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Speaker: Honourable P.J. McNicholas

Monday

16 May 1988

The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

Statements by Ministers

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and the Minister of Rural, Agriculture and Northern Development (Mr. Power), and indeed on behalf of all the members on this side of the House, I am pleased to announce that a unique happening has taken place in the Newfoundland Agricultural Industry over the weekend.

This past weekend the Newfoundland Enviroponics Complex at Mount Pearl shipped its first load of cucumbers outside of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:
The Complex now has four zones producing. The weekend shipment is the first of many to be made to the rest of North America.

Mr. Speaker, for reasons of competition I cannot release the marketing arrangements at this time. However, the Newfoundland produce has been well accepted and a repeat order has already been received. To all those critics and others who do not think this thing is going to work, I have news for them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WELLS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we will be impressed when we see the bottom line and see that it produces something green below the bottom line, but not before.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. WELLS:
And I do not expect it to produce any black ink below the bottom line.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please! Order, please!

MR. MATTHEWS:
You will see our bottom line before we see yours on your salary.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, you can sell anything if you sell it cheaply enough and you are prepared to compete. There is no question about that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. WELLS:
Anybody can do that. But we will

be impressed -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. WELLS:

We will be impressed, Mr. Speaker, when we see the bottom line and see that it has not cost the taxpayers of this Province the money that it appears at the moment it is costing the taxpayers of this Province.

I am not quite sure what the Premier is talking about in this statement when he says 'It was shipped just this weekend and the produce has been well received'. I assume it must be samples or something that was sent before.

MR. SIMMS:

Time is up.

MR. WELLS:

If it was shipped this weekend, I do not see how it could be well received by the consumers. It must be transmitted by electronic beams or something to have reached the market in that time. It will be very interesting to see the bottom line, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

It is pretty difficult, Mr. Speaker, to respond to the statement. I think we have to be the only Province in Canada that continues to have these

agricultural updates on one particular project like this.

I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, why we continue to get this. The project is one that we have had a chance to look at, we have had a chance to do some investigation on, we have had a look at some of the numbers, and personally I do not believe that the volume and the price will hold up to the point where we will be able to make money on it, and I think that is a bit of a tragedy.

I do know that one of the things we did predict, back on March 22, when we went through the project, was that the tomato production looked very poor. I think within three weeks after that time period the tomato production ceased, which indicated, I think, that there are major problems with it.

That fact is, Mr. Speaker, we have gone into this project, we have put a lot of money in it, and we have committed a lot of the, quite frankly, credibility of the administration on the other side on it. Personally, I think it was an ill-advised project and it will prove to be that way six months, eights months or a year from now. The fact that any produce has left the Province is not really significant. The fact is that we still have to see the bottom line, and that will be about a year from now, and we will know at that time how the thing operates.

MR. BARRETT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Development and Tourism.

MR. BARRETT:

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to

announce to the House of Assembly this afternoon the commencement of Tourism Awareness Week in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Every year we set aside this week to focus on the value of tourism to our Province and to recognize the thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who make up their living in the tourism industry.

Years ago, there was a prevailing thought in this Province that tourism was some kind of cottage industry which, while nice in its own right, was not really all that significant in terms of our social and economic development. Today, I would venture to say that there are very few Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who hold to that antiquated theory.

In fact, our people are, day by day, becoming more aware of the fact that tourism is one of the most significant industries in this Province in terms of both employment creation and the generation of economic wealth.

All one has to do is travel throughout this Province and talk to our community leaders - the town councillors, the mayors, development officials, and others - to see that they are excited about the prospects and opportunities presented by the creation and development of a tourism industry in their areas. They have come to this conclusion because they see tourism as a positive alternative which has the potential to generate many new jobs and new money for their local communities.

A lot of the credit for this renaissance of thought must be shared, first with the far-sighted leaders of our community who

recognized the potential for economic diversification presented by tourism and have gone to great lengths to bring that message to their people. I also believe that the co-operative efforts of the Provincial government, through my department, and through the federal government and its tourism agencies, as well as through the private sector through its tourism agency, the Hospitality Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, are all very much responsible for this high level of tourism awareness in this Province.

Between us, we have spent a great deal of time and money in the last decade in a joint effort to develop a top quality tourism industry, as well as to promote and market the Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism experience, and these efforts are starting to pay off in big dividends.

Last year, as a whole, we entertained close to 300,000 visitors from outside of Newfoundland and Labrador. These people came by air, they came by water and by road. They travelled in cars, in buses, trailers and motor home caravans. They also came by train into Labrador West and by boat into Goose Bay, and they came by sailboat, from the Northeast United States and from as far away as Florida.

They bought crafts, they stayed in hotels, and motels and hospitality homes. They ate in our restaurants and bought gas. They took in boat tours, and visited museums, and participated at the Summer festivals and community celebrations and contributed in excess of \$106 million new dollars to this Province's economy.

Add to this, Mr. Speaker, the \$230

million spent by resident Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who vacationed at home last year and you get an accurate picture of the total impact of tourism in this Province.

So, in essence, over \$336 million was spent on the tourism product offered by operators throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

This year we anticipate an increase in all these levels of visitation and tourist expenditure as a result of our ambitious advertising and our marketing campaigns undertaken in the Northeast United States, throughout Central Canada and the Maritimes, as well as locally here in the Province. And, I might add, the excitement of Soiree '88 has certainly contributed greatly to this ever increasing interest in the Newfoundland and Labrador vacation.

In 1988, the Department of Development and Tourism has increased the advertising budget by \$300,000 to a total amount of 1.8 million this year. And, as I said, we expect to have even greater results and levels of tourism expenditure as a direct result of this.

Already, we are getting some positive indications that that advertising and these other promotions are starting to pay off. The level of enquiries we have received via mail and through our toll-free tourism information service, so far this year, have increased by over 20 per cent above last year's figures. In fact, it is quite likely that we will answer more than 100,000 such enquiries this year. And, each and every one of those people represent potential future tourism

business for this Province.

It might seem cliché to say it, but we are now only starting to scratch the surface of our true tourism potential. And it is the continued co-operation of government and the private sector which will enable us to deliver a quality product to these ever increasing numbers of visitors.

Last year, for example, both the Province and the federal government provided \$3.5 million in incentive funding for private sector projects under the Tourism Development Agreement. This leveraged \$6.2 million in additional private sector investment in these same projects. So, last year, through the co-operative efforts of government and the private sector, we generated close to \$10 million in expenditures to improve our tourism product, whether it be for accommodations or an attraction or the promotion of an event or something else entirely, and it illustrates very clearly to me that we have adopted the correct approach in the development of this industry in the Province, and that the public and the private sectors are together, and together on the right track.

Today we recognize Tourism Awareness Week, fully cognizant of the fact that tourism awareness and tourism development are year round responsibilities, and possibilities. And tourism awareness is every Newfoundlanders and Labradorians business.

Record numbers of tourists are being compelled to visit our Province. This Summer, each and every person in this Province should consider themselves a host and make every effort to provide a

high level of service and hospitality to our visitors. Let us work together and again deliver the goods on the best vacation experience, on lifestyle, on history and culture available anywhere in North America - the Newfoundland and Labrador vacation experience.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. KELLAND:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Naskaupi.

MR. KELLAND:

I do not know if it is inadvertent, but I did not receive a copy of the statement, Mr. Minister. It probably got misdirected somewhere along the line. Anyway, that is neither here or there, I understand the statement as you read it and as you intended.

MR. BARRETT:

I sent it to your office before lunch.

MR. KELLAND:

Thank you, very much, Mr. Minister.

It was probably misdirected, as I said.

I think, now that the Premier has announced his cucumber awareness week, the one that the Minister of Development and Tourism (Mr. Barrett) has announced is much more significant, and will be much more significant, to our Province than the project -

PREMIER PECKFORD:

It all helps.

MR. KELLAND:

Yes, indeed, it all does help, and we will see the results in the next provincial election, I suggest to the Premier. I believe, Mr. Minister, that you are indeed on the right track. We discussed this somewhat in the questions and answers in the Estimates Committee and, as I said at that time, I found that wherever possible the minister was forthcoming with his information and indicated that he has a high level of seeing the tourism industry developed in our Province. I strongly support that, because I also believe we have a vast potential.

I was given a figure some time back which said for every \$1 million spent by tourists, we see seventy-five jobs created. The minister may be able to confirm that, or figures in that area. So in the figures he was talking about, not just the dollars spent in actual employment resulting from tourism development and the tourism industry, we have seen a significant number of jobs directly related.

I also believe in the concept of providing more training in the private sector. I know the minister made some announcements just recently on that. I believe more of that is needed. I would personally like to see a greater concentration of effort in the Labrador part of our Province. I suppose that is natural, in that I represent one of the seats. I would like to see something done with respect to the ferries which give tourists access to our Province. I would also like to see something done with the water transportation, the ferries that take tourists ongoing from the Island of Newfoundland into Labrador. Some of these are much

less a standard than I personally would like to see.

I think the minister is right in giving credit to a lot of sectors. The business community, probably in a lot of cases where there are tourism associations, took over from groups that were essentially volunteer. Credit should be given, of course, to the volunteers who have helped tourism grow in our Province, but volunteerism can only go so far and then the private sector, the business people, have to take over, in that they are the operators, those who will make their living from it. I have experienced some of that myself in Labrador, and I know they do it in other parts of the Province, have done it, and will continue to do so.

I was also very interested earlier in what the minister had to say about a combined tourism/cultural sort of conference or seminar that will relate to Labrador and, no doubt, to other parts of the Province as well. The minister can be assured and the government can be assured that the Opposition firmly and strongly supports any initiative and any effort that would bring more tourists to our Province, and keep them here longer so they would spend more money, and that is what is all about. We do have a very vast potential in tourism.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. KELLAND:
If I may clue up, Mr. Speaker. We have a vast potential, and if we have things to sell that Florida does not have to sell, then we will sell the things we have in tourism and let Florida sell what

they have to sell. I think we have a great potential, a great future in tourism. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. LONG:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:
We also join with the minister in acknowledging the significance of tourism and development. There are a couple of points I would like to make in response to this statement. One is, the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) makes note that on page 3 the minister talks about visitors coming to Labrador West by train. They also come by the road now, from Baie Comeau, which has been finished. We noticed with regret last week, when the minister gave us a package which we appreciated, to see the fine materials being produced by his department, that the most recent map does not have the road from Baie Comeau to Lab City clearly marked on the map. So, we might bring that to the minister's attention, because obviously that is a very important development that has taken place in the last couple of years which we want to promote to let visitors be aware that they can drive to Lab West.

I might also say, Mr. Speaker, that it is with some irony I note the minister's expression of commitment to a partnership both public and private, because this is a minister who, in some of his other capacities, is quite proud of the government's insistence on allowing and encouraging the

private sector to take the lead. We saw that with the sale of Newfoundland Hardwoods, and the suggestion from the minister that anything the private sector could do, government should get out of the way and let it do it.

Of courses, that philosophy does not always make sense. It is not always practical. And in the case of tourism development and the development of tourism potential, it is, of course, critical that there be government involvement, both provincial and federal, to assist especially the many small business people who look to the tourist season as the key time of year for them to be able to expand their services and make a return.

So it makes a lot of sense, Mr. Speaker, that the government have a commitment to this partnership. I know in my own district, here in St. John's, some of the programmes, including the private sector employment programme that government makes available to small business operators, are quite important to the small business people in this city as they look toward the Summer and vacation time and being a part of the tourist activity in this city.

I might also say, Mr. Speaker, that we see a really important need, and unfortunately the minister does not say anything about it, but I am sure he is aware of the need to develop a training aspect in the service industry particularly, that there is a need to promote education and training within the tourist industry so that the services are provided in the most efficient manner possible, and where services are underdeveloped, they might need assistance from government.

I might also say, Mr. Speaker, in other areas where the government is looking for support from the federal government, such as roads and highways, this is also critical to our success in being able to market ourselves as a fully serviced Province.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to note -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. LONG:
- the minister mentions culture and history, and we are glad to see the first acknowledgement of that by the minister.

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform hon. members of the House that after careful consideration government has decided to postpone the enactment of the Driver's Point Programme, which was scheduled for implementation this Spring.

This decision was made because government was concerned that such a system could be considered an infringement on the privileges of our people to hold a driver's licence.

When the need for a Points System was initially brought to the attention of government it was in the form of a total driver improvement system, whereby, drivers who showed signs of establishing a poor driving record were counselled and given ample

opportunity to correct their ways before being suspended. However, we feel that after careful consideration, the programme, which has been developed and recommended for implementation, is a little bit too punitive and it does not afford drivers adequate warning and opportunity to correct their ways before being suspended.

Mr. Speaker, this postponement will allow time for additional study. It gives government more time to assess the existing materials on the subject from both the point of view of the effectiveness of such a system in protecting the public, while also allowing for a further careful study of the mechanisms necessary to help drivers improve their driving habits.

This is not to say that drivers' records will not be monitored in the interim. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles for the Province continually monitors the driving record of those whose history of motor vehicle safety is questionable, and he has the authority to suspend a driver's license if he or she continues to drive in a manner dangerous to public safety.

Mr. Speaker, the postponement is for an indefinite period and I am not prepared, at this time, to indicate when in the future government will be in a position to reconsider implementation of a points programme. However, I have instructed my officials to once again review the counselling and education of drivers in the hope that overall driver safety will be achieved without the use of punitive actions such as the driver point system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. GILBERT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I agree with the minister. It was one of the concerns I had when I read Bill 14, and it is one of the arguments we were going to make about this, that again it seemed to be an example of the government jumping into a situation before they really knew what the ramifications were going to be. It seemed to inflict the point system on the motorists of Newfoundland without adequate time for introduction. Because, as I understood it when this bill was coming in, immediately this Summer we were going to put in a point system. I felt it was unfair, and I am glad the minister saw the error of his ways and corrected it before the people of Newfoundland were forced to be punished by it.

I would imagine it has something to do with the fact that the road system in Newfoundland is not up to the standard it should be. Trip Canada, I think, in their study last year, said that the highways system in Newfoundland was only about 80 per cent defective, so that it would be hard to force drivers into safe driving when the road is barely safe to drive upon, and for this reason, I think it was a good reason.

I do think the point system should be considered. I think that it should be implemented, but lots of time and lots of warning should be

given for motorists to be educated to the situation that is happening. And as the road is improved, I think this system should be put in place.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menehik.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, this is a very puzzling Ministerial Statement. I am looking over there at the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs who, on previous occasions, has put out press releases and other announcements that this point system would be a system which would save lives. Maybe somewhere along the line the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs could explain to us how a system that could save lives last year is now a punitive system on drivers in this Province.

IF, Mr. Speaker, the cutoff point for a person losing their licence comes too quickly, then maybe an adaption of the point system is more appropriate; instead of having, if I recall correctly, three speeding tickets means losing your licence, maybe four is more appropriate. I do not know, I am just suggesting it.

Rut, Mr. Speaker, I am really in a quandry, because it is my understanding that many other Provinces in this country do have a point system in place, that the point system has been effective in locating dangerous drivers, getting them off the road, and making sure that our roads are safer.

What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, given this statement, is it is very difficult to know whether the government is making a good move or not. Are they just responding

to political pressure from individuals who do not want to see it? Have they now told us that the previous studies which indicated this would make our highways safer were incorrect? Have they found additional information here, because, quite frankly, this looks like another example of the herky-jerky kind of politics that we are getting from this government, where they put in a particular initiative like, for example, if I recall, with the ATU's, when they made insurance mandatory on them and then later pulled it off. This is another example of the same kind of hasty implementation of policy and then the withdrawal of it later.

I would like to hear some answers later on about why we are doing this, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I should inform the House that the following statement is also being made at this time by my colleague, the Minister of Northern Development (Mr. Warren), who is attending a meeting of the Labrador Inuit Association presently being held in Hopedale.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce today that my department is transferring ownership, administration and control of our fishing facilities barge, **The Labrador I**, to the Labrador Inuit Association for the nominal sum of one dollar.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

This barge was acquired by my department in 1973 at a cost of \$140,000 and was subsequently upgraded at the Marystown Shipyard at a further cost of \$200,000. This barge has been positioned at Smokey since 1974 for use as a floating support facility for fishermen pursuing the fishery along the Labrador coast each year. The barge has provided facilities such as washrooms, showers, laundry and mobile telephones to fishermen working all along the Labrador coast.

Mr. Speaker, my department has recently constructed a modern on-shore complex at Smokey to provide increased services to the Labrador fishery. The Labrador Inuit Association has requested that they would like to operate this barge North of Nain to support the many Inuit/Labrador fishermen who work in that area. This facility will assist the future development of the char fishery and many of our other Northern fisheries. My department, therefore, will be relocating the barge, at our expense, to a mutually agreed upon location.

The transfer of ownership of the Labrador I is on the understanding that no subsidy will be considered if operating difficulties occur in the future and that the Province will be given the right of a "first refusal" in the event that the Labrador Inuit Association is no longer interested in operating and/or intends to sell the facility.

I believe the transfer of the

Labrador I will provide a badly needed support service to the native fishermen who work in the remote Northern area of Labrador each summer and I am, therefore, very pleased to comply with their request.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There is not too much, Mr. Speaker, we can say about this statement. For the benefit of the people in the House, maybe, who do not understand the purpose of the barge and what it was intended for, for years that barge acted, I suppose, as a home away from home for a large number of Newfoundland inshore fishermen who fished in the Smokey area and who used the barge as a support service, again on which there were a number of amenities that the fishermen would avail of, such as those outlined in the statement - washrooms and showers and mobile telephones, etc.

Mr. Speaker, it did provide an essential service, and I am glad to see that the department has now provided, I presume, a better, more modern service for Newfoundland fishermen. It is important now, especially with the fishermen getting more mobility, being able to travel greater distances, and with the depletion of the resource and their inability to catch any sizeable quantities of fish close to the Newfoundland Coast, a large number

of Newfoundland fishermen now travel to the Labrador Coast. I know from my own riding in Summerford, for example, last year there were, I would think, twenty-five or thirty, or maybe more, fishermen who left and went to Labrador and fished and, I might say, had a very successful voyage. So I believe that the provision of these new services now will be a very worthwhile endeavour and something that the fishermen of Newfoundland will avail of.

It is important too, I think, that while we agree that transferring ownership to the Labrador Inuit Association is another good move, certainly these people, I think, need that kind of a facility North of Nain, where they fish, I think the minister should keep an eye on it and make sure that the barge is being used for the best advantage of the people to whom it is now being transferred. It would be a shame to see that facility which cost government, I suppose, a total of almost \$500,000 over the years, just abused or not being put to proper use. So I would urge the minister to make sure that it is being used properly and that it, again, will be used for the benefit of the people for whom it is intended.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. W. CARTER:
Yes. We support the statement, Mr. Speaker. We see no problem with it.

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

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker, we see this as a policy on the part of this

government which we approve of, and that is devolving more and more responsibility on the Labrador Inuit Association and the Innu Associations, and providing them with more of the resources they require in order to handle their own lives, their own existence, their own business. On this basis, we are quite appreciative of this initiative. We are hoping that it will make it easier for the Inuit fishermen on the Coast to be able to pursue their activities during the Summer and, by all means, keep up the good work.

MR. SPEAKER:
I would like at this stage to welcome to the gallery the President of the Tourism Association, Mr. John Tremblett with his Executive Director Mr. Joe Bennett.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

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

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. the Premier. Bearing in mind the comments over the last few days of Premier Peterson about his being prepared to consider amendments to the Meech Lake Accord, and the previous comments of Premier McKenna in New Brunswick, and Premier Filmon and Mrs. Carstairs in Manitoba, would the Premier now agree to consider amendments in this House? Would he consider amendments from here?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No, Mr. Speaker, absolutely not. We have no intention as a government. We signed a deal with the other provinces and with the federal government, that deal had certain checks and balances in it and was agreed to on that basis. Any change would, therefore, upset the whole agreement from our point of view and from a lot of other people's points of view, other provinces and so on. We signed a deal. When I sign a deal, Mr. Speaker, that is the deal.

MR. SIMMS:

Hear, hear!

A man of his word.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mrs. Carstairs, Premier Peterson and Premier McKenna, withstanding, we have a deal. If in fact there were to be any changes that would mean going back to the table again, because a lot of provinces and leaders agreed to that deal based upon certain balances that were built into the system. For example, from our point of view, not only was it important to see that Quebec was an integral part of the Constitution of Canada, but we were able to access, as a result of the negotiations, further discussions related to shared jurisdiction in the fishery. Premier McKenna is against that completely, Newfoundland having more say over our largest industry. The whole agreement would be opened up and we would have to go back to the table and it would take years to put anything together. I think this is a very important point. It is not a question of safeguarding, although some, either Native groups or women's groups, believe

that they are somehow now at greater risk than they were before, even though a lot of legal experts say they are not. It is not a question of that. That is not the question. It is a question that the whole agreement will unravel because within the negotiating process certain gives and takes were made to various provinces to get the agreement we have now, and you would have to go right back to square one if in fact the agreement was opened. No, Mr. Speaker, we have absolutely no intention of making the slightest amendment to the Meech Lake Accord. It was an agreement that I entered into on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland with the full support of my Cabinet colleagues. We support it wholeheartedly and we want to see it passed in this House as quickly as possible.

MR. SIMMS:

A man of his word.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. FENWICK:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. FENWICK:

It refers to the previous question asked. It is my understanding in oral Question Period, under Rule 359 in Beauchesne, Section 12, "Questions should not anticipate a debate scheduled for the day, but should be reserved for the debate." Since this is on the Order Paper and scheduled for this

afternoon, I would suggest that that question was out of order. I allowed the Premier to answer, but I was afraid there would be a supplementary so I thought it was appropriate to raise that point of order at this time.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

To that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

PREMIER PECKFORD:

On the surface it looks as if the member for Menihek has a good point.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

I disagree with the hon. member for Menihek. Mr. Speaker, the question was directed at developments today. The Premier has spoken, but whether or not they will allow that debate is another question quite apart from this debate in the House. It has nothing to do with it.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, I am going to consider that matter and I will rule on it tomorrow.

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, my question would have gone to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Windsor), but in his absence I direct it to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout). It concerns the problem

being encountered in St. Lawrence with respect to their fish plant up there. A delegation came to St. John's last week, and I believe met with the Minister and the member for the district and the Minister of Finance. I wonder can the minister tell the House and the people of St. Lawrence what plans does he have for the re-opening of that fish plant?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is correct. First of all, let me go back a little bit further than just the last day or two of last week. As a matter of fact, my colleague, the Minister of Career Development (Mr. Matthews), the member for LaPoile (Mr. Mitchell), the MP for the area, Mrs. Ting and a number of her lawyers, accountants and other employees, met at Mrs. Ting's request of two or three weeks ago to analyze the present financial situation of her whole operation, not only the St. Lawrence operation, but Port aux Basques and Rose Blanche as well.

Government is in the process of considering a financial request from Mrs. Ting that hopefully will address some of her problems. In the context of St. Lawrence, government authorized the Minister of Finance and my colleague, the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies, to meet with Mrs. Ting and her officials on Friday past. They did. I understand that some further information has been requested from her accountants, and hopefully that information will be forthcoming today, so that over the next day or two we can address a financial package that will positively impact on the St.

Lawrence operation.

MR. W. CARTER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, the minister in his reply made reference to Mrs. Ting's plants in Port aux Basques and I believe Rose Blanche. I wonder can he tell the House are these plants in similar trouble? Will they be permitted to operate this year, or will they be facing the same fate as the St. Lawrence plant?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the financial request from Mrs. Ting is an all-encompassing one. It would include financial assistance, if government approves it, to all of her operations, Eldorado Seafoods as well as the St. Lawrence operation. At the moment, of course, the hon. gentleman will be aware that Port aux Basques and Rose Blanche have moved beyond the Winter fishery stage and are presently not operating. The inshore fishery is about to begin in St. Lawrence, so that problem, while I do not want to say more pressing, is more immediate in the sense that St. Lawrence is about ready to open.

The other difficulties at Rose Blanche and Port aux Basques are being addressed as part of the same package. At the moment those operations are not operating but

St. Lawrence needs to know over the next few days whether they are going to be able to operate.

MR. W. CARTER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I take it then from the minister's reply that the 200 or 300 people who would normally be employed in that plant, plus the fishermen it will serve, can pretty well take it for granted that the plant will be opening up certainly in time for the fishing season. Do I take it to be correct that the plant will be opening up soon?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that we can definitely say that you can take it for granted. What I can repeat to the hon. gentleman is that we are hopeful before the day is, over Mrs. Ting and her principals will be able to provide the government with some financial information that we need in order to be able to make an intelligent and responsible decision on her request. We cannot be fiscally irresponsible, of course, that would not be right. So we are hoping that we will have that today and if we do get it and we are satisfied with the information that is forthcoming, then government has already authorized the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Fisheries, and the Minister of Development and Tourism (Mr. Barrett) to respond

in an appropriate manner to the request.

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KELLAND:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to direct a question to the Premier. I ask the Premier could he could tell the House if government has given or undertaken to give any further loan guarantees or any other financial assistance to the Sprung Project since the \$2 million loan guarantee for operating a few weeks ago?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

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

MR. KELLAND:
The \$106,000 that is being claimed by Tors Cove Excavating, is that being disputed by the company or is it simply because the company probably does not have sufficient funds to meet this obligation?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
No, no. There is a dispute on between Mr. Sprung and the Tors Cove Company over a written legal agreement between the two, and it has to be interpreted, I guess, by

the courts.

As I understand it, it is a written agreement that is in dispute.

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Naskaupi.

MR. KELLAND:
So it is not that they do not have sufficient funds, since you are indicating that they do have funds.

I would like to ask the Premier is construction of the facility now complete? If it is not, how much remains? For that which remains, does the company have enough funds in place to complete the job?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
I cannot give that off the top of my head. It must be close to 98 percent or 99 percent complete, if not 100 percent complete at this point in time. I have not got an update as of today, but I know construction is 95 percent plus complete at this point. The operation is now well up and running. I do not know how many are on right now in operations, but there must 110-120 if not more people hired.

As a matter of fact, they got into a problem last week and the problem was that they did not have enough people hired to take care of the increased production that is occurring out there. Production is increasing at a tremendous rate, way above what anybody anticipated in the figures that were done at the beginning,

and that is why we could do our export a little bit earlier than we thought we could it. So it is somewhere around 95 percent or more completed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My questions are for the Minister of Justice (Ms. Verge) and they have to do with the election statistics report released by the Chief Electoral Officer for 1987. In his preface to the report he makes a number of observations, most of which are by ways of criticisms of the way in which elections are held under the current election legislation and the Electors List especially.

My question to the minister is this: Given that the Chief Electoral Officer points out that over 20 percent had to sworn in in the elections held in St. John's East Extern and Windsor-Buchans, and over 30 percent had to be sworn in in St. John's East in the previous one, will the minister assure us that the enumeration which has been budgeted for will be undertaken immediately, so that if an election is called this year the lists, which were clearly out of date back in 1986-1987, will be brought up to date prior to any election call?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I have already assured hon. members, and the general public through the news media, that the Department of Justice, through the Chief Electoral Officer, will carry out

a Province wide enumeration of electors this year. In the Estimates of the Department of Justice, which we have all been dealing with, there is a provision of about \$600,000 for that purpose. That will be spent in this fiscal year so we will have a complete, up-to-date voters list in advance of the next election.

MR. FENWICK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

The original question asked when that would occur. Maybe she can give an answer to that when she answers this supplementary.

The Chief Electoral Officer also indicated in the preface a number of areas where our legislation is very weak, those having to do with

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. FENWICK:

My question to the minister is this: Considering that the Chief Electoral Officer has indicated three or four sections of legislation which are very weak, requiring a whole abundance of extra polls all across the country, denying, quite frankly, the military the right to vote when they live in Gander and so on, will the minister give us some assurance that there will be repairs to this Elections Act prior to this session ending, I would assume, in the next five or six weeks?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I have answered similar questions posed by the member for Menihek before. I have said that the government, as a whole, is considering various recommendations, including the one from the Committee chaired by the member for St. John's North for new elections legislation. When the government, as a whole, is prepared to move with a new bill, it will be presented to the House. We are trying to approach this task in a comprehensive way and to study the experience of other jurisdictions and incorporate the best elections legislation features of other jurisdictions in a new act for our Province.

MR. FENWICK:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, I keep on getting the same answer every time I ask the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

You keep asking the same question.

MR. FENWICK:

It is clear that we have a very poor piece of legislation which denies people the right to vote. My question to the minister is this: Will you assure us that we will have a new Elections Act before this session of the Legislature finishes in June? Yes or no!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

No. Mr. Speaker, I have said that a number of times.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was very interested in the Premier's statement today and, in light of the fact that he has in the past said that the Sprung greenhouse would supply Newfoundland needs and then supply needs all over North America, talking in terms of fifty more units, I would like to ask the Premier if, seeing he has announced one shipment, he would fill us in on sales in Newfoundland during the last couple of months, a general comment on how the sales have been going because I assume the Newfoundland market by now must be saturated before we would start shipping out. So would the Premier make a comment on that, please?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I can only say that the sales have just been absolutely outstanding around the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Absolutely outstanding! To preface what I am going to say next, I could stand to be corrected, but I can say this with some degree of certainty, although I have not seen the number

specifically in the last week or so, but.

MR. W. CARTER:
Why are you not smiling?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
We will smile all the way to the bank over the next year and a half, I tell you, and we will smile all the way to the ballot box as well. But, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people are going to eat an awful lot of cucumbers to swallow this one.

We are close to having sold in the Newfoundland market to date, since January, more cucumbers to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians than was ever done before in a whole year. In other words, in less than five months, we have sold more cucumbers in the Newfoundland market than was traditionally sold in a whole year in Newfoundland. We are getting close to that. What we have done is created a new market, an expanding market.

So, Mr. Speaker, things are going very, very well, and whether the market is saturated in Newfoundland yet or not is a good question. I do not know. I still think that there is more that can be sold here. Production is happening at such a rapid rate out there. We have had some hydroponic lighting experts from around the world out there, who had to stay extra days to take a look at what is going on out there because they cannot believe it, the same way as hon. members cannot believe it.

MR. SIMMS:
Or will not.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
You know, it is like Newton, when

the apple hit on his head and he came up with gravity, and Copernicus and Galileo and a few more, some of whom got ex-communicated and all the rest of it. I guess we are into the same kind of thing in 1988. There are a lot of people who will not believe, but the doubters are becoming less and the market is becoming better.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:
Sir, when is the Premier going to carry through on his promise to let us have a look at this tremendous facility, and will he table the week-by-week statistics in the House? It is a very important figure.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Well, I do not know if I will table the week-by-week statistics, but anytime any member opposite would like to visit the facility, as of this moment I would welcome them to the facility to see it. I would like for all of you to see it, especially now. I would like for the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Wells) and the member for Menehik (Mr. Fenwick) also to take the opportunity to go back again, because I do not think you will actually believe what has happened in such a short period of time, the kind of production that has happened. It is way above anything that we even put in our

predictions for a break even point. So, you are welcome.

MR. BAKER:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. BAKER:

I watched the cucumbers with interest. They started out big, round, and firm. Lately, it seems to me they have become smaller and more gnarled, and that suggestion had been made to me. Would the Premier guarantee the House, as well as the people of the Province, that the same kinds of stunted growth and deformities are not showing up in the greenhouse here as showed up in their Calgary greenhouse?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

The hon. member will see that himself. What is happening is we are gearing to the marketplace. There is in Newfoundland today, because of the enlarged market, a demand, from some families and individuals who shop, for smaller cucumbers. Some like the big ones and some like the small ones. I take it the hon. member for Gander likes the small ones. I, Mr. Speaker, prefer the large ones.

MR. BAKER:

Do you prefer money?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No, I do not. If the hon. member wants to put his bank account on the table with mine, I think that he will outshine me any day of the week, and I am willing to do it.

MR. BAKER:

Mine is spent.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Yes, mine is too. If the hon. member wants to say, as a quip, that I have more money, then I am willing to put our two accounts on the table, and I think he will prove to have more money than me.

MR. SIMMS:

How about Mr. Wells?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

That is another matter. If he would like to do that, then that is fine. But there is now three or four different grades of cucumbers being produced at the Sprung facility to respond to the market. What happened in Calgary, as the hon. member well knows, is that it was on an oil refinery site. It has been proven by independent consultants from universities and from other oil companies. The city of Calgary has admitted it. There is no question about stunted growth here, Mr. Speaker. It is a question of different varieties, sizes of cucumbers, to meet the market demand that the people in the Province want and no doubt will want outside the Province.

I would welcome the hon. member or any members opposite to the facility whenever they want to go out, in the next few days or the next few weeks, at any time. I would love for them to see it.

MR. SIMMS:

You have to check your firearms at the door.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

It is just gorgeous, Mr. Speaker, just gorgeous!

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. DECKER:

My question is to the hon. the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Tobin), Mr. Speaker, who seems to be enjoying the Sprung as much as the rest of the Province. The hon. minister will know that there is no formal detoxification centre in St. John's for women. Unlike the Minister of Health (Dr. Collins) I am sure the Minister of Social Services knows the facts as they really are. I want to ask the minister what action he has taken to ensure that women are given access to detox centres?

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the question put forward by the hon. gentleman, I have to be truthful with him and say that I am not aware of what he is talking about, and I would take it under advisement and report back to him as to what, if any, action has been taken.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MS VERGE:

The ADDC comes under Health.

MR. TOBIN:

That is right. Yes, that is true. The department responsible for the ADDC, the Alcohol and Drug Dependency Commission, comes under the Department of Health. It would be the Minister of Health who would be responsible. And he

would probably be the most appropriate one to answer your question.

But as it relates to my department, we do not have any programmes for that. I am not sure if the hon. member is aware of that or not, that that does come under the Department of Health and not the Department of Social Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. DECKER:

It is my understanding that the Alcohol and Drug Dependency Commission came under the Department of Social Services, but I will go after the Minister of Health, who seems to -

MR. SIMMS:

That was not mentioned in the newspaper article, I guess.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DECKER:

I did speak with some of the people who were quoted in the article, and they said it is the Department of Social Services. It is must be a recent change.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DECKER:

The fact of the matter is, Mr.

Speaker, the problem still exists and it is a government problem. I ask the Minister of Health, since it is obvious that the minister has not placed enough emphasis upon the problem that women are having with alcoholism, will the Minister of Health explain why alcoholism has been given such a low priority, and what action does he intend to take to address this problem in a more meaningful way?

Now it has been proven according to the press that women are not getting this service.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, we have done quite a bit, perhaps not as much as we will do or perhaps not so much as people would like us to do, but we have done quite a bit on the abuse of alcohol situation. It was this government that brought in the ADDC, the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Commission.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. COLLINS:

And we have branch offices throughout the Province and in Labrador where there is information available, they are staffed to meet with the various groups and so on. In addition to that, we have funded Talbot House, which is run by St. Clare's Hospital, which is not a full-fledged detoxification centre in terms of a total service, but is the so-called drying out type of facility, which has been very useful, and it is used by men and women. In addition to that we have funded people going to specialized facilities on the mainland, particularly in Ontario,

Downsview I think it is called. In this budget, as hon. members know, we have put in money to start a provincial centre, not a West Coast Centre, at the Western Memorial hospital in Corner Brook. So, we have done a lot.

MR. DECKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:

I do not know if the minister is deliberately pretending not to understand the question. I am concerned with discrimination of women. I know about Talbot House and this sort of thing, but why is the minister continuing discriminating against women with this problem? The Corner Brook centre is a regional thing, but is the minister considering geography? He talks about Toronto with a big population within a ten mile radius, but is the Corner Brook centre going to be the only answer he is going to offer, or is he going to consider geography when he develops the centre in Corner Brook?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, as I explained it will not be the other centre but it will be the only facility where there are in-patients, shall we say, or resident facilities of a very high tech, a very extensive type of nature. The fact that there is only one in the Province is not unusual. I think there are only two or three in the whole province of Ontario, where they have a population of eight or ten

million, or whatever it is. You do not need many of these centres, but you need one very highly developed centre and we will have it in this Province. There is another centre in Labrador, at Northwest River, which is funded by the federal government and is operated by the LJA there. They have a somewhat similar type of centre but that is not a provincial initiative. I think that the effects of this centre in Corner Brook will be felt throughout the Province. They will develop resident services and they will then develop sophisticated ambulatory and family services, and these will then be exhibited throughout the Province through the branches that I have mentioned that we already have in place, through the ADDC.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Health. I would ask the minister if he would confirm a statement made by the Administrator of the Health Sciences Centre last week, when she said very clearly that the hospital was operating almost entirely on an emergency and urgent basis? The minister said on Friday that he would check that out and report back to the House. Would the minister care to clarify that?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to get some information on that. Let me first say, though, that there are three types of admission to hospitals, generally speaking. There is the elective type, the urgent or acute type, shall we say, and then there is the emergency type. Now, what the administrator of the hospital said - this was an off-the-top-of-the-head response to a question at an interview - was, 'We are operating almost entirely on the basis of urgent and emergency.' So that means that they are not operating largely on the basis of elective. So it is the elective side, shall we say, not being serviced as much as in normal circumstances.

I have some figures here on emergency admissions. In 1986, 43 per cent of admissions to the Health Sciences Complex were emergency; in 1987, 53 per cent; and in 1988, up to the present time, 55 per cent; and for the month of April of 1988, 54 per cent. So you can see that throughout 1987 and to date in 1988, the percentage of emergency admissions is not changing all that much. I do not, unfortunately, at this point in time, have the percentage for the non-emergency but urgent and the non-emergency but elective.

I think that it would be a misunderstanding to think that the Health Sciences Complex is operating on the basis of only emergency admissions. There are other types of admissions going on there. At least 46 per cent of all admissions are non-emergency admissions at the present time.

MR. EFFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave, a supplementary.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, last year there were thirty-seven beds closed two weeks earlier than had been anticipated by the Department of Health, and at that time Dr. Hawkins, Dr. Wright, and Dr. Miller, and the administrator -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

This is a supplementary. Would the hon. member pose his question?

MR. EFFORD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

- of the hospital sent out a memorandum to all the hospitals around the Province saying that they could not do elective surgery and that they could only take emergencies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Would the minister, then, since there were only thirty-nine beds closed last year and they could not do any elective surgery whatsoever and they even had emergency patients waiting in the corridors, say that it is going to be even worse this year? In fact, they are closing some fifty-plus beds at the Health Sciences Complex and they are not going to be able even to do emergency surgery.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, I have just given the figures. I hope the media pick up the figures that I am giving, because they are correct ones that we got directly from the Health Sciences Complex, and they do not pick up any spurious figures and create unnecessary concern around the Province.

Last year, in 1987, 53 per cent - this is for the whole year - of admissions to the Health Sciences Complex were emergency. This year, to date, it is 55 per cent, virtually the same. There has been no increase in the proportion of emergency admissions at the Health Sciences Complex, this year to date, over last year. I think that somehow or other the hon. member is giving out some figures that the media misunderstands as showing that there is a worsening situation there. The figures I have just given show that that is not the case.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

Notices of Motion

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, it is the Annual Report of Mineral Licences and Mining Leases for the year April 1, 1987 to March 31, 1988.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Naskaupi.

MR. KELLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition, signed by 145 residents of Churchill Falls in Naskaupi District. The wording is similar to earlier ones I have presented, and it deals with the road between Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Churchill Falls. In effect, the residents on both ends of the road are looking for additional funding, other than just the regular maintenance of \$100,000 or \$150,000, I believe, which is spent every year in routine maintenance which is far from adequate. Generally speaking they are looking for an upgrading of the road itself, you know, some substantial money being put in other than other the regular maintenance that we have been having for the past few years of the \$100,000 to \$150,000.

In particular, I would like to bring to the attention of the Minister of Transportation the immediate need for some work to start on the road now, and this is in the line of annual regular maintenance over and above the aspect that the petition is calling for. Just prior to coming into the House I was contacted by some residents in Churchill Falls, and also in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and there are a number of people on both ends of the road, particularly in the more isolated Churchill Falls community, who would like to be able to travel down to Happy Valley-Goose Bay as soon as possible.

This will save me a telephone call

to the minister or deputy minister - I would like to ask the minister when he rises to speak to this petition, as he no doubt will, if he would have his officials take an immediate look at the Churchill Falls road, because I believe that there are some washouts. We get a number of minor washouts every year, but I was told about one around the Pope's Hill area, and people from Happy Valley-Goose Bay are currently driving as far as Pope's Hill but cannot go any further because of that particular washout, and there may be some others that need immediate repair.

The people in Churchill Falls, after a very long winter of isolation, are very, very anxious to get on the road and come down to Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and the number of different reasons I was given included the fact that they wanted to do some shopping, get some needed items; some vehicles are going to be traded in. There is that aspect of commerce when you establish the link each year, as you reopen the link each year, so I would like to ask the minister to give consideration to that immediate request from my district, that some work would start right away to both ends of the road. In the opinion of the people I spoke to, a loader could accomplish the filling-in of the washouts, the Spring runoff washouts. And if we could have some equipment go up from the Happy Valley-Goose Bay end, no doubt, as in previous years, the minister could make arrangements for equipment to come down from the Churchill Falls end and fix up these areas, washouts and things like that, that would permit travel right away. I say that initially. I would like to have a response from him today, so that I could inform the people who make

the calls to me what his intentions are in that regard.

But further than that, in my final remarks in relation to this particular petition, Mr. Speaker, it would seem that the government has to take a responsible position on the Churchill Falls road. We can no longer get along with simply the routine maintenance that occurs every year. In effect, there is only one total grading of that road for the whole season and, generally speaking, that is completed in the Fall, in September, or something like that. The total grading is finally done by September - the previous Minister of Transportation would probably confirm that, as well - and that that is not the right time to have it done.

Somewhere government would have to first of all upgrade the road, put more fill on the roads in areas that are pretty well down to bedrock now and upgrade some of the culverts that have not received attention, to bring the road up to a standard equal - at least equal - to the road between Churchill Falls and Esker, which nobody complains about because it is a fine gravel road on which you can drive the regular speed limit and so on, bring it up to an acceptable standard, up to the standard that the two or three new bridges are, and from then on have a meaningful annual maintenance programme that will permit people to travel comfortably on a gravel road for the entire season.

There are a number of blind curves, as we have mentioned on earlier occasions. There are a number of areas where the undergrowth, even though some work was done on that last year, is

growing in quite close to the road and making visibility very difficult. I see it as a very serious safety hazard on that road, and it is only through the grace of God, I suppose, that something really serious has not yet happened because of forward visibility, the blind curves and the conditions of road.

So I would ask the minister to give consideration to the overall upgrading, the permanent solution to the road, but, in the meantime, I would ask that he would respond to the request that I have received today, to get the road open now, so that the people can travel back, as their requests indicate they want to do.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LUSH:
It gives me a great privilege to support the petition so ably and competently and efficiently and effectively presented by the member for Naskaupi, and related to a most important project, namely, the upgrading of the Churchills road. I think the request made by the member, certainly a most reasonable one, almost in two parts, asking for immediate repair and upgrading now so that the roads can be used immediately, then, in the long term, more substantive and major construction so that the people of this area, Churchill Falls and Goose Bay, can have the transportation link that is so vital for the area.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure, will agree that probably one of the most

effective means of creating unity and the sense of belonging to an area, belonging to an entity is through communications, and transportation forms a very important link of that communication.

I remember well when I was in Churchill - I was there for five years, right from the beginning of that great development until its official opening - and I recall that the first couple of years I was there, Mr. Speaker, I felt a more a part of Quebec than of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador simply, and in the main, through communications. That was the missing link. I do not believe the Provincial government have paid sufficient attention to the importance of communication to make the people of Churchill Falls, and the people indeed of all Labrador, feel a part of this great Province. If we are to do that, communications is going to be a vital link. So, Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope that the Minister of Transportation will acquiesce immediately to the request made by the petitioners and presented with such fervor and presented with such zeal and such feeling as the member just did.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot overemphasize the importance of establishing the proper communication links in Labrador, particularly as is requested by the petitioners today for the Churchill Falls Road. I do not know whether they still refer to it as the Freedom Road. When I was in Churchill Falls, it was commonly referred to as the Freedom Road. I think that suggests how important it was to the people, to give them access to other areas of Labrador, particularly to Goose Bay, but it

also gave them access to be able to participate in the great fishing and the great hunting that is available all along the Churchill Falls Road.

MR. KELLAND:

It connects them to the ferry route to the Island, too.

MR. LUSH:

And, of course, as the member so properly points out, it connects them to the transportation system of the Island. So it gives them freedom in more ways than one, freedom for greater leisure and freedom to be able to get greater access to the Island part of the Province.

Mr. Speaker, it is one of the most important roads in the Province, and one that I support and endorse wholeheartedly. I would hope that the government will certainly heed the petitioners in their request for immediate repairs and upgrading, working, as the hon. member suggested, from both ends so that the people can immediately use the road, and, then, to have a longer term maintenance of this road to put it on a par, as he says, with the road to Esker which, over the years, has been a good road, a marvellous road. The road to Esker, again, Mr. Speaker, I have driven over many, many times, from Churchill to Esker, and enjoyed all of things that one enjoys by driving from Churchill Falls to Esker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. LUSH:

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I strongly, wholeheartedly support this request so ably presented by this dedicated and committed member from the district of

Naskaupi.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the hon. the Minister of Transportation had to step out for a few minutes but I would be very pleased, because I have had some background in dealing with that particular piece of road over the years, and take great pleasure in having had a number of meetings over the years with the councils in Labrador dealing with the start and, hopefully, the completion, in the not too distant future, of the Trans-Labrador Highway of which this particular road section is a part.

A number of years ago, we identified some money from the federal government to begin the completion of a Trans-Labrador Highway that would take from Labrador West, Wabush and Labrador City, through to Churchill Falls and on to Goose Bay. When the first block of money was allocated, there were a number of meetings held, a number of routes proposed, and, as hon. members will remember, an environmental assessment study done on a couple of proposed routes. Specific meetings were held with the joint councils, the councils from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, from Churchill Falls, from Labrador City and Wabush, asking their input into how the expenditures of these federal/provincial cost-shared programmes should be carried out, whether we should, in fact, start and begin the construction of a new stretch of road, the

uncompleted stretch of road between Labrador West and Churchill Falls, or whether a portion of the money should be spent on upgrading and fixing up the Freedom Road as is referred to in the petition. The decision from - the point I wanted to make - the joint councils was that the first order of business, as money became available in the cost-shared agreement, should be the building of the new road, and as more money became available and as we went into other cost-shared programmes, that money then be used to fix up and upgrade the Freedom Road.

But in that first agreement, because of a particular problem associated with, I guess, the largest bridge in that particular area, a \$2 million block of money was taken and put into that bridge which complemented a number of other bridges that the provincial government had, in addition to the maintenance money, funded completely along that network. Obviously the road needs a substantial amount of additional work, and I think the points are very valid.

I just wanted to point out that there is a historical sequence as to how the money is being spent on these cost-shared programmes, and notwithstanding that, there is a need to do more on that particular piece of road. It is the hope, and the minister has indicated this on several occasions, and I have as well, that as we get into additional cost-shared programmes, and hopefully they will not be in the not too distant future, that a significant portion of money will be able to be spent not only working on both ends of the existing Freedom Road, but the potential of beginning from

Churchill Falls and working towards Labrador City, on the part that is not built yet, and, at the same time, addressing some of the major concerns on the Freedom Road.

It is very important from an economic and social and tourism perspective, from the life of the people living in Labrador and the relationships that have been built up over the years between Churchill Falls and Goose Bay. I think, that particular piece of road is important for all the people. It is important for Newfoundland to have that road connection improved so that the driving conditions are that much better for the people who have to use it.

So, I do not think there is any question, Mr. Speaker, that we, on this side, support the prayer of the petition. I am sure the hon. the minister will address whatever immediate solutions he can have with the problem, but I think we all have to work towards that long-term solution of identifying additional funding so that the whole road network is completed to such a standard that it will be able to be used for the intent.

There is going to be in the future a problem, as is identified in the petition, as it relates to services. It will be a vast stretch of highway that will run from Labrador City and Wabush through Churchill Falls and into Goose Bay with essentially just three points of civilization, if you will, or amenities and highway services, available to travellers on that road and certainly the future will have to identify a means of addressing that particular concern.

So, we, on this side, support the

prayer of the petition and with the hard work of my colleague, the Minister of Transportation, I am sure a new agreement is not too far in the future which will see a large expenditure of money being able to be spent on that part of the road as well as on the Labrador City-Wabush to Churchill Falls Road.

Orders of the Day

DR. COLLINS:

Motion 5. Meech Lake.

MR. SPEAKER:

Motion 5. That debate was adjourned by the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle and he has thirteen minutes left.

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

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, I was addressing the amendment which was put forward by the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey). We see a clear weakness in the Meech Lake Accord if it is allowed to go through as it is, and I will just recapitulate a few of the points I was making there. The weakness that we see in this proposed Meech Lake Accord which, as I said, Mrs. Carstairs, thankfully, is going to prevent — she is passing judgement on the reality and saying that it is very unlikely it will go through — so our discussion is only academic anyway, thanks be to goodness! If it had not been for Mrs. Carstairs, if it had not been for the reality of what is happening in Canada today, if this Meech Lake Accord had become a part of the Constitution of Canada, we see a very clear weakness where all the provinces are not treated as

being equal. That is the weakness that we see in this Meech Lake Accord.

We see nine provinces which were treated in one way and we see Quebec given special status. This amendment attempts to have Newfoundland likewise treated as a special society, we want Newfoundland to be given special status in Canada.

Now, we heard the Premier today say that no matter what the Opposition or no matter what any other group of people come up with, this Meech Lake Accord will be passed in this House without amendment. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with what the Premier is saying. It will be passed without amendment, of course. In the end, simple mathematics will determine that. More members sit on the other side of the House than sit on this side of the House, and if it is their intention to go by the old adage that might is right, regardless of whether might could possibly be wrong or there might be some improvement to the position of might, if they are going to continue to take this position, then there is not too much members on this side of the House can do about it.

So, even though we are putting forward this amendment, we know that might will outweigh us in the end. But history will show, Mr. Speaker, that at least members on this side of the House tried to amend this Constitution, and that when this was debated in this House, there were at least fifteen members who were prepared to stand up on behalf of Newfoundland. Mr. Speaker, even if we do see our amendment defeated, I will stand up as a man and be counted when I

vote for this amendment, and I will be able to tell my grandchildren that there was a time, in 1988, when I had the privilege of standing up on behalf of Newfoundland and insisting that we be given the same treatment as Quebec. I believe that will be reward enough in itself, Mr. Speaker, that I can stand up and say that when a government had gone mad, when a government got together with some other governments and because some of them were tired and sleepy because the night was wearing on they decided, 'Well, look, we might just as well agree and get out of here, we might just as well get something that we can all put our signatures to,' we, on this side of the House, will say that we were not carried away in the panic, we were not forced into doing something that we did not believe in and, therefore, we stood for Newfoundland.

This amendment would remedy some of the problems in this Meech Lake Accord, Mr. Speaker. I referred to it the last time I spoke as the Meech Lake 'discord', because it is a euphemism if ever I heard one, it is euphemistic to refer to the Meech Lake as an accord. The more appropriate word would be the Meech Lake 'discord.' I was giving some of the reasons why, in my opinion, Newfoundland can be considered a unique society if Quebec is considered a unique society. I gave a list of reasons and now, Mr. Speaker, I will continue on with a few more.

Another feature about Newfoundland, which shows us a being different from the rest of the nation, is our music which is contained in our folk songs. I do not believe there is another province inside Canada which could

spawn a poet capable of writing the words of **Let Me Fish Off Cape St. Mary's**. I do not know of any other province in which such a song could have been written.

MR. W. CARTER:

Jim's father wrote it.

MR. DECKER:

Yes, the son of the writer is sitting with us in the House of Assembly today, Jim Kelland.

The appropriateness of these words sort of transcends time, Mr. Speaker. Just think of the advice which will be so appropriate and so relevant to members on the other side, after the next election. The song is **Let Me Fish Off Cape St. Mary's**, and here is the advice to the hon. the Premier and members on the other side of the House: "When my dory fails to make it/Let me be a man and take it." For all but the Minister of Justice (Ms. Verge), that is outstanding advice, unique to this Province. Only Newfoundland could have put forward such a song.

MR. W. CARTER:

Repeat the line again.

MR. DECKER:

"When my dory fails to make it/Let me be a man and take it."

MR. W. CARTER:

Now, tell them what a dory is.

MR. DECKER:

My colleague for Twillingate says, "Now, tell them what a dory is." That says it all. Because any government that would allow the other provinces to treat Newfoundland as anything but unique, I would have to question whether or not they know what a dory is. They are certainly

divorced from the reality of Newfoundland. They do not know a whole lot about Newfoundland culture; they do not know what a dory is, a motorboat, a punt, a skiff, a scow, or any of these words that we on this side are all familiar with, those of us who know Newfoundland culture. Mr. Speaker, we are different because of the songs that our folklore put forward.

Another reason I believe we can argue we are a distinct society within Canada and we should have special status is because, unlike any other province in the Dominion of Canada, we, ourselves, Newfoundland itself was once a nation. We were once a Dominion, Mr. Speaker. I am sure members opposite are familiar with the story of how we were an independent, self-governing nation. We all know about our history and what happened to us.

But let us not forget, in the wisdom of the people who signed the Terms of Union with the Dominion of Canada, they made provision that one minute before the document was finally signed, we reverted once again to Dominion status. So when the members sat down to sign the Terms of Union, it was not a colony dealing with another nation, there was two nations. Two nations who signed the Terms of Union. Let us not forget that.

When people across this nation refer to Newfoundland as if we were some colony that they tacked on to the East coast of Canada, let us tell them what really happened. We were a nation. We were a Dominion. We were entitled to the motto, 'From Sea to Sea', before the Dominion of Canada was entitled to that motto, Mr.

Speaker. We were a Dominion and self-governing. We reverted to that status one minute before the Terms of Union with Canada were signed back in 1949.

The Irish have a song where they long to be a nation, 'A nation once again,' the refrain keeps going. I wish the Minister of Public Works was here, he would probably sing it for us. Well, I will tell hon. members: We were a nation once again. It was recognized by the whole world that when the Terms of Union were signed between Newfoundland and Canada, we were signing them as two nations in every sense of the word.

If we did not have our special language, if we did not have our special folklore, if we did not have our special folk songs, surely the fact that we were a nation in our own right, that, above all other reasons, would make us equal with the Dominion of Canada. That would give us even more right than Quebec to be treated with special consideration in this Meech Lake 'discord,' Mr. Speaker.

There are a whole list of other reasons. I could go on. I could refer to denominational education, from which we were given special status. The Premier thought he could see some political points, grab a group of church leaders, and ran on up to Ottawa some years ago, and preached that we should be treated specially because of our denominational education.

Our climate makes us different. I suppose, let us not overlook the fact that our high unemployment rate is a disgrace within Canada, it is a disgrace in the world, that high unemployment rate,

surely goodness, must mean for us special treatment. If it were not for the fact that we were once a nation, that we have a special unique culture, that we have a special folklore, if it was not for all of these reasons, the fact that we have such an unbelievably high unemployment rate should give us special status within Canada.

Mr. Speaker, you have told me I have only got a few minutes left to speak. I have listed a whole lot of reasons why Newfoundland is distinct. Someone might say, 'But so is Quebec,' and I would have to agree totally that Quebec is unique.

Someone else could say, 'But so is Nova Scotia. Look at their Scottish ancestry, look at their folklore, look at their ghost stories, look at where they came from and where they are going,' and I would have to agree. So is Nova Scotia unique. And someone would say, 'So is New Brunswick unique,' and I would agree, so is New Brunswick unique.

We could take every province across this great Dominion and every one of us have something special to bring into this Confederation, and we are proud of it, Mr. Speaker. We are proud of it! That is what makes Canada great, because we are ten equal, unique provinces, all of which have special status! That is what makes Canada what she is today, and that is what I hope she will ever be, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

So when we put forward this amendment, we knew the unreasonableness of the members

over there; we knew that the Premier was going to say no, no, no; we knew that they were going to ride roughshod over us, because they have the majority. They are not going to listen to reason. They are not going to listen to another point of view.

We knew that, but we put forward this amendment to let the people of Newfoundland know that if Quebec gets special status, Newfoundland should have special status, and New Brunswick should have special status, and every Province in this Dominion should have special status. Then and only then, will we stand up and support this Meech Lake Accord. We might even consent to call it an accord, as opposed to discord.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to say we know what the condition in this House is like. We know our amendment will not pass, but we will be able to tell our children and our grandchildren and generations yet unborn that, when the chips were down, at least the members on this side of the House stood up and stood for Newfoundland.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. DAWE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to point out to the hon. member from Gander (Mr. Baker) that I am sure he will have

plenty of opportunity to speak. As I understand it, we have already had eight or nine speakers in this particular debate and if members opposite wish to continue, they are certainly welcome to do so, but on this side we are ready to call the vote at any time, I guess, after I have a few words. The foregoing message has been brought to you by the House Leader.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and a privilege to be able to speak in this particular debate on the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord.

Members opposite, and the last speaker included, have been very frivolous in their attempts to try to criticize this particular agreement. The history of the agreement, the work that went into creating a Canadian consensus that became known as the Meech Lake Accord, which provided an opportunity to include Quebec in a constitutional accord, in an agreement in the Canadian fashion, by consensus, is well known.

Members are inclined to say, 'Well, why do we not make some amendments here in this particular legislature?' Well, I am sure that they wish to make amendments in other legislatures but it certainly defeats the purpose and the hard work that went into the First Ministers meeting on this particular thing. They have taken the concerns from their various Provinces, from their various jurisdictions, and brought them together in an historic meeting that resulted in a consensus on how we should proceed with a new Canadian Constitution.

What members have failed to acknowledge is that this particular consensus, this particular Constitutional Accord,

provides an opportunity for constitutional change. It provides a mechanism and a wherewithall to be able to facilitate, as situations dictate and as circumstances change, and provide an opportunity to make changes in the Senate, to make changes with regard to the inclusion of other new jurisdictions, as perhaps becoming new Canadian provinces. It provides an opportunity to make necessary changes in a whole range of constitutional issues.

For the time that I have been in this Legislature, it has been clearly identified to me, as well as other members, the problem that we have had, as a Province within the Canadian Confederation, of being able to influence, in any kind of a substantive way, federal - provincial agreements and federal - provincial programmes or federally initiated programmes that would have the capacity to recognize the unique nature of any particular situation in this Province, whether it be in housing, whether it be in dealing with various social service programmes, whether it be in dealing in health, or whether it be dealing with our unique circumstances in education and our denominational system. To be able to take those nationally conceived programmes and work with them in a meaningful way within this Province, recognizing our particular characteristics in whatever area were were talking about, it has just not been there. It has created, and did create, a lot of confusion, a lot of argument, and a lot of discord within this country.

Mr. Speaker, one of the clauses in the Meech Lake Accord provides an opportunity. It does not take

away from the powers of the federal government in the areas of spending. What it does recognize, for the first time, is the right of the federal government to spend money and to do funding in areas that have been traditionally provincial jurisdiction. It provides an opportunity for provinces to be able to sit down with the federal government when initiatives in a particular area, from a national perspective, are brought forward from the federal government, if this particular accord goes through, it will provide the provinces with an opportunity to sit down and say, 'we want to make some adjustments to this national programme that will suit the requirements, that will suit the needs, that will suit the peculiar characteristics in this Province,' of any given programme. It provides that opportunity.

This has been, I would suggest, one of the big problems with previous federal administrations, their failure to recognize that Canada is a Confederation and it can only be strong when each of its component parts are themselves strong. You must recognize the juridical equality of the provinces. The Meech Lake Accord provides an opportunity to do that in certain constitutional issues which we have never had before, as a province. Quebec has always had the veto power and we recognize Quebec's desire to do that. But this particular Accord provides an opportunity to recognize our provincial juridical equality. It recognizes as well the principles of federal - provincial co-operation.

Now, it has created some concerns. The gigantic federal bureaucracy and other

administrations who were in power for so long did not recognize that the provinces should have rights beyond what they were willing, as a central agency, to give them. They tried to homogenize Canada. They tried to develop programmes in Central Canada that would apply, and tried to apply them to the various regions of Canada. It was like trying to put a round peg in a square hole. It just did not work, and it created a lot of conflict, Mr. Speaker.

It is the kind of conflict that this particular Accord does away with, or at least it provides a mechanism so that Canada can be what it is. It is an accumulation of provinces into a confederation. That recognition, Mr. Speaker, is something that we have fought long and hard to see included and we are very pleased that that aspect of the Accord recognizes our rights in that area.

There has been a lack of, and a genuine lack of understanding, I believe, prior to this particular federal administration coming in place, a lack of understanding of the aspirations of the various provinces and various regions of Canada. Mr. Speaker, this particular Accord goes a long way in recognizing that that was a problem and goes a long way in correcting that particular problem. We have seen, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity.

Obviously, the Accord does not do all the things we would like to see in the Senate. The Senate is supposed to provide in Ottawa a voice for the region. Obviously, because of the numbers in the Senate and the voting power of the large block provinces, this province does not have a complete equality in the Senate. I think

it is something that over time we want to work towards, a triple E Senate, or a senate that recognizes the regions and recognizes that equality of the province in the central government.

Prior to this, the federal government, whatever the administration was, appointed Senators from the region. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, human nature would dictate that they would appoint people that they thought were going to share their views, their concept of Canada, and it was not always the case that they appointed people who represented their regions first and the Canadian nation second.

The purpose of the Senate, the whole idea of the Senate was to provide, if you were into a situation where provinces elected all people from one particular party and there was not an opportunity for another voice, then the Senate provided that other argument on behalf of the region, perhaps a little different from the one brought forward by the elected administration at the time. This had not been the case, especially without a structural change in the way the Senate is appointed. The Meech Lake Accord provides an opportunity in subsequent meetings of First Ministers on constitutional issues to affect a change in the Senate.

Obviously, it is not as quick as a number of people would like, but the mechanisms are there to do that. It is not something that we can whimsically do in an amendment in this Legislature or any other Legislature.

Members opposite have made reference to different things that have been said with regard to the

roles and responsibilities in fishery. They have quoted the Federal Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Siddon) in the House of Commons as saying that he has no intention of bringing forward jurisdictional changes in the fishery in Atlantic Canada or anywhere else.

That is not the role of the Federal Minister of Fisheries. He said, 'I will continue to carry on discussions with my provincial counterparts on fisheries issues and we have dialogue and we talk about quotas. We do this and I will continue.' Mr. Speaker, that has continued on and will continue on in their roles as federal minister and provincial minister and that will continue, hopefully in a co-operative way, well into the future.

But the mere fact that this particular statement was put in the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord identifies that it will be dealt with on a constitutional basis; it will be dealt with under the mandate of First Ministers. It is obviously intended to have constitutional implications, or the process that has gone on and will go on with regard to federal and provincial ministers meeting will suffice. The Premier has to be given full credit for this. The Premier saw this and this administration has seen this as a very important step forward in our ability to access additional jurisdiction, shared jurisdiction in our fishing resource.

Members opposite have indicated that they do not agree with that. Members opposite do not want to have shared jurisdiction or more jurisdiction in our fisheries. They are content to allow the federal government, the centralized federal government,

with all its concerns about other things, to dictate how the fishery in this Province is administered.

If I would, as an individual, criticize the Terms of Union between this Province and Canada, I would have to criticize the lack of foresight as it relates to giving up our jurisdiction and our control over what was, is and will continue to be the most valuable natural resource that this Province has, and that is the fishery.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that that alone, that unique characteristic of Newfoundland, should allow members opposite and all members of this Legislature to wholeheartedly support this particular Accord.

If you look at the amendment brought forward by members opposite, 'that Newfoundland be recognized in the Meech Lake Accord as a unique society,' obviously, Mr. Speaker, anyone who has looked at the proceedings and have read the Accord, and read any of the summaries of the Accord, they would realize that the identification of Quebec in a clause in the Meech Lake Accord is interpretive and not substantive. It is, in the discussions that went forward, an important item philosophically for Quebec to have in the Accord, and it does, in fact, recognize the the large block of the French language component and culture in the language sense that operates in Quebec. It recognizes that just in an interpretative way and not in a substantive way.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would have to agree, Newfoundlanders will always be unique, have always been unique and will continue to be so.

Confederation, or various forms of government over the years, have not stopped us from being ourselves, and I hope it never will.

I hope the hon. gentlemen opposite never have the opportunity to try and homogenize us. His philosophy seems to indicate that he will be taking this into a homogenized, well-blended Canada, without unique characteristics and without an opportunity to express ourselves in a Newfoundland fashion.

Mr. Speaker, it is not necessary for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to put that into any kind of a constitutional accord. It is understood and well recognized right across this nation, and will continue be so.

The acknowledgment that Quebec has included in the Accord a phrase that recognizes their uniqueness as a Province is indeed interpretive and not substantive.

Mr. Speaker, this process has continued for a long time and we should all recognize that there has been a series of discussions and debates that have taken us years. There is that recognition.

There are some that would say that perhaps there was a little too much given to Quebec in order to bring them into the Constitution, but I say to members opposite that without Quebec as part of an agreed accord, without Quebec being a signator to this particular Meech Lake Accord, the possibilities for the kinds of changes that we want to make or will need to make in years ahead in the Constitution are virtually

dead in the water.

It will take decades to try and reach a consensus because, Mr. Speaker, after a consensus is reached by a group of people who have worked on this - governments have worked on this, First Ministers, the federal Prime Minister and the Premiers have worked on this for a long period of time - and all of the sudden it comes back for debate and is debated by a group of people who were not involved in the workings of developing this accord, new governments have come into place and have decided that they may or may not honour what their previous government has agree to, Mr. Speaker, at some point in time at a First Minister's meeting, there may be requirements for amendments or change or to develop another consensus.

But certainly, as the Premier has indicated, this legislature, the Government of this Province, as signed by the Premier, has signed its name to an Accord that was agreed upon by all ten provinces and the federal government. They have placed their name on a document that this administration and this House of Assembly will support and it will recognize it as an important and historic document.

This is not the place to make amendments to this particular Accord. It is a national agreement that was agreed upon between First Ministers from the ten provinces and the federal government, and that is where any changes or any amendments or any flexibility will have to occur. Mr. Speaker, it is important, as I have indicated before, to recognize the validity of an agreement.

We did not give away the shop to Quebec. We did not give away anything. I mean, to say in a clause that we recognize them as a distinct society is interpretive, not substantive.

There are advocates in the Status of Women movement who say that the Constitution will take away the rights of women, particularly in the Province of Quebec. It is ironic that the women of Quebec do not think that their rights have been infringed upon by this particular accord. The women of Quebec, who other women have said will be affected, do not consider this to be a problem.

The unique society comment, in referring to the amendment, is one of interpretation and not one of any substantive meaning. It does not alter our constitutional rights as a Province. It does not alter my individual rights under the Constitution. It does not alter the rights of anyone in Quebec under the Constitution, or British Columbia, or Prince Edward Island, or anyone else. It does not take away from the spending power of the federal government. It does not take away from the ability of the Provinces to enter into agreements that recognize the various differences as it relates to federal shared cost programmes.

It does not take away from anything, Mr. Speaker, but it does, for the purposes of Quebec, provide them another mechanism where they could accept a Canadian constitution, and thereby allow Canada, as a collection of Provinces, Canada was not created as a single unit, and then divided after the fact. Canada was formed by a number of units deciding to get together for a common good, but not giving up individual

rights, individual and unique characteristics, or giving up its desire to be able to move ahead on an economic, social and legislative basis for the benefit of its own people.

This particular Accord provides an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, a unique opportunity. The member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker) referred to being able to tell his grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, if this does not go through in this Province, the other provinces and form the basis for the opportunity for constitutional change, we will be all able to hang our heads in shame to our grandchildren that we missed an opportunity that may be a long, long time coming again, to be able to develop a Canadian consensus and get this country on a co-operating, level playing field that we have all been trying to achieve since Canada became a nation.

It provides an opportunity to be able to identify our uniqueness, our own individual characteristics and be able to blend them together to form a great nation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am very happy to be able to participate in this particular debate. It is a very historic

debate, and I will be very careful in what I say during the debate.

Before I get into the substance of what I want to say about the Accord, today I plan to deal with a couple of general points in the Accord because there will be further opportunity to speak to the Accord as such, or any further amendments that might be put to the Accord.

I would like to make two points, the first point is that it has come to my attention that what is being said in this House about the Meech Lake Accord is of great interest to many other jurisdictions across the country. Members may not realize this. I wanted to point it out.

It is kind of unfortunate that the Premier and the Government House Leader are not here to hear this. Many other jurisdictions across the country are very interested in every word we are saying. As a matter of fact, there have been requests in so that immediately after speeches are made in this House concerning Meech Lake, copies be sent to other provinces and jurisdictions. They have been requested, Mr. Speaker.

The reason I am pointing this out, Mr. Speaker is, and I am not going to point fingers at individuals, but some of the things that these people must be reading, if you think back to the last few days of debate on the Meech Lake Accord, and I must say that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Dawe) did not fall into the trap that many members fell into, that the subject was not treated seriously. There were a lot of peripheral things brought in that had nothing to do with the Accord or with the nature of the Accord

or the effect of the Accord on this country. I would suggest to members, and it is something that the Government House Leader (Mr. Simms) and the Premier are going to have to deal with and talk to members opposite about.

The words spoken in this House may not be of interest to government members opposite. Obviously, there are five of them sitting in their place and a few moments ago there were only three. It may not be of interest to most members opposite, but what we are saying is of interest to legislators all across this country and somebody is listening, Mr. Speaker, somebody is listening.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

I would say to members that I never again want to feel, sitting in my place, ashamed of what I am hearing in the debate, ashamed because this is going to be read all across this country.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make has to do with what has happened in the House in terms of the attention being paid to this very significant debate by the press of the Province.

I realize that they are not around now to hear, but maybe somewhere in the recesses of the building there is somebody from the press who is listening. I would say to them, and I want to get it on record, that a debate of this significance I feel should be properly covered by the press of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Legislators all across this country are listening or at least reading what we are saying here about Meech Lake and yet the people of this Province do not know it is even going on. I think that is a very serious flaw in what has developed in this House of Assembly with regards to the press gallery, a very serious flaw.

When something of monumental importance like this is going on, the press tends to be diverted with a few little sensational flicks that are put in from time to time and that is what gets reported and that is what gets the headlines. The press tends to be diverted by things that can be encapsulated in a twenty-second clip. You cannot put Meech Lake in a twenty-second clip, Mr. Speaker. It just cannot be done. Meech Lake is much more complex than that.

The reasons behind the debate and what members have to say on both sides are important. I know they are important to me. I am serious about what I am saying here. I believe what I am saying and I believe that this should be of importance to the people of the Province. Something is happening here. We are talking about the making of a constitution. We are talking about the changing of a constitution. Mr. Speaker, that is a historic event.

By the way, in my opinion, the simpler the constitutions are, the better. Perhaps part of the reason why the press coverage is lacking on this is because a lot of it seems to be not understandable. It has not been simplified in such a way that people understand what is going

on. If the press finds it difficult to understand what is going on, then certainly they will find it very difficult to point this out to the people of the Province.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to dwell on that too much because I only have half an hour at this particular time. I simply want to say that in this House of Assembly in some cases maybe we are not taking this seriously enough. Obviously, the press of the Province is not taking this seriously enough.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to get on to deal with the Meech Lake Accord in some general ways. I will save the specifics for a later time.

I started off by saying a moment ago that the simplest constitutions are the best. It seems to me that a constitution for a country that is simple, and yet has a lot of flexibility built into it, is the best of kind of working document to have.

The more often, and this is true not only with constitutions of countries but with constitutions of groups and so on, the more complex and the more complicated a constitution becomes, the more difficult it becomes to administer, the more difficult it becomes to deal with in real terms in a country, because the more you write down, the more you actually write down on paper, the more specific you get on paper, the more difficult it becomes to deal with later on. Constitutions are best left to generalities that are then applied in the country and then the custom that has built up over the years, and the interruptions of the constitution,

and so on are then what we go by, and hopefully build a country on.

It goes a little further than that, because you have to remember constitutions are there. They are almost permanent fixtures. They get changed from time to time, but they are there and the country is changing very rapidly. As the country changes, it should be easy to adapt to changing conditions. It should be easy for a government to adapt to changing conditions.

The more the country changes, the more difficult it is going to be to administer a constitution that contains a lot of specifics. It is easy to alter custom. It is easy to alter interpretations and so on, if reasons are good and if circumstances have changed, then the interpretation changes. That is easy to deal with. But, if the constitution becomes too specific, we end up getting hamstrung in dealing with change in the country.

Making a constitution is a slow process. Changing a constitution should be a slow process. It should not be something that is entered into quickly to try and satisfy an immediate political demand. It should never, never be done that way.

In February of 1985, the Government of Quebec set out five conditions under which they would become signatories to the Constitution. All members are familiar with these five conditions.

The first one involved recognition of Quebec as a distinct society; the second one involved opting out and veto over changes to national institutions or creation of new provinces, they wanted a veto right there; the third one had to

do with the participation in the appointment of the Supreme Court of Canada Justices that come from Quebec, three of them; the fourth one dealt with immigration where they wanted to control the number of immigrants to Quebec and the kind of immigrants to Quebec; and the final one involved limitation of Parliament's spending powers.

These were five conditions that Mr. Bourassa and the Liberal government of Quebec laid out as conditions for becoming signatories to the Constitution.

DR. TWOMEY:

Did you forget about the Senate?

MR. BAKER:

The member asks about the senate. That would come under the changes to national institutions that I mentioned in Point 3, which involved the Supreme Court as well. The Senate, apparently, in the original five points of 1985, was not spelled out, I say to the Minister of Public Works and Services (Dr. Twomey). It was not spelled out specifically. The Supreme Court Judges were and national institutions.

The five points, as put forward by Quebec, were then taken by the federal government, and I presume discussed by the First Ministers, but the point I want to make is that that was in February of 1985. It is now just three years later and all of a sudden we have a do or die situation, either we have to sign this Meech Lake Accord, or dire things are going to happen.

I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is not the slow, reasoned process that I would envision for constitutional change or developing a constitution. I

am willing to wait, Mr. Speaker, for a number of reasons.

I am willing to wait to make sure that this is what the country needs and wants. I am willing to wait awhile. I do not feel we should be rushing into this. I do not subscribe to the philosophy, 'There is one little window of opportunity and if we do not do it now, we will never do it.' That does not frighten me at all, Mr. Speaker, and it should not frighten anybody who is talking in terms of constitutional change and developing a constitution.

You cannot operate that way because every single province could do the same thing. All of a sudden people will say, 'Oh, to keep the place together, we have to do this or we have to do that.' It does not work that way. Constitutional change should be a slow, deliberate, thought out process.

Mr. Speaker, another thing that bothers me about it, and this is kind of a general comment as well, is Quebec being the distinct society and protection of their culture, their heritage and their language and so on. It kind of disturbs me because I believe that this country is not bicultural but multicultural. I believe this country is not bilingual but multilingual.

I believe, for instance, that the Italians in Toronto have a very distinct culture. They have not been here as long as the French culture, certainly, but they are a very distinct culture and have their own language. There are more Italians in Toronto than there are Newfoundlanders in Newfoundland. It is a large group.

There are other cultures that have been here a long, long time. Remember the men in sheepskin boots, the Ukrainians, that settled largely on the Prairies. They are a very distinct group with a very distinct culture and many of them have retained their language as well, but they have certainly retained their culture.

Mr. Speaker, there have been changes, in spite of the panic that members opposite sometimes want to spread. There have been changes in Canada in terms of the French fact. It is a fact that Quebec is mostly French. It is a fact that there is a large French contingent in New Brunswick. It is a fact that there are people of French extraction here in Newfoundland. That is a fact, and there have been changes in this country to reflect that fact.

The spread of the French language throughout the country has been one of these marvellous reactions to the nature of the country. The French immersion programme in Newfoundland, for instance, provided originally by the federal government, but latterly by the provincial Department of Education, has had tremendous success and is perhaps the fastest growing part of our educational system, where we start children in Kindergarten and they become bilingual after three or four years. That is a marvellous reaction.

French has not been ignored. The French fact has not been ignored in this country. Quebec has been part of this country. In a sense, Mr. Speaker, it is not bringing Quebec into the country or into the Constitution. Quebec is part of this country. Quebec has to be part of this country. The French

fact is being dealt with in a slow, evolutionary process through the spread of the language throughout the rest of the country.

Schools in Ontario provide emersion courses in Spanish and Italian. Schools on the Prairies and in Northern Ontario provide German and there are people who are taught to speak German fluently. We are a multilingual country. We have been reflecting that fact in spite of the fact that we have not had our own Constitution, except for a short time. So we are a multilingual and a multicultural country and we have been dealing with it under the present circumstances.

I wanted to stress that point because the impression is being given that if Meech Lake does not go through, it means that we have thrown Quebec out the window. Well, we have not thrown Quebec out the window, just like they have not thrown us out the window.

It brings to mind a rather interesting conversation I had with a friend of mine who is also a member of the Legislature in Quebec. I sent him some information not too long ago on the French emersion programme in Newfoundland because he was starting to develop or trying to get developed an English emersion programme in some parts of Quebec. That is co-operation, Mr. Speaker, and that is the way that this country has got to work, through co-operation.

I believe, to finish my first point, the making of a Constitution is a slow and serious process. I believe that the next logical step in this slow consideration of Meech Lake and what it means is to go through the

hearing process, to let people know what is in Meech Lake, to go around the Province, and in other provinces to do the same thing, talk about Meech Lake, discuss what it means, discuss the pluses and the minuses and let us get some feedback from the people of the Provinces to find out really what is going on out there and what they believe Meech Lake means.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you this, and this is being absolutely honest, most people in this country do not know what Meech Lake is, have never read the document, have never read any of the discussion papers or anything leading up to it, and have never read any scholarly critiques or commentaries on Meech Lake. They do not know what it is, and opinions are being formed without knowledge. I would suggest that, because this should be a slow, deliberate, well thought out process, we should go through the hearing process to let people know what it is all about.

The second point I would like to make, Mr. Speaker, is that certain provisions in the Meech Lake Accord actually make change more difficult. I alluded to that at the beginning when I was making a few general remarks. They actually make things more difficult.

Section 41 of the Constitution Act, which is Section 9 of the Meech Lake Accord here, points out, "An amendment to the Constitution of Canada in relation to the following matters may be made by a proclamation issued by the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada only where authorized by resolutions of the Senate and the House of Commons

and the legislative assembly of each Province."

Members opposite know exactly what I am going to say here. I am sure they do if they have thought about this at all. They know that in order to change the Senate, for instance, we have to get the agreement of everybody. In other words, every single jurisdiction in this country has a veto.

How much more difficult, Mr. Speaker, could you make it to make changes in the Senate? It is as difficult as you can get. Everybody I have spoken to, at least, agrees that the Senate has to be reformed; that there have to be changes and, especially as our country develops and grows, we may in the future see an even greater need to change the Senate.

The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs says the Meech Lake Accord makes it possible for us to change the Senate, which means that there was no mechanism there before. In actual fact, what it does is it says that every jurisdiction in this country has a veto over changes to the Senate, which is a slightly different impression than the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Dawe) was trying to give.

To my way of thinking, Mr. Speaker, it means that Senate reform, after Meech Lake, if this is passed and if it does go through all the stages, will be next to impossible.

It is also true, Mr. Speaker, for the Supreme Court. It says that unless the agreements of all of these are attained, you cannot make changes to "the office of Queen" and so on, and "the powers of the Senate and the method of

selecting Senators." It goes on to describe a number of other things and also talks about the Supreme Court of Canada and a variety of other things.

Who knows what Canada is going to be like thirty, forty, or fifty years down the road? Who knows? I am sure Laurier did not appreciate in 1900 or in 1899 what Canada was going to be like today. Who knows what Canada is going to be like fifty or sixty years down the road?

Maybe we will desperately need changes in the structure of the Supreme Court, but here what we have done is we have said every single province, every single jurisdiction, has a veto power over any changes to the Supreme Court. That is what it says.

It says that every single province has veto power over the extension of Provinces. Do we honestly believe that Canada is forever going to be like this, like it is now, the same lines drawn on a map, and no possibility of change? Every single jurisdiction has to agree in order for there to be extensions to Provinces.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, especially for the Yukon and Northwest Territories, every jurisdiction has to agree before new Provinces are created. We have these two large Northern territories and they have people living in them, although I must admit they are rather sparsely populated at the present time.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, one of the great political visions that I can remember is that vision of the North that was announced by John Diefenbaker, a vision of the North. Today we see the North is

being developed. Changes are happening. There is oil up there now, and we are finding that these territories have more to offer than anybody could have envisioned 100 years ago.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, we might want to make one or two new provinces. We might want to do that. This Constitutional Accord, Mr. Speaker, makes it next to impossible, if it is passed. We need the authorization from the Senate, Governor General, House of Commons, and Legislative Assembly of each province, we need all of that in order to make a change in the number of provinces.

There are a lot of other specifics. These are the main things that I would like to point out to members opposite who are interested and anybody else who is reading the debate. I believe that by putting in a clause like that we are, in fact, doing serious damage to the process of constitution building. We are doing harm by becoming too specific, becoming too rigid, and laying down too specifically how these things are going to be done. By doing so we are putting a strait-jacket on the Constitution. We are making it very, very difficult for there ever to be any change in these areas outlined in Section 41 now, or in Section 9 of the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Speaker, there are lots of other specific points. The aboriginal rights issue is not dealt with and they are not happy; a lot of the women's rights groups are not happy, and so on. This deals with my general comment that the more specific you start to get in the constitution, the more specific you are going to have to

get, the more groups of people who are going to demand that you be specific.

The final point I want to deal with, Mr. Speaker, is I believe there are no special Provinces in Canada. There are no special Provinces. We are all special Provinces. I believe that the Government of Canada can deal with each Province in its own special way. That is one of the functions of the central government. Obviously, Newfoundland is special in a lot of ways and it needs a certain kind of attention paid to it.

Newfoundland has real problems with municipal infrastructure, transportation, fisheries jurisdiction, and a number of things. So, obviously, the federal government has the leeway to deal with Newfoundland to make sure that there is some kind of equality in this country.

The federal government can deal with Quebec in such a way to insure that Quebec's interests are protected, just like they will deal with Newfoundland so that Newfoundland's interests are protected. The same thing goes for British Columbia, Alberta, and all the other Provinces.

We are all special. We are all different. We all have special needs, and we should all be dealt with in a special manner by the central government. However, a constitution should never pick out one Province and say that that province is a special province. A constitution should not do that.

I am speaking now, technically, to an amendment that was placed by the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey). I could not vote for a

Meech Lake Accord that contained that amendment, I will say to the member for St. Barbe. I could not do it. I could not vote for a Meech Lake Accord that says Quebec has special status, I cannot vote for a Meech Lake Accord that says Newfoundland has a special status, or that Ontario has a special status. I cannot do that.

If you stretch it to say that all provinces have special status, then fine, or all provinces have the same status. But I cannot vote for this amendment where it attached to the Meech Lake Accord. I want to make that point, because I am serious when I say that there are no special provinces. We are all special provinces.

The member for St. Barbe was making a point, and the point that he was making was exactly the same one that I made a moment ago, exactly the same point, that we are all special, that nobody is special. That means exactly the same thing.

The Premier has signed an agreement with nine other Premiers and the federal government, an agreement that is now before this House, and it is put before this House in a ritual manner, not to make any changes, we are told that there can be no amendments.

We are told that we cannot have input from the people of the Province.

They are not going to have any input. We are not going through that process. There is no possibility of input. That means, I suppose, that on the surface what I have said for the last half hour has been a total and complete waste of time. I cannot convince

members opposite, obviously. They believe this is great, and that this is the way to go about constitutional change.

The only reason I am speaking in this debate is to get on record. It is as simple as that. I hope that some of my friends in other provinces, the other five or six provinces that will, in the next few days, receive transcripts of this debate, and read it, maybe will be influenced and maybe they will be interested in the views that I put forth here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words on this amendment that has been put forward by the member for St. Barbe. I suppose I could take up where the member for Gander left off by saying that the amendment, I do not believe, is put forward to say that in a Confederation called Canada, in a federal country called Canada there should be anybody who is considered special, there should be anybody who is considered constitutionally distinct. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, one could almost say that perhaps you would be insulting the intelligence of somebody to say that you are distinct constitutionally. And that is what the amendment put forward by the member for St. Barbe says and that is what the amendment that it is suggested by the Premier we vote for, says to the rest of us as well, that we in Newfoundland are not as equal as other Canadians, that Quebecers somehow are far more equal than the rest of Canadians.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I go any further I want to say that the Premier introduced an amendment which he says he believes in, an amendment to the Constitution, a motion which will seek our concurrence and seek debate on an amendment to the Constitution. It has been called the Meech Lake Accord. You would have thought that the Premier would have stood in his place and been very statesmanlike about the introduction of that amendment. You would have thought that would have been the case. The Premier is a good politician. He is one of the best politicians this Province has ever seen, and I say that to him sincerely.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:

In terms of getting votes, this Premier is one of the best politicians this Province has ever seen. In terms of trying to stir the emotions of Newfoundlanders, to pit Newfoundlander against Newfoundlander, and to pit Newfoundlanders against the rest of Canada, this Premier has been one of the best politicians this country has ever seen. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that is an admirable quality in a Premier. It is an admirable quality in the Leader of the Tory Party, and it is an admirable quality, perhaps, in the MHA for Green Bay, but when a person stands in this House as the Premier, then, I suggest to you, that is not an admirable quality he should have, especially when it comes to dealing with a matter that is so fundamental to this country called Canada as our Constitution.

He is, as I said, one of the best politicians. He is not of the

best statesmen this country has ever produced. Far from it! Because what does the Premier try to do? As I said, when the Premier stood in his place on March 17 you would have expected that he would have argued the issues and would have argued them from a foundation of fact rather than from some political rhetoric that he wanted to throw out in this House. I believe the hon. gentleman was followed by the hon. Minister of Fisheries, and we saw the same thing happen again, pure political rhetoric.

He started off by trying to be the statesman, but before he was halfway through his speech he was pointing across this House at the Opposition, particularly at the Leader of the Opposition, and saying, 'You are against Newfoundlanders.'

AN HON. MEMBER:
So he is.

MR. TULK:

'You wanted to give away some of our fish. You are prepared to give away some of our fish.' What nonsense! What nonsense!

AN HON. MEMBER:
It is the truth.

MR. TULK:

The Premier tried to say that the position of the Liberal Party was somehow different from that of the government when it comes to jurisdiction over fisheries matters. He did not care to state the fact that on last June 17, eleven days after the present Leader of the Opposition was elected leader of the Liberal Party, he sat in this gallery and I, on his behalf, stated an amendment to a resolution that had been put by the member for

Twillingate, subsequently amended by the member for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) and then amended by me again, and that that amendment passed this House unanimously. He did not care to mention that because it was not to his political advantage to do so.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I could read into the record exactly what that amendment said.

MR. W. CARTER:
Read it.

MR. TULK:
Yes, I think I might. I have it here, I believe.

Here is the resolution: June 17, 1987, out of Hansard:

'THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador assert its faith in the inshore fishery.'

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) read it into the record (inaudible).

MR. TULK:
And I go on to say 'We all agree, on that. But how are we going to do that? We are going to add to it be continuing to pursue a comprehensive programme of revitalization and development such as the inshore fisheries agreement, debt restructuring, and an appropriate jurisdictional role for the Province to play.'

Of course, everybody on the other side said, "Aye, Aye." We all agree that this Province, where it can and where it should, must have a say in fisheries jurisdiction, it must have a say in management in fisheries, because the fishery is so vital to this Province. We all agree on that.

But, yet, as I said, when the Premier introduced his resolution he stood in this House and somehow tried to paint the Leader of the Opposition as against people in Twillingate, against people in Fogo, against people in Green Bay and so on. I say to the hon. gentleman, it is unworthy of the Premier of this Province.

That is typical of the way this government has operated. I can remember when a certain gentleman, who then represented the Straits of Belle Isle in this House, was called a traitor because somehow he questioned the Premier on the way he should handle the offshore dispute.

MR. PATTERSON:
Not Mr. Roberts?

AN HON. MEMBER:
No, not Mr. Roberts. He would not do that.

MR. TULK:
Hon. gentlemen well remember. We saw what happened in that case, and I will not get into it now; we will debate it some other time. I ask the hon. gentleman in this House, and I ask the people from the other side, is there anybody in this legislature who does not want equality for Newfoundlanders within Canada and does not want the best that Canada has to offer Newfoundlanders? That is the question. If you really want to come into this House and be a statesman, that is the bottom line.

In all this debate we see going on on the Constitutional Accord the bottom line is, are you willing to say that some person in Newfoundland is a traitor who, rather than for his own personal gain, would like to see Newfoundland take a different

position? Do you think there is a person in this House who would want to do that? I, for one, believe that is not the case. Because anybody who would take the Constitution, the foundation of this country, and use it for their own personal political gain should not have the privilege of being in this Legislature.

So, let us not debate the Constitutional Accord on that issue. I would go so far as to say that I do not believe there are too many Nova Scotians or mainlanders anywhere, Quebecers or anybody else, who would want to weaken Canada, and, indeed, who would want to discriminate against somebody else in this country. I do not believe there are.

I believe there is a desire in this country to make us all Canadians, and I believe there is a desire in this country to see that the people from different provinces have certain rights.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that a person in Quebec, regardless of whether he is French or English, and I do not believe that a Ukrainian on the prairies of his Province, should have any more rights, or should be any more distinct than I should in Newfoundland. The member for the Strait of Belle Isle and the member for St. Barbe pointed out to us how distinctive Newfoundlanders are, how distinctive they are. Language: Quebecers speak French. I am supposed to speak English, and I can never get to it because of my background.

And I am proud of my background, proud of the fact that I come from the Northeast Coast of this Province which had its language

founded in good old Southwest England, and not in CBC in Toronto. I am proud of it. Does that make me distinct? Of course it does, just as distinct as the person who came from France to settle in this country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:

Just as distinct as that person who settled in Quebec. Do I demand that in Canada I have to have special status, that I have to have something in the Constitution that guarantees me that I am going to be treated as distinct? The answer is no. I am prepared to show how ludicrous the whole process is. In this country, I have to be prepared to live in the same way as everybody else, and, yet, protect my own distinctiveness myself. And that is what they have to do in Quebec. And that is what you have to admire about the Lalonde's and the Trudeau's and, I suppose, the Mulroney's. That is what you have to admire about them, that they did not try to get something written into law to protect them. They said, 'Let us go do it.' It is no secret what happened in Quebec in the quiet revolution and afterwards. It is no secret. The Premier of our Province would prefer René Levesque's version of Canada rather than that of Trudeau, or Lalonde, or Marchand or even, I suggest to you, Mulroney.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. TULK:

I suggest to you that he getting very close to it in this amendment. But what did the Trudeau's,

Lalonde's or Marchand's say? What did they say? Did they say now give me a distinct society, give me a Quebec that is independent of the Sovereignty Association. No!

So, let us go to where the power is. Let us get out there and challenge the powers that be and change this country for all Canadians. Let us get out there, and as people who come from the French culture and have a French language, change this country so that Frenchmen can exist in it.

But our Premier and our government do not want that approach. They are prepared to take this country and divide it up, almost like pirates finding a booty of some sort and dividing it up among themselves. The constitutional process in this country has become a political one, and that is not the way a constitution should be developed.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier decided that he was going to come into this House, and if he had had in that amendment to Meech Lake that we were going to get some further jurisdiction over our fishery, I would have found it far more difficult to go against Meech Lake than I do now. I would have found it far more difficult, although I think in the final analysis one would have had to do it, because I am not sure we can divvy up the country like that. I am not sure that we can handle the consequences, rows that are going to come with New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Prince Edward Island. I am not sure we have the wherewithal to do that.

But is that what the amendment says? The Premier goes around the Province and tells us that we are now going to have more say. The

member for Bonavista South says, 'More say.' I wish he was in his seat. I want him to be here. Because I have heard him since 1979, talk. That is all we have seen. It is in the record. What do we have the Federal Minister of Fisheries saying at the same time? I think my friend from St. Barbe has it somewhere as a telex, or printout, or whatever it was.

When the Premier of this Province is somehow trying to make us believe that he has achieved this great thing for Newfoundland, when he is trying to tug on our emotions again so that he can boost up his sagging popularity, at the same time that he is doing that, the Federal Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Siddon) is standing in Ottawa, in answer to a question put to him by one of the Newfoundland members, MPs, and what is he saying? He is saying we will sit down with you, we will talk to you, but, he says, I am not giving those people any more jurisdiction. I am not going to give you any more jurisdiction. We will talk, sure. I do not mind talking, but I am not going to give you any more jurisdiction. So, we won, I suppose. If you want to look at us as Newfoundlanders in this House, I suppose we won in Meech Lake.

We have now institutionalized First Ministers' Conferences, and we are told that fisheries is going to be an agenda item forever, I would suggest to hon. gentlemen, forever! That is the exact word I wanted, 'forever'. It will be on the agenda forever. That is what we have achieved. Because in order to change this whole process now, as I understand it, we not only have to get seven out of ten provinces in agreement with it, but on those things we

have to get ten out of ten. Ten out of ten is correct, is it not?

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. TULK:
We have to get ten out of ten. Is Nova Scotia going to agree? Sure. Absolutely! Is New Brunswick going to agree? Yes. Is PEI going to agree? Yes, because Brian wants it. Do not be so foolish. I am almost tempted to stand in this House and ask if, indeed, the Premier did not have some other deal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. TULK:
No, because I do not believe, I will not believe that the Premier of this Province would somehow look at the Constitution and say, 'I can deal in some other matters.' It has been suggested, for example, that he will get an agreement on Hibernia because he said he would support the Prime Minister on the Meech Lake Accord. That cannot be true! I would love to see the Hibernia deal signed and going and people employed, and this Province getting all the royalties it is supposed to be getting and so on, but I would not do it, to be quite frank with you, I would not do it at the expense of the Constitution of this country, and I do not believe you should.

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker, the Premier talks about our power in Ottawa.

MR. MITCHELL:
Do you agree that we should have more jurisdiction?

MR. TULK:

How many times does he have to be told? The member for LaPoile is surely not that dense. I will not read it again to the hon. gentleman. I will just tell him to go back and read Hansard of 17 June, 1987 and therein he will find the answer. He will also find, by the way, what he believes himself, because he was in this House and voted. He was in this House and voted, as I recall, but he probably does not; he just did it at the time because the person who is now Senator Ottenheimer told him to vote for it. Mr. Speaker, do we want more power in Ottawa? Of course we do. If this country is to survive, of course we have to have more power in Ottawa. Because, as the Leader of the Opposition so ably pointed out in his opening remarks, the one thing that has happened in this country is that no matter what programmes you have put in to try to create equality in this country, they have always ended up being centered in Ontario and Quebec. The power in this country has been traditionally in Ontario and Quebec, the two central provinces of Canada. We are told that somehow the Meech Lake Accord gives us more say, more power. As the Leader of the Opposition says, it is just the opposite.

What way should we have gone? Should we have signed the Meech Lake Accord and said that is it? Should we be signing this and saying that is it? No, because it is right the opposite here. You have to have the ten provinces in this country agreeing to any power change that is going to take place.

Why did our Premier not push for that triple "E" Senate which has been talked about so often and which has been the subject --

AN HON. MEMBER:

How do you know he did not?

MR. TULK:

I do not know at all that he did not. I would like to hear the hon. gentleman say whether he did or not. I would like to hear the hon. gentleman say whether he had pushed for a triple "E" Senate. Are you suggesting that he did? Because I would like to know that he tried and lost.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to have power at the center in Ottawa, it obviously has to be in the Senate. Because, of course, our MPs in this country are going to be elected MPs and they are going to be elected by a combination of population and geography. But a triple "E" Senate would give us the change to elect rather than make patronage appointments, which we have all done, and which my federal party has probably been as guilty of as anybody - we have appointed out share of patronage appointments to the Senate. I suggest to you that if a person can do the job, perhaps there is not that much wrong with it. But let me say this to you, that I believe that those people who serve in the Senate should be elected rather than appointed by anyone. Surely they should be responsible to the people they are supposed to be representing. Surely that is the case. Surely we should have equal, the second "E", representation if we are going to have the power at the top that we need. Surely, if you build in that the House of Commons cannot override the Senate by holding a second vote, as is now the case, I believe, that is a way that Newfoundland could have equal say with Ontario. If it is say the Premier wants, if it is power he

wants this Province to have in Ottawa, if it is the right to control our destiny he wants in Ottawa, surely that is the way to do it and not what we are presently doing with the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have five minutes left. I say that Quebec's demands, as the member for Gander said, to bring Quebec into the Constitution, as if a change on paper was somehow going to make Quebecers feel a part of this country, is not necessarily the case. In order to attempt to do that, we have said to Quebec, 'You can have every demand that you make.'

By the way, Quebec has been part of the Constitution since it was signed, since it was patriated, its government of the day had just not signed to say that it would be, that it would recognize it. That is all the difference that I can see. Quebec made five or six demands, as the member for Gander said, and the five or six of those have been met. The one that is perhaps the most tearing of all is the clause, 'a distinct society.'

Our Premier, our statesman who went to Ottawa for us said quite clearly, 'All I want you to do, Prime Minister, for Newfoundland is say that you will institutionalize First Ministers' conferences and that you will place fisheries jurisdiction, roles and responsibilities of the two governments, on the agenda.' That is what we got. In return for turning over everything that Quebec wanted, if you want to look at it as a bargaining process, which I do not believe it should be in terms of province versus province, that is what we gained out of Meech Lake, the right to

have a say, to talk, not necessarily any more jurisdiction at all. This time next year the Premier still will not have the right to say how much fish should be caught in a certain part of this Province. He still will not have the right to say whether there should be part-time or full-time fishermen, and the Minister of Fisheries know this. He still will not have the right to say whether - where is my friend from Port de Grave? - a sixty-four foot eleven inch boat as well as a sixty-five foot boat can fish in 3NO. He still will not have the right to say that, because he will still have no jurisdiction. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is what we gained.

Last week the Minister of Fisheries, for some reason or other, stood up - or three or four weeks ago, whenever it was he spoke - and went completely crazy about what he had gained in this Constitutional amendment that we are now seeing. I say to him that he is no further ahead in terms of what is going to happen in the fisheries in this Province than he was a year ago. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Fisheries might have been better off if he had followed the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment and tried to get agreement from the Government of Canada that he could set up the same kind of board as now governs the offshore, namely, a joint federal board. He might have been better off if he had followed that route. Maybe that is where he is finally going to go, but, I say to him, there is very little need for him to try to get a constitutional change, the kind we have in here, to achieve that end, he can do that very simply by having two pieces of legislation passed, one

in Ottawa and one here, to set it up.

I say to the government, if they think that in the bargaining process they have put in place with the other ten governments in this country they have gained anything in Meech Lake, I say to them they have gained nothing as far as Newfoundland as a Province is concerned, and as far as Newfoundland as a Province in Canada is concerned, and, I say to the hon. gentlemen, they should reconsider. In terms of democracy, what a farce!

The Premier was asked the question this evening, 'Are you going to allow any amendments to that?' He has the numbers in it. 'No. Struck a deal.' Struck a deal with the Constitution of Canada. Is he going to have any public hearings. No. None at all. So, as the member for Gander said, the only reason you are standing in this House is to get yourself on record as being opposed to this whole issue of Meech Lake, and why you are opposed to it.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the Premier that what he has done is join a group of Premiers and the Prime Minister who think that somehow you can take this country, like a piece of meat on the table in front of you, chop it up, cut it up in little bits and divvy it up; you take this piece because it has what you want in it, you take this piece because this is the kind of meat you want - that is rare, that is well done, that is medium rare. I say to the Premier of this Province, a country is not a piece of meat, it is something that is far more alive than that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:

You have already spoken to the main motion.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, I have spoken on the main motion.

MR. FUREY:

They said nobody over there was going to speak on the amendment.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Oh, I see.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, how come (inaudible) stood up?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) wish to vote unknown.

MR. RIDEOUT:

If members wish to vote on the amendment, I will take my seat.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to have two or three speeches from the Opposition without exercising our right and our responsibility to respond.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

It is difficult enough to listen to two or three of those speeches in a row, but it is more difficult if you are not permitted to get up and respond to them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all tell the hon. gentleman for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) that I have been

swamped, I have been deluged, I have been almost ridden out of town with requests from my constituents and from Newfoundland and Labrador to have public hearings on Meech Lake. I cannot keep up with the telephone calls or the letters. I just cannot keep ahead of it, with the great head of steam that is building out there in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, there are demonstrations in the streets of Round Harbour every night, that this government hold public hearings on Meech Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I will, in more detail, tell the House about those demonstrations that are taking place in the streets of Round Harbour tomorrow.

I therefore adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The debate has been adjourned by the hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, there are a few matters here I would like to deal with.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Not again, not again!

DR. COLLINS:

Table them! Table them!

MR. SIMMS:

The Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) is ready to tackle this debate tomorrow, see. So he wanted to give me thirty seconds so I could make a few

announcements.

One is tomorrow, we will continue with the debate on Meech Lake. Everybody knows that.

We will decide and announce tomorrow the government's business on Thursday and Friday. We are not quite certain. It depends on how Meech Lake goes tomorrow.

I would like to get the Leader of the Opposition's attention and the Leader of the NDP, if I could for a moment. I believe the hon. members are aware of Order 31 on the Order Paper, Bill 32 which is the Atlantic Accord Act Amendment that deals with a time problem. What would be required, I understand, would be some agreement to put that through first, second and third reading, the whole bit. We have already done first, I guess. If the Leader of the Opposition might be prepared to consider that, I would appreciate it so that we could perhaps do it on Thursday, if we could. It is a minor item, I think, not too serious.

MR. WELLS:

You could do it tomorrow, if you want.

MR. SIMMS:

We have already decided to do Meech Lake tomorrow, that is the only problem. So we will do it Thursday, I guess. We will try to tackle it. He has no problem. The Leader of the NDP has no problem, I guess, so we will do that Thursday before we get into whatever else we are going to get on to.

May I also announce for the information of members that an agreement has been reached by all three parties in the Legislature

that on Tuesday, June 7, this is so hon. members can make plans and all that kind of thing, and for the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island (Mr. Barry), who is within range, Tuesday, June 7, the House will not sit. The reason is it is in honour of the visit of His Royal Highness, Prince Edward, who will be here in front of Confederation Building, I think, somewhere around 4:30 for a welcome and so on.

In addition to that, the offices in Confederation Building will be closed on that particular day at 4:30 as well so that public servants and others who might wish to watch the welcome will be available to do that. So that is Tuesday, June 7, for the information of the press and anybody else who might be interested, we will not be sitting.

MR. SIMMS:

That is by agreement. I thank members from all parties.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

The Minister of Development and Tourism (Mr. Barrett) is expected to be here again tomorrow for any questions there may be.

Mr. Speaker, I move -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

DR. COLLINS:

Do we wear medals?

MR. SIMMS:

Full regalia.

I move that the House adjourn until tomorrow, Tuesday, May 17, at 3:00 p.m.

On motion the House at its rising
adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday,
May 17, at 3:00 p.m.

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