back is applied in such a way that it does not negate against one part of the country over another.

In 1600, Mr. Speaker, Lord Bacon said there are three things that make a nation great and strong: fertile soil, busy workshops, and the easy conveyance of man and goods from place to place. That particular comment is very relevant today.

Our fertile soil, Mr. Speaker, may, in fact, be the ocean. It may be the fish and the offshore resources that we reap. That may be our fertile soil. The busy workshops, Mr. Speaker, we have had trouble developing but, we are on the verge of major developments associated with the fertile soils of our ocean. And certainly no one in this Legislature or no one in Newfoundland can doubt the fact that transportation, both on the Island, in Labrador, to and from the Island and Labrador, to and from this Province to Mainland Canada, to and from this Province to Europe, into the United States and elsewhere is a very, very important tool. It is vital.

It is something that we cannot allow financially to go outside the capabilities of business people, of individuals, or of our Newfoundland and Labrador society. We cannot allow that aspect of 1986 life to go beyond the financial capabilities of the people of our Province.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I will certainly be going on record

as supporting the resolution put forward by my colleague for LaPoile and supporting it very strongly because the user/pay concept is one that can be applied in very large, densely-populated urban areas of the country, but it is not only unrealistic, but I think against the constitutional make up of Canada to try and apply that concept to the extremities. Newfoundland and Labrador, in that context of transportation, is certainly on the extremities of the country.

Again, for a few brief moments, I would just like to go back to the amendment put forward by the member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) and try to indicate to him in a very positive way, not for the sake of voting against his amendment to the resolution, certainly not, but I think he, members of the Opposition, and members on this side must appreciate that if we support this particular amendment in the form it is presented here today and in the manner in which it is presented, it certainly does not go far enough. It certainly would be detrimental to the Province's position, detrimental to the statements that have been made by this administration time and time again. It would be a disservice to the people of this Province if we supported this amendment because it really does not go far enough.

It has to go beyond just retaining a railway for the sake of retaining a railway. We do not want a monument, Mr. Speaker, that extends from Port aux Basques to St. John's. We want a very active and important transportation infrastructure. That railway, if it is to play a part in that important transportation

infrastructure, must be upgraded, it must be improved, it must be placed in an economic and structural position to be able to capture and retain a significant part of the freight movement to and from this Province. The amendment to the resolution put forward by the member for Fortune - Hermitage does not go that far, Mr. Speaker, and it should certainly do that.

So I will be supporting the original motion put forward by the member for LaPoile (Mr. Mitchell) on behalf of the member for Humber West (Mr. Baird) and will be voting against the amendment which does a disservice to the whole concept of the railway being a very vital and important part of the transportation infrastructure in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say from the outset that the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Baker) is playing childish little games with words and not addressing the issue that was put forward by the member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

He is playing simple little semantic games with an issue that

is extremely important.

It is not the objective of any resolution in this House to totally deal with any situation. If that were the case, then we could dispense with our complete civil service and everything else and simply deal with things through resolutions in the House that dealt with every possible case and every possible situation that might arise on an issue.

It is obvious from what he had to say that he is simply playing hide and seek on the issue of the railway. In actual fact he is probably up having talks in Ottawa planning to sell out the Newfoundland railway right now.

MR. TULK:

That is what Patterson said.

MR. FUREY:

Hear, hear! Patterson said the railway is dead.

MR. BAKER:

The amendment simply puts forward a very important consideration in this Province right now: the future of the Newfoundland railway.

The minister goes on about policy, saying the resolution does not put forward our policy. If the minister wants our policy, he can see a little bit more of our policy. He can read Resolution 21 that he referred to a little earlier if he wants to see a few more details. As a matter of fact, we would only be too glad to get unanimous consent of the House to go ahead to that particular resolution and deal with it, if he wants to discuss our policy with regards to the Newfoundland railway.

MR. PATTERSON:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PATTERSON:

I would like to ask the hon. member whether his policy conflicts with the recommendations of the Sullivan Commission?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

The hon. member will get ample opportunity to explain his position a little later. I hope he stands up. I am waiting with bated breath to hear the statement of the hon. backbench member with regards to this particular resolution. He can certainly explain to everybody all of the reports that he knows about, including the Nielsen report which is mentioned in the original resolution.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I knew there was no point of order.

The Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) read from a document which said that transportation is the key to economic development. I would put to you, Mr. Speaker, that it does not say a single method of transportation is the key to economic development, it deals with transportation generally. It means air transportation, sea transportation, road

transportation and yes, Mr. Speaker, rail transportation, one of the cheapest methods of transportation that we have. We are guaranteed, Mr. Speaker, a railway under the Terms of Union. The government of this Province should have been making sure, over the last number of years, that the railway we were guaranteed under the terms of union was adequately serviced, was not falling apart, did not have tracks that were coming apart and ties that were coming loose and bridges that were in a state of disrepair. They should have been making sure that that rail system was an adequate rail system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

And they have the nerve and the gall to sit there after being in office so long and say, 'Well, the Newfoundland railway is in a state of disrepair. You people want to keep a monument,' and all this kind of nonsense. Balderdash! The decrepit monument that exists right now, members opposite have to bear part of the responsibility for that, if not 99 per cent of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Transportation: The key to economic development. We know the position of members opposite, it has been stated a number of times, and articulated more recently by their party Whip. We know they want a four lane highway across this Province and they want the four lane highway at the expense of something else, a complete method of transportation. What we are talking about doing away with here is not simply a spur line, it

is not simply a railroad, it is the railroad, the one and only, a complete method of transportation. It is our right to have that method of transportation, it is also our right to have proper highways across this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

It is also our right to have proper airports in this Province, it is also our right to have proper ports in this Province and proper sea transportation. All of these things I believe to be our right. There should never be a choice of one or the other. If, due to progress, one or other of these methods of transportation becomes totally obsolete as a method of transportation, then, Mr. Speaker, we look at it, obviously. If air transportation becomes obsolete, becomes impossible financially, then we have to look at our right to have airports all over the place. If sea transportation becomes impossible at some time in the future, then obviously, Mr. Speaker, we have to reconsider. But rail transportation has not become obsolete. What has happened to the railroad in Newfoundland over the last twelve or fourteen year is perhaps a bit of a disaster, but rail transportation generally has not become obsolete. As a matter of fact, it has become, in other parts of the world, a very efficient method of transportation.

MR. DAWE:

Where? Name one place.

MR. BAKER:

The minister is shouting from a doorway. I would ask Your Honour

to ask him to come in and sit in his place if he wants to make comments at the appropriate time.

Now, we have a right to all these methods of transportation and, Mr. Speaker, I submit that you do not give away one total method of transportation unless you know what you are doing, and not simply pretending that it is a trade-off for another method of transportation, a highway, which we are also due.

The Liberal position is very clear on this, Mr. Speaker, and it is that all methods of transportation have to be upgraded and made as efficient and as good as possible. That is the Liberal position. If sometime in the future all our transportation needs can be adequately met, then we might discuss what is happening with the railroad, what is happening with airports or what is happening with roads, but particularly I mention the railway because that is our guaranteed constitutional right and is not to be traded away for another right that we have.

Now, the original resolution refers to the Nielsen Report and I would like to indicate what I consider to be a difference of opinion about this Nielsen Report. I was informed by the Premier that things in the Nielsen Report were not to be worried about, 'you do not worry about those.' I have correspondence from the Premier to that regard. 'Do not worry about the Nielsen Report because that is not government policy. When it becomes government policy, then we get concerned about it.' I contend that the speakers from the opposite side already have indicated that what the Premier

said is not correct, that the Nielsen Report is of some concern to us here in Newfoundland and I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, a very great concern. I would like to point out that the Nielsen Report, which in effect this resolution in either form condemns, is very far-reaching with regard to its effect on Newfoundland; it recommends the abolishment of the railway, the very thing we are debating here, and it recommends a lot of other things, too, Mr. Speaker, if I could just point out some of these in passing. In terms of licensing and resource allocation of fisheries you might say, well, what has that got to do with this resolution? It has to do with the Nielsen Report and a recommendation that is made. It is pointed out that recent trends towards establishing provincial quotas must be discouraged, and they talk about balkanization and so on. In other words, no longer should there be a Newfoundland quota, striking at the very heart of this Province. Another suggestion in the Nielsen Report, Mr. Speaker, and to put the lie to the fact that this is not a significant report and it is really not government policy, therefore, it does not become the concern of government until it is government policy, which particular point of view, Mr. Speaker, is like saying we cannot do anything about it now because it is not law and once it is law you know what happens, they do not do complain, they do not put pressure on, they do not do anything about it anyway.

One of the suggestions in here, Mr. Speaker, is to recommend that the current ban on factory freezer trawlers should be eliminated. Now, we all know, Mr. Speaker, what has happened in that field,

and how dare anybody say that the recommendations in this report are really not government policy and this is just like a White Paper for discussion purposes. Nonsense! These are articulating policies that that government up there intends to follow, that same government that was going to inflict all this prosperity, that same government that the Premier of this Province travelled all around the Province for on his prosperity crusade. Once we elect him everything will be hunky-dory, everything will be rosy, we will get what we want and no more fighting. He was right, Mr. Speaker, about no more fighting because, no matter what happens, there is no more fighting.

Let us go onto a couple of other issues dealt with here. I am just going to go through this very briefly. With regard to the 159 Class D harbours in the Province, and we are talking about transportation, harbours and so on, the Nielsen Report says, 'Berth charges should be imposed across Canada for all commercial and recreational users. All! It does not say 65 foot boats, it does not say 120 foot boats, it says all commercial and recreational users. That is basically the direction this government is taking. We have products to market throughout the world and in order to market these they have to be promoted and advertised.

With regard to promotion, and this deals with seafood promotion, the recommendation is to, first of all, reduce person years in this particular department of government, the marketing center, by 30 per cent, cut staff by ceasing direct delivery of seafood promotion programmes. That is the

kind of policies that this report espouses. I might add again, Mr. Speaker, that in effect there are going to be great pressures to make them government policy. It is an indication of the way these people up there are thinking, and members opposite sit back and go their merry way and accept these things. If the government up there were of a different stripe, there would be a holy war; we would now be trying to get out of Confederation, we would now be building a wall around this Province. We would be getting on the border in Labrador with guns, Mr. Speaker. That is what we would be doing if this were a Liberal Government suggesting these things.

The Premier was right, no more fighting. He was wrong on the prosperity, right about no more fighting. He promised no more fighting. I thought, and the people of the Province thought, that this meant there would be no more reason to fight but we were mistaken. He was right about no more fighting, but there are many more reasons to fight.

About the Fisheries Prices Support Board, Mr. Speaker, it says 'maintain that.' That is marvellous, maintain that. But then it goes on to say, 'at least for the near future.' Not the foreseeable future, at least for the near future but restrict its operation.

MR. TULK:

The Fishing Industry Advisory Board?

MR. BAKER:

Right. No, just a second now. We are talking about the Fisheries Prices Support Board. That is what we are talking about.

MR. TULK:

Oh, is that right? Throw the inshore fishermen to the dogs.

MR. BAKER:

What about the Fisheries Improvement Loans, Mr. Speaker? That is interesting, because it hits at the heart of this Province and is indicative of the way the thought is going up there. 'The government considered termination of the Fisheries Improvement Loans Programme.' Termination! That word is very, very common in this particular report. What about the Fishing Vessel Assistance Programme? Are we going to keep that going, too? No, Mr. Speaker. 'The government should consider terminating the Fishing Vessel Assistance Programme.'

What about the Fishing Vessel Insurance Programme? 'We have to achieve full cost recovery by April 1, 1986.' But then they go to say, 'after that point it should be eliminated.' Terminated again. Mr. Speaker, is there going to be anything left in this Province? Are we going to trade off our railway simply to keep our highway up to date? Are we going to destroy our fishery? Are we going to destroy our ports? What is going on here?

What about the Salmon Enhancement activities? I find this one particularly interesting. The Salmon Enhancement Programme, Mr. Speaker, I find interesting because I spent three years doing research work on salmon in rivers in Newfoundland. It says, 'Maintain the Salmon Enhancement activities as a long-term management tool for the B.C. fishery.' Mr. Speaker, when I saw that I said, that is marvellous. What about the Newfoundland fishery? I read on a little bit

further and, lo and behold, they do mention the Atlantic Canada fishery. Their suggestion about the Atlantic Canada salmon fishery is to 'not do this SEP to Atlantic Canada as an integral strategy for Atlantic salmon.' So we are going to have this Salmon Enhancement Programme for the B.C. salmon but not for the Atlantic salmon. Horrible! Horrible, Mr. Speaker, absolutely horrible! I could go on and on about a variety of things in here, and it is terminate, terminate, terminate. It is my opinion, Mr. Speaker, that the only thing that should be terminated is that government for the way they look at this part of the country. And they do discriminate, Mr. Speaker, against this part of the country without as much as a meow being raised by the pussycats opposite.

There are a lot of recommendations in here, Mr. Speaker, and one in particular pertains to my district and it is in the environment recommendations. They say, 'Proceed with the transfer of the Weather Service Centre at Gander to St. John's.' This is indicative. I suppose members opposite would support that. Every indication is they supported the movement of Air Canada to St. John's. Now, I suppose, they are going to support the movement of The Newfoundland Weather Centre to St. John's. It is typical of the way they get on in transportation matters. Mr. Speaker, every time I bring up Air Canada, members opposite, the Premier, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe), whoever, accuse me of driving EPA out of Gander; I wanted to get rid of 350 jobs in my hometown. That is what I am accused of all the time. That is an example of the petty little politics that these people like to

engage in, not addressing the issue, but saying things that are not true, Mr. Speaker. Without a shadow of a doubt it is not true, these things they say. Then they belittle the efforts of a whole community to save 350 jobs in the transportation industry. They belittle it. They say oh, well, the town of Gander did not support us, a big, brave government, when we asked for a CTC hearing. This big, brave government asked for a CTC hearing simply because they knew that a transportation company that is moving its headquarters from one place to another has nothing to do with the CTC. If they were changing their routes, that would have to do with the CTC. And this big, brave government over there, knowing this full well, staked everything on simply applying to the CTC. How easy! What an easy way out! And right now, when there is a situation that does come under the CTC regulations, and there is an issue that does come under the CTC, they will not even support the town of Gander in an application to the CTC. That is how badly they want those public hearings.

They want a public hearing if it provides them with an easy way out of a situation. If it provides them with a way to do nothing, they are all in favour of opening hearings. They are in favour of open hearings on food prices when they have no intention of ever doing anything about them. They are in favour of all kinds of hearings like that, Mr. Speaker. But when they come to the opportunity of a hearing to have some effect on a decision that is being made, oh, no, they back off, they play their petty little politics and throw their poison darts across the floor. That is

what I have seen in this House in the last year. They play their petty little politics, throw their poison darts across the floor, Mr. Speaker, and they totally ignore the real issues.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland railway: We want a resolution stating that we are in favour of retaining the Newfoundland railway. We did not go into all of the details; we did not specify which bridges had to be rebuilt for the railway, and which ties had to be replaced. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, a very simple matter to say yes, we would like to retain the Newfoundland railway and then, once that is established, turn it into a viable operation, put the money into it that is required to build it up into a reasonable mode of transportation. And, as I say, if ten years down the road our road system is adequate, our port system is adequate, our air systems are adequate, all this money is being put in here and we have what we are due in all these areas of transportation, then we will sit down and say, 'All right, is there one method of transportation that we, at this point, do not need? and then we may even talk about it. Mr. Speaker, that is the purpose of putting in this amendment and I hope members opposite see the light and support it.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Hickey):

Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS. VERGE:

I am pleased to be the third member of this House representing West Coast districts to speak in support of this motion which was put by a fourth member for the West Coast, the member for Humber West (Mr. Baird), who is absent from the House today. As I think all members realize, the reason for the absence of the member for Humber West today is that he is representing government at the homecoming ceremonies for the Corner Brook Royals, who are just back to Stephenville and Corner Brook after winning the Allan Cup in Nelson, British Columbia.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

And, Mr. Speaker, there can be no better representative of this House or the government for that function, since the member for Humber West has made such a substantial contribution over the years to the development of hockey in Corner Brook. As he, himself, pointed out, perhaps his most meaningful contribution to the Royals winning the Allan Cup was made twenty-five years ago, when he and his wife gave birth to a son who is a member of the victorious team now.

Mr. Speaker, the member for LaPoile (Mr. Mitchell), who spoke in place of the member for Humber West in introducing the motion today, obviously has done a lot of research, has looked at the issue of subsidization of ferry services for Newfoundland and Labrador in a national context, has examined transportation services elsewhere in the country which operate with the benefit of public funding, and speaks from a depth of personal knowledge, coming from Petites and

representing LaPoile district which includes Port aux Basques, of course, the main point of entry for Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, one phrase voiced by the member for LaPoile struck a responsive cord with me; he said that the ferry service is for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a highway to the world and he stressed the necessity of this service to ordinary Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as well as its essential nature for the cultivation of our tourism industry.

The member for LaPoile pointed out that it is essential that this service be within the financial means of users, both residents of our Province who must use the ferry service to travel back and forth to other parts of our country as well as for ferries coming in here, and for the development of our tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, I want to concentrate some of my remarks now on one part of our ferry system, namely, the ferry service linking Port aux Basques with North Sydney, Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, in recent years the federal government subsidization of that ferry service has declined quite significantly. I obtained statistics from CN Marine today pointing out that in 1980, just six years ago, the federal government subsidy of the Gulf ferry service was 90 per cent of the budget for that service.

In 1980, the cost of operating the Gulf ferry service was \$67.3 million and, of that amount, \$60.9 million came through a Crown corporation from the federal government, the subsidy that six

years ago was 90 per cent.

In 1982, four years ago, the subsidy had decreased marginally to 88 per cent. In 1983 to 85 per cent, and for 1984 it appears that the federal government subsidy is only 75 per cent. In the space of six years the portion of the cost of operating the essential Gulf ferry service that has been borne by the federal government has declined from 90 per cent down to 75 per cent. Of course, the slack has been taken up by users whose fees have increased.

I also have some statistics for the total financial picture of CN Marine. It is a new federal government corporation set up last year. For its first year of operations, 1985, the total operating budget was \$83.7 million, of which \$63.2 million came from the federal government by way of subsidization. The year before, comparable statistics illustrate that the cost of operating the same service was \$81.2 million, with a \$68.5 million subsidy. So in just the first year of the existence of CN Marine we have seen a \$5 million cut in federal government subsidization and a \$7.8 million increase in revenue from users.

So, Mr. Speaker, these figures show a definite trend toward shifting the financial burden for operating the vital Gulf ferry service away from the federal government and on to the consumer, the ordinary Newfoundlander, who has to depend on that mode of transportation to get back and forth from Newfoundland to other parts of Canada and also for tourists, whose travel, in many cases, is discretionary but whom we, in our Province, want to encourage to visit, to take part

in the many benefits that our Province have to offer, as well as to contribute to our economy.

The tourism industry in this Province is, I suppose, only a fraction of what it could be. With more effort, with better government programmes, policies, financial assistance, with more initiative from private operators, from business people, the tourism industry in this Province could grow significantly and make a much more substantial contribution to our gross domestic product.

Mr. Speaker, cost, then, is a very important issue. The main motion speaks to cost, condemning the suggestion in the Nielsen Report that the federal government subsidization of our ferry system be reduced or even eliminated. What I pointed out is that statistics indicate that trend has been established and it is incumbent upon all members of this House and leaders elsewhere in the Province to speak out against that and try to reverse the trend. Cost, then, is an essential issue.

Another issue, and one on which I want to concentrate now, is the service that is provided for the cost, however the cost is borne, partly by the public through the federal government and partly by the user. It is incumbent upon us also to call out for improved service so that there is value for the taxpayers' money and value for users' fees.

It is necessary for Newfoundlanders relying upon ferries for essential travel to get value for money, to get good service and to get comfortable accommodations. It is also, perhaps even more important from the point of view of encouraging

and promoting our tourism industry that tourists, whose use of ferries is discretionary, be attracted to the ferries and to the entry of our Province by a first class ferry service.

Mr. Speaker, there are many features of a ferry system which go into making good quality. CN Marine is about to launch the new Caribou on the Port aux Basques/North Sydney run. I understand the inaugural voyage will be this coming Monday. Some of the statistics and information I received about the new Caribou present a positive picture.

I suppose most significantly the new Caribou will be able to complete the Gulf crossing from Port aux Basques to North Sydney in just four and a half hours versus the usual six hours which the older ferries take for that crossing.

The Caribou will be capable of four trips a day during the Summer season, which is the peak use season. The Caribou will be able to take 1,200 passengers on day crossings, 800 on night crossings, and it will have a capacity for 350 automobiles.

Mr. Speaker, one feature of the Caribou which causes me some concern is that it only has 196 berths and all the berths have four cabins. So, Mr. Speaker, it is to be expected that solo passengers or people travelling in couples will be booking cabins and, of course, using only one or two berths while others will be stuck on night crossings having to stretch out or sit up in the chairs provided in the lounges.

I suppose one cannot judge until one has a trip on the new ferry

but that feature of the Caribou has been commented upon in months gone by when the vessel was being designed and constructed by people involved in promoting our tourism industry and words of caution were expressed to CN Marine.

One positive feature of the new Caribou is that it will have a child care center.

Mr. Speaker, while the new Caribou will provide some advantages to travellers this Summer, a second vessel has been lined up by CN Marine to operate on that same run as a backup service and, unfortunately, that vessel is the John Hamilton Grey which has been widely condemned by people by Port aux Basques and people elsewhere in the Province who are familiar with the record of that vessel.

Evidently, it was not designed for travel on the open seas and the rough water, such as is the case between Port aux Basques and North Sydney. It is commonly thought of as a cattle boat. It felt that the prospect of having to travel on the John Hamilton Gray to get to Newfoundland will discourage people who are discretionary travellers or tourists.

So, Mr. Speaker, while maintaining and, if anything, increasing federal government subsidization of our ferry system so that entry to the Province and travel from the Province to other parts of Canada is within the financial means of both Newfoundlanders, Labradorians as well as tourists, Mr. Speaker, it is essential that the money that goes to pay for the system purchase good value, decent service, comfortable accommodation, food that is nutritious, prepared well and

served presentably, as well as staff who are efficient, polite and courteous.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I want to stress that perhaps the most important feature of any public service is the personnel which operate it. If the staff of CN Marine operating our ferries were given better in-service training programmes and provided with employment incentives to be more considerate of users and passengers, then I think the regard that the ferry service is held in by users would go up and use would increase by tourists.

Mr. Speaker, people in Corner Brook involved in promoting our tourism industry have made two points to me which I would like to raise with the House. One is that the current CN Marine Gulf ferry service reservation system does not accommodate the needs of tour operators.

Mr. Speaker, our tourism industry in recent years has gotten a substantial boost from bus tours which originate in other parts of North America. The tour operators plan months ahead and require certainty in making travelling arrangements. The tour operators have been trying to line up well ahead, at the same time as they are making other arrangements, definite bookings for the Gulf ferry run and, for night crossings in particular, reservations for cabins so that people booking tours may have the option of sleeping in a cabin in comfort on a night crossing. Unfortunately, the CN Marine reservation system has not accommodated this reasonable request from tour operators and, as a result, Newfoundland is not reaping as much benefit from tours

originating in other parts of North America as we could.

Another point, Mr. Speaker, is that the new Caribou has been equipped with a tourist information desk. The information desk will be sponsored by the provincial government, by our Departments of Development and Tourism. The city of Corner Brook and others have proposed that there be more co-operation from CN Marine in the operation of this information desk, namely, that since the Province is providing the staffing for the information desk, CN Marine guarantee accommodation for the staff as well as accommodation for the crew of the vessel.

Mr. Speaker, again that seems to be a very reasonable request and a practical approach to having the provincial government and CN Marine co-operate in enhancing opportunities for tour bookings for the Province and good quality information services on board the new Caribou for all passengers, tourists in particular.

Again I wish to support the motion phrased by the member for Humber West (Mr. Baird), introduced by the member for LaPoile (Mr. Mitchell), condemning the Nielsen Report suggestion that federal government subsidization for our ferry system be decreased. I would like to stress the need for reversing the trend that seems to have set in already of a decreasing federal subsidy for the Gulf service, which is absolutely vital and essential, and to urge, also, that the service be improved so that it is more comfortable for everyone, tourists in particular, and so that both the general public and governments, who are injecting taxpayers' money, and

users who are paying fees, get good value for their money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, before Your Honour leaves the Chair I would like to advise about the Estimates Committees. Tonight at 7:30 p.m., here in the House, the Government Services Committee will review the estimates of the Department of Municipal Affairs. At the same time, 7:30 p.m., at the Colonial Building, the Social Services Committee will continue its review of the estimates of the Department of Education. Tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. the Resource Committee will continue its review of the estimates of the Department of Fisheries here in the House, and tomorrow evening at 7:30 p.m. at the Colonial Building, the Social Services Committee will review the estimates of the Department of the Environment.

MR. FUREY:

When is Environment?

MR. MARSHALL:

Tomorrow evening at Colonial Building, Social Services and Environment.

MR. SPEAKER:

It now being six o'clock, the House stands adjourned until 3:00 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday.