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***VERBATIM REPORT***  
***(Hansard)***

***Speaker: Honourable P.J. McNicholas***

Tuesday

17 May 1988

The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):  
Order, please!

Before calling for statements by ministers, I would like to welcome to the gallery thirty-two Grade VII students and their three teachers, Janice Hardy, Marvin Rider, and Eugene Stagg, from St. Peter's Junior High School, Catalina.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

### Statements by Ministers

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
Mr. Speaker, I want to amend my statement of yesterday. I made a little error, and I want to amend my ways. I said there was about 120 people working at the Sprung facility and that is incorrect. There are 200 people working at the Sprung facility.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
Two hundred Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. There was an allegation yesterday that somehow we were not producing good cucumbers, so I want to -

MR. SIMMS:  
Hear, hear! Uncrinkled.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

- present to the two Leaders and anybody else who would like to have one - I have three here right now - cucumbers, Mr. Speaker, that are not scrawny. That is what was said yesterday.

MR. SIMMS:  
Small, scrawny, crinkly cucumbers.

MR. MATTHEWS:  
And one for the man who made the accusation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:  
How do you like them cucumbers?

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

I think I should rule that out of order, if the Speaker is not given a cucumber as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:  
Since the Premier is correcting his statement about the number of employees, maybe he would care to correct a few other misconceptions he put forward at the same time.

We understand, from checking with Nova Scotia, that the price of the cucumbers being sold there is between fifty-five and seventy-five cents a pound. In fact, maybe the Premier should explain to us how, if the cucumbers -

MR. BAIRD:

Why do you not go to Nova Scotia and stay there?

MR. FENWICK:

- are to break even at \$1.09 a pound, he can possibly do it when he is selling them for around fifty or sixty cents a pound?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Mr. Speaker, I am announcing as per appendix one, the approval of 103 new projects under the private sector employment programme.

These projects involve a Provincial contribution of \$803,810 employing 227 employees, and a total of \$69,330 employing 48 students. These 103 projects, Mr. Speaker, are allocated to 51 different communities across the Province.

I wanted to make that particular comment about this approval, because in the last announcement made by the Premier there was a comment made by someone from the Opposition that it was sort of Avalon oriented. So we wanted to point out that of these approvals, 51 are in different communities of the Province.

This is the second announcement on the programme. To date, Mr. Speaker, 175 projects have been approved, for the creation of 430 new jobs, including 69 student positions. Of the \$7.5 million allocated for the private sector employment programme, \$1.39 million has been spent to date.

As can be seen from appendix one, these projects are on the average of 40 weeks duration. This is again an indication that we are committed to breaking away from the ten and twenty week cycle.

Applications are continuously being received and assessed by my department, and approved by government on a weekly basis. Once again, I would like to encourage employers of this Province to take advantage of this very worthwhile and this very successful programme.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, of course it is only fair to compliment the hon. minister for dividing 430 jobs. I have to say, though, that the minister must realize that there is something drastically wrong with our society, with our economy, when the only way a young person in this Province can get a job is for the government to come up with some sort of make work programme.

The hon. minister said it has gone from ten weeks to forty weeks. Well, big deal! There is still the fact that there are 20,000 young people in this Province who can only get work if the government makes work for those young people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is not something the hon. minister should be bragging about, that is

something the hon. minister should be moaning about, that his government has brought this economy to such a place that private enterprise is no longer doing what it should be doing, providing work and allowing government to administer other programmes.

The government is taking money and putting people to work, and they have no other choice but do that. I can only compliment the minister on doing that, but I ask the minister and his government, his colleagues in Cabinet, to consider what is happening to this society, to consider what is happening to this economy. Let them put all their abilities together and see if we can-

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

This is good! Start worrying.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DECKER:

See the problem, Mr. Speaker? They cannot recognize the problem. And until they recognize the problem, they will never solve it.

MR. BARRETT:

You do not know what you are doing.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DECKER:

I am making a good suggestion to the hon. minister.

MR. LUSH:

And a good speech.

MR. DECKER:

I am making the suggestion that surely they will realize that government does not have the

ability, nor is government required, to provide work for every young person, but it is their responsibility to make sure-

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member's time has elapsed.

MR. DECKER:

My time is up. May I have leave? If I have leave I can give a solution.

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is just a very brief comment in response to what is a brief statement, but one that is, nonetheless, welcome. I would say to the minister that I have had some very positive feedback in my own district from people who are -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LONG:

Do not take up my time now. I only have a few minutes.

- quite complimentary toward the staff and the officials who are working on this programme, and the pressure they are under to turn over applications quite quickly. I want to say to the minister that the staff are doing a good job.

I do want to point out that I think with this programme the training component of the

programme is very important, so that it is not simply a programme of first come first served get the jobs, but there are some larger objectives. I am concerned that of the figures given us today, from my calculation 16 or 17 per cent of the positions so far created are going to students. In light of the fact that this year the government has cut its own government funded job creation programme from the different departments for the Summertime as students continue to come out of school, high school students and university students who are looking for work, it is really critical that in the coming weeks the programme address the very serious problems students have, the particular needs students have in finding work.

Other than that, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to seeing the programme developed, and perhaps by the end of it, if all the money is not used up in the private sector, we can put some more money into public sector programmes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WINDSOR:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WINDSOR:  
Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but observe that it is amazing how the Liberals find it possible to criticize the creation of so many jobs, but we intend to give them lots to criticize.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a joint statement on behalf of my colleague, the hon. the President of Treasury Board, the hard-working minister.

On behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, I take great pleasure in announcing the approval of a pension plan for part-time employees of government as well as its Crown agencies, boards and commissions. This plan may also be offered to certain full-time employees of public service organizations which are not necessarily operated by government, but which rely substantially on provincial funding. This plan will affect approximately 5,000 part-time employees, the majority of whom are employed in the provincial health care system and the Province's school boards. They will receive the benefits of a pension programme which have not been available before.

Mr. Speaker, the provision of a pension plan for employees who work less than full-time is a significant employment equity initiative.

Access to a pension plan is an important consideration for employees for whom working less than full-time or job sharing is the best employment option. Both the Task Force on Employment Equity for women and the Task Force on Employment Equity for people with disabilities recognized this in their reports. We are very pleased to demonstrate further government's commitment to employment equity through this announcement today.

The pension plan for part-time employees will be separate and distinct from the pension plan offered full-time public employees and will adopt a money purchase format. In other words, employee contributions together with matched amounts from government or other participating employers will

be invested in a separate pension fund until retirement, at which time a retiring annuity is purchased. This is similar in concept to a Registered Retirement Savings Plan and is the type of plan most commonly used by employers in the private sector.

We have been assured by our pension advisors that this type of plan is the most appropriate for employees who have limited amounts of pensionable service due to the nature of their employment, and will provide benefits reasonably comparable to those benefits offered full-time employees. Further, in order to facilitate those employees who may move between full-time and part-time employment status, provision will be made to transfer their pension credits.

This plan will be offered to all eligible employers and it is anticipated it will become operational later this year after we have consulted with all of the parties involved and finalized administrative details. Very shortly, government will be releasing all the necessary information and plan details to the eligible employers and their employees, as well as to the relevant employee organizations. Later in this session, I will be asking leave of this hon. House to introduce the appropriate legislation.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, may I say that the introduction of this plan demonstrates the Peckford Administration's continued concern for its employees and its commitment to the implementation of employment equity within the public service of our Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I have to say on behalf of the official Opposition, it is about time the minister started considering this kind of a pension plan. They have been pushing for it for years. The people who pushed especially hard, and who have written us innumerable letters, are the nurses of the Province, and they feel that it has been for some years their right to be able to participate in such a plan. So it is about time. We welcome it and we are happy to see that the government is taking this step.

There are some problems with it that maybe the minister can straighten out. I understand that the administrative details have not been finalized yet. First of all, in the health care system I am assuming that the employer's contribution is going to come from new money that the government is putting in and is not to be squeezed from an already squeezed health care system.

The plan will be offered to all eligible employers. Do they have to participate? How many of them are going to participate? And if there is a money problem, like in the health care system, then perhaps we have to provide the extra money to make sure that these people participate. There is nothing definitive about that yet.

'After we have consulted with all of the parties involved.' I am surprised that there has not yet been consultation with the parties involved. You would think the minister would have consulted with the parties before he made the announcement. The administrative details: In addition to not consulting with the parties, the administrative details have not yet been finalized. All too often this government have brought in programmes without having the administrative details finalized and have run into all kinds of snarls and problems that have made the programmes impossible to properly administrate.

So, I would suggest that these details should have been done previously.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

MR. BAKER:  
Mr. Speaker, legislation will come before the House. We are looking forward to seeing the legislation to see exactly what this is all about.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:  
Mr. Speaker, since we have been making representations for a pension plan for part-time government employees, it is going to look something like harping now to point out some tremendous deficiencies with the proposal that is being put forward here today.

One of the things we should realize is that the vast majority of these part-time employees are women. If one looks at the employment statistics, one realizes that of the 19,000 part-time people in the labour force in 1986, a full 14,000 were women and only 5,000 were men. So it is them we are addressing this to.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have a public service pension plan, a teachers' pension plan, ours and the uniform one, which are guaranteed benefits by statute, guaranteed by statute that if you work that many years you will get it. Now we are creating what I would call a second-class plan for the part-timers, in which the behaviour of the fund will determine the amount of money available and then some sort of an annuity will be bought at the end of it.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what we are pushing for. We are pushing for inclusion of part-time employees in the public service pension plan so they will get the statutory benefits on a pro rata basis and be guaranteed it by law, not by the chance of the market or how good the money managers happen to be at any one time.

On that basis, Mr. Speaker, we are quite disappointed to see that there is a less highly qualified plan being produced for them.

The other thing that is a good question about this is what will happen when full-time employees become part-time employees?

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

Before calling for Oral Questions,

there was a point of order raised by the hon. the member for Menihek yesterday. He quoted Beauchesne, "Questions should not anticipate a debate scheduled for the day, but should be reserved for the debate."

I think the hon. member was quite in order as far as that is concerned. The only point I would like to make is even though it had been announced beforehand that this particular item would be debated, there was no absolute assurance that it would. As to the question of amendments that he brought up, this is for the hon. House to decide at the appropriate time, and I will see them and we will decide whether they are in order.

### Oral Questions

MR. DECKER:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DECKER:  
My question is for the hon. Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth (Mr. Butt).

The minister will know that strychnine is being used to poison animals in the Roddickton area. It is being used on a scale never before used in Canada. It appears that the intent is to destroy all the wild animals in the area, the foxes, minks, bear, beaver, you name it.

MR. BAIRD:  
I think a fox bit you.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

MR. DECKER:  
Mr. Speaker, it never ceases to amaze me how frivolous they are with this very serious matter. It is not a joking matter in Roddickton, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister guarantee the people of the area that this poison is being used in a perfectly safe manner and that there is no danger that this poison will end up killing fish, pets and maybe even harming humans?

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation, and Youth.

MR. BUTT:  
Mr. Speaker, I have every confidence in the people who are involved in the programme on the Northern Peninsula to eradicate the rabid fox situation there. We have, in fact, heading up a team of experts in the Wildlife Division of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Youth, a Doctor Johnson, who is a world renowned expert in this field. So, Mr. Speaker, to answer the hon. gentleman's question, the answer is yes, an absolute yes.

MR. DECKER:  
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
A supplementary, the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:  
I am wondering would the minister be so confident when I tell him that a constituent told me, as late as last night, that he saw the poison on a river bank last week which this week is under water as a result of the spring run-off? Now is the minister advised that it is perfectly safe



to have strychnine placed on river banks? Can he guarantee no harm to the fish or to the salmon?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member has some absolute proof or evidence that somebody is doing something that is not in accordance with all regular rules and regulations, then I suggest that he bring them forward to me and I will certainly investigate it. I do not have the time or the liberty to go to every single location in Roddickton where this exercise is underway to eradicate a very, very serious problem, as the member so rightly pointed out, one that we are putting a lot of money into to eradicate and prevent this terrible disease from spreading with fox on the Northern Peninsula. Because if in fact it spread to the rest of the Island, then we would be in a similar position to the Labrador portion of the Province, and Ontario and so on, where we would be getting into some kind of a protective programme and maintenance programme every year that would cost millions of dollars.

So we are using every method at our disposal to eradicate the rabid fox. We are doing it under controlled conditions with the best expertise available in this country, bar none.

If the hon. member finds anything wrong, has proof that there is something wrong going on, then I suggest he should do the responsible thing and bring it to my attention, at which time it will be taken care off forthwith.

MR. DECKER:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. DECKER:

The last report said only three foxes tested positive for rabies. I ask the minister, is this rabies outbreak as bad as the minister previously feared? Did he not panic? Is it really necessary to kill?

MR. BAIRD:

What a warped mind!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

You were the one wanted to stop boats coming across the Gulf.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DECKER:

Is it really necessary to kill every wild animal in the Roddickton area? Did the minister consider any other solution instead of the final solution?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker, I did give the hon. member more credit than to ask that kind of a stupid, absolutely stupid question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BUTT:

What question would you ask me today if we took no action when we had a rabid fox on the Northern Peninsula? I suggest the hon. member would be up whistling

another tune. At great cost to the taxpayers of this Province, Mr. Speaker, this minister and the department that I represent recognized the potential disaster. If you do not have a sensible question to ask, I suggest the hon. member remain in his seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

I have another question to the same alarmist minister, because obviously he has become quite alarmed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. BAKER:

The minister's approach to solve the problem is to wipe out all of the animals in a given area, the scorched earth policy. The member for the Strait of Belle Isle has not offered any specifics, so I will give him a couple of specifics. Does the minister not realize that foxes will eat good meat more readily than poisoned meat? Has the minister considered, instead of this Rambo-style approach, using cages? It is not funny! Hundreds of animals are being shot, many of them for no reason. Has he considered using cages, using good meat, trapping the animals and holding them for a period of time?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Thurlow has arisen again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BUTT:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have indeed, that and more. In fact, we are doing that. We are to a degree, indirectly, employing people on the Northern Peninsula to go out and hunt and trap rabid foxes in particular, and other animals to see if in fact this disease is spreading. To date I can say, you know, with some confidence, that we have only had three cases that tested positive. Well, that is marvelous, is it not? I mean, it would be better if it were one. If we do not have another case reported with the eighty-odd carcasses we are now sending up, if those tests come back negative, then in six months time we can say, based on some scientific data, that we have accomplished what we have set out to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Has the minister considered, instead of using bullets to shoot these foxes and whatever other animals that they are shooting, using tranquilizing darts and, again, holding and testing the animals while they are still alive, instead of wiping them all out?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Get your shots!

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Culture,  
Recreation and Youth.

MR. BUTT:  
Mr. Speaker, we looked at all methods to approach this very serious problem in a comprehensive way. I have confidence in the staff I have doing this, heading up this programme for me, along with the best expertise we have in this country. Now, I suggest to the hon. member who was the expert on fenitrothion, and he got an awful bath in that, that he is probably going out on a limb now. Because of his friend from the Northern Peninsula, he is going to continue to ask stupid questions as the hon. member for the Strait of Belle Isle has done.

MR. SIMMS:  
You stay in your seat, too!

MR. BUTT:  
Sit down! You are making a fool of yourself.

MR. SPEAKER:  
A final supplementary.

MR. BAKER:  
Mr. Speaker, it is very nice, instead of answering the question, to attack the questioner, which is the only thing that this minister knows how to do properly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:  
Are we to understand from what the minister says, that you are collecting the foxes that are being poisoned by strychnine and the foxes, rabbits, bears, lynx and so on and sending them away for testing? Does he know where

to go to find them?

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Minister of Culture,  
Recreation and Youth.

MR. BUTT:  
I can tell hon. members in the House that we have not had one rabbit to date.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
I got them all snared.

MR. BAKER:  
What about bears? What about lynx?

MR. WOODFORD:  
What about Liberals?

MR. BUTT:  
No.

The hon. member made a statement about the rabbits and foxes and bear and so on. We have not had any rabbit, bear, or lynx to date. So, Mr. Speaker, we are using the best approved methods that we have at our disposal to eradicate this problem on the Northern Peninsula, and, going along the path that we are going now, Mr. Speaker, there is a high degree of success. While in the beginning I told hon. members in the House, just a couple of months ago, that in fact there was the possibility that we might not be successful, but I can say today, with more surety and more confidence, that in fact we are on the right track and could wipe out this dreadful disease.

We could wipe out this dreadful disease and it will cost the taxpayers in this Province approximately \$500,000. To me, Mr. Speaker, it makes good sense from a biological point of view and from an economic point of view that we should put all resources,

both financial and human at our disposal, into this programme to eradicate the rabid fox on the Northern Peninsula.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

I ask hon. ministers if they would please keep their answers short, as the questions should also be.

MR. LONG:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LONG:  
Mr. Speaker, I would like to change topics from rabid foxes and see if we can deal in a more serious fashion with another very important issue. I would like to put a question to the Premier concerning negotiations with the federal government, as he is the person most responsible for putting forward this government's position, with respect to day care. I would like to ask could the Premier give the House an update on the status of negotiations between this Province and what this Province is expecting to receive from the federal government in the way of a cost-sharing formula so that the government may be able to get on with taking some of the initiatives which many people in the Province have been waiting for for some time?

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
As I understand it, the Province, through the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Tobin) and the Minister of Intergovernmental

Affairs (Mr. Dawe), is now in negotiations with the federal government on the day care programme. I sure the Minister of Social Services can give the hon. member more information on it if he so desires, but we are now into negotiations with the federal government as a result of their announcement on day care that was approved by Cabinet two or three weeks ago. We have gone through the whole programme, have gone back to the federal government, and are into negotiations now with the relevant ministries in Ottawa.

MR. LONG:  
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
A supplementary, the hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:  
I would like to put my supplementary again to the Premier. We had some discussion in the Social Services Estimates Committee about the negotiations. I would like to ask the Premier, on the long-awaited legislation from this government to deal with children under the age of two, and the lack of day care licensing and regulations in this Province and other initiatives, such as the need for family day care, is the Province waiting to take initiatives in these areas until it resolves negotiations with the federal government so that it can see what kind of a pool of funds it has to deal with?

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
You can answer that question, Glenn.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the question put forth by the member for St. John's East, the issues that he raised have been addressed in the strategy programme as put forth by the federal government, one which could have some quite significant benefits for the day care programmes in this Province. As it relates to what he put forward they are hopefully going to be addressed. It is the intention of the federal government to try and conclude the negotiations and have the legislation introduced into the House of Commons by June, which is only a few weeks away, Mr. Speaker. I think that looks after the urgency of the question of the hon. gentleman.

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services, by way of a final supplementary, if the people of the Province, and certainly many of the working mothers who are still having to wait for any initiative from this government to indicate its commitment to day care, can expect, before the House closes this session, that this minister and this government will bring in new legislation with reference to some of the areas that I have mentioned in earlier questions?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I think it is this government that has led the way in day care in this Province. Which administration and which government was it that introduced the day-care programme? Which government was it, prior to this administration, spent millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to a day-care programme in this Province? Which government was it that just opened up one of the most modern day-care centers in this Province in the Confederation Building in less than a year? It was this administration that has done it, Mr. Speaker. We have moved forward in all social programmes, and, indeed, in all programmes of the government, and we will continue at the same pace as we have in the past. That should augur well, Mr. Speaker, for day-care programmes and everything else in this Province.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

My question goes to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout). I believe it was the end of January last year, some eighteen months ago now, the minister, in conjunction with his federal counterpart, commissioned a study by the Link Group into the fish processing plant licensing procedures and policies. Mr. Speaker; at the time I believe the minister promised that that report would be available by June of last year, approximately twelve months ago.

Can the minister tell the House if

he has received even a preliminary copy of that report, and, if so, why was it not released, or does he intend to release it?

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

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Mr. Speaker, we certainly do intend to release the final report once it is made available to us. Let me tell the hon. gentleman and the House that we received the preliminary report much later than had been indicated from the consultants. The department and various Cabinet Committees, and Cabinet, as a whole, have dealt with the preliminary report and have sent it back to the consultants, to the Link Group, for finalization and for presentation of the final report to us. We expect to have that in our hands almost any day.

MR. W. CARTER:  
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. W. CARTER:  
Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister can tell us when he received the report, and was it sent back to the consulting group requesting that certain revisions be made in it?

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure, so I will have to check when we received it. That is a factual matter that I just do not have on

the top of my head. But I did indicate to the hon. gentleman that we had received a preliminary report --

MR. W. CARTER:  
This year or last year?

MR. RIDEOUT:  
It was in the latter part of 1987.

-- that the department had dealt with it, that government, through the various Committees of Cabinet and the whole Cabinet had dealt with it, and we resubmitted the draft report, the preliminary report, to the consultant with government's observations and have asked them now to proceed to finalize their final document and present it to the department.

MR. W. CARTER:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. W. CARTER:  
A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the minister is vague. He says he received the report sometime in 1987. Well, this is 1988, six months have elapsed. I wonder can the minister tell the House, then, Mr. Speaker, to what extent will the findings of that study impact on his recently announced restructuring, a restructuring, of course, which included the processing sector? Will not the findings of that Link report, having to do with licencing procedures and policies, have something to do with the restructuring programme in general, for example, as it applies to the processing sector?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries,

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I will check the date when government received the report, but I do know it was the latter part of 1987. It was not last January or February or anything of that nature, it would have been sometime the early part of last Fall.

But, as to the other part of the hon. gentleman's question, there is absolutely no connection whatsoever in terms of the announced debt restructuring of the inshore fishermen. There is no connection to the processing sector.

MR. W. CARTER:

I was talking about the \$60 million federal/provincial Inshore Fisheries Agreement.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Oh, the Inshore Fisheries Agreement. That is a different matter, Mr. Speaker, a different matter altogether. That is a different quintal of fish, Mr. Speaker. There are programmes in the Inshore Fisheries Agreement that are applicable to the processing sector. And all the Link study is doing is looking at the licencing procedures and policies and requirements of the inshore processing sector. So I cannot see any connection, any impact, immediate, short-term or long-term, vis-à-vis the the Inshore Fisheries Agreement, and whatever might come out of the Link study, Mr. Speaker. None at all, as far as I can see.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Brett). Last year, 1987, on April 15, the then Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Brett) released the department's Capital Works Programme for that year. He did this by beating himself on the chest and slapping himself on the back, by saying that this was the earliest time ever that these Capital Works Projects had been announced. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is May 17, a month later.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member is making a speech. I would ask him to direct his question.

MR. LUSH:

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is: I wonder can the minister indicate, by rapping himself on the knuckles, why this delay this year?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, we will be announcing the Capital Works Projects very soon.

MR. LUSH:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. LUSH:

It is a month later, May 17. Will the minister admit that this

requirement, of asking councils to submit a five-year plan, is becoming a charade and a boondoggle when they do not know what monies they are going to get in 1988, to say nothing of 1989, 1990, 1991, and so on? Will the minister not admit that his requirement of requiring council to put in a five-year plan is becoming a bit of charade?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BRETT:

No, Mr. Speaker, it is not. Obviously if we are to know where we are going over the next four or five years, then we want to know what the expectations of the various councils are across the Province. That is why we have asked for the five-year plans. I am pleased to tell the hon. member that I think all of the councils across the Province requesting capital works money or at least most of them anyway, have submitted their five-year plans, and they have been a great help to us.

For example, we knew this year that councils were looking for approximately \$160 million. Had we not had the five-year plans we would not have been able to put a figure on it. So it does help the department to plan. I do not think we can do without it, really.

MR. LUSH:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister can indicate a little

more precisely when councils can expect announcement of the capital works projects. Will he inform the House as to which way he plans to make this announcement? Will he do this House the courtesy of releasing the details of the capital works projects in this Chamber?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, the capital works projects will be announced in due course and will be tabled in the House.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Health (Dr. Collins) and it again concerns bed closures at the hospitals.

I would like to table this memorandum, which doctors from the hospital sent out last year concerning the closure of thirty-seven beds, stating they would only be able to perform emergency operations. I ask the minister, in light of that memorandum sent out last year, to explain to this House, since there are going to be sixty-five beds closed at St. Clare's, seventy-two at the Grace General and 81 at the Health Sciences Complex, how are they going to do even emergency operations this year? In fact, has he not been misleading this House with the information that he



has been putting forth in the past two weeks?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member, if he gets up on a supplementary, will withdraw the word 'misleading', because it is unparliamentary.

But he quoted there a figure for the Health Sciences Complex of 81 beds. I do not know where he got that figure. That is a new figure to me. The other figures he mentioned for the other two hospitals, if my memory serves me correctly those were the same figures, the same number of beds that were closed last year. So there is no increase there.

I have already answered that question. We have information from the Health Sciences Complex that at the present time approximately 55 percent of their admissions are emergencies. So that means that 45 percent are not emergencies, and that is the latest figure I have.

MR. EFFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister is again not correct with his figures. Last year there were forty-one beds closed at St. Clare's and sixty-five this year. At the Health Sciences Complex there were thirty-seven beds closed last year, and a total of fifty-five -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is in Gander there are fifty-six beds closed out of 156. Would the minister explain how the Gander hospital is going to operate, even in emergency situations, when the operating rooms are closed in Grand Falls altogether, and fifty-six beds are being closed at the Gander hospital, and more to go?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, trying to keep up with the hon. member is like chasing a will-o'-the-wisp. He keeps trotting out figures and making statements. I take his statements, I investigate them, I find there is nothing to them and I have to respond in this House. The hon. member is a bit of an alarmist and I think it is unfortunate because it is an area that people naturally have a concern about. When he comes out with these alarmist statements he does not do anyone any good, himself or the people of this Province. As a matter of fact, the hon. member has lost a considerable amount of credibility with many people I know of because he comes out with these bald, alarmist statements. I do have to reiterate that we are in touch with the hospitals on a daily basis and they are not coming out with these reports to us that the hon. member is trying to put about. They are not closing all their operating rooms; they are not having difficulty dealing with emergency cases. They are closing a certain number of beds, 14 point - something per cent this year,

whereas 13 per cent were closed last year, a small increase but not a significant increase. The hospitals have only recently been informed about their budget allocations for this year, just very recently, because the House just passed the budget very recently. Graduations are going to occur in June, very shortly, as they do every year, so there will be more graduate nurses available to hospitals. Some of the hospitals have told us that it is not so much a money problem with them. Money is always a problem. Money is a problem for the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, a particular money problem with him. It is a problem with me. Money is a problem with the hon. the Minister of Finance. Money is a problem with everyone, so hospitals have money problems too. Some of the hospitals have told us that the big issue with them is not money problems but the availability of graduate nurses, and there will be some improvement in that in June as the graduations occur.

MR. EFFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. EFFORD:

Let me say to the Minister of Health that I have spoken to each one of the administrators in those hospitals as late as 12 o'clock today, and these are correct figures. I would like to ask the minister would explain, give us the figures, based on yesterday's percentages that 55 per cent of emergency cases were being done at this time of the year, would he give us an estimated percentage of what will be done over the Summer months with all the bed closures

that are going to be done in the hospitals?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is asking me to predict the future and I am afraid I cannot do that. Emergencies are by their very nature emergencies. I cannot tell the hon. member how many emergencies are going to occur in June at the Health Sciences Complex. I just cannot do it. I could buy a crystal ball, I suppose, and see if I could get anything out of that. I just cannot do it. All I can say is that the hospitals have told us that they are responding to the pressures that they are faced with. They are responding with some difficulty, partly because of the non-availability of graduate nurses, which hopefully will improve next year, partly because, like everyone else, they have to try to find cost containments. I would remind the hon. member that we had a Royal Commission in this Province which carried out extensive investigations, undertook extensive hearings and they came up with the statement that has been echoed in many other provinces, that the health care system has a problem within itself in terms of how it allocates its funding. It is not so much the total amount of funding that is the problem, but how the health care system itself allocates that funding. As hon. members know the health care system is very largely a self-regulating system.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, on May 3, the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth (Mr. Butt) announced that Provincial Parks will have concessions operating in them this year. Obviously, there are certain questions and certain problems that will arise. I ask the minister would he would consider the private stores in nearby communities, some ten to twenty miles away, selling groceries and other supplies now, and ensure that there will be no concessions interfering with these private stores that are now existing in nearby communities? Certain kinds of items will not be found in concessions in the park.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker, I indicated when I announced this programme to the House that we would receive a wide range of proposals. We live in a competitive world and the market is wide open. I can tell hon. members now, while I am on my feet, that there is a tremendous amount of enthusiasm towards this programme. We are receiving a lot of good proposals and a lot of inquiries. I may have to come back and try to extend it for a week, but, certainly, I do not think we will be doing any grave injustice to anyone who has got a store fifteen or twenty miles away from a park. Because, in fact, the private sector involvement in Provincial Parks for concessions is certainly going to deal with a lot more things. I hope, Newfoundland businesspeople, men and women, got a lot more on their

minds and are more imaginative and innovative than just dealing in groceries.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

This must be a final supplementary.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, the minister indicated in the media yesterday that he had received, I think, seven or eight proposals. Will these proposals be made public, I ask the minister? And have there been any case where two proposals have been received for the same park? Have there two proposals, say, accepted for the same park in any of those that the minister has received? He says that he is receiving numerous proposals.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. BUTT:

First of all, Mr. Speaker, proposals received and approved, of course, will become public knowledge. But if there is a private businessman or businesswoman out there who is putting in a proposal, I certainly do not intend to make that public. If it is not approved, then it is just a transaction between officials in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Youth, Finance and Development, and whatever individual comes in and deals with them. I certainly would not want to lay that kind of information on the table; there is no need of it. If they are not successful they are not going to be doing business with us.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

During Question Period I did not want to interfere with the time, but the hon. the member for Port de Grave mentioned about the hon. the Minister of Health misleading the House. Now, if we look at Beauchesne, in one section it is accepted as a term that one can use, and in another part, just two or three pages later, it is not accepted.

I do not think it is the most desirable term in the world, but I cannot rule that it is unparliamentary.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, if that word is unparliamentary I have no problem with withdrawing it, but what I did was ask the question, 'Is he not misleading the House with those figures?'

AN HON. MEMBER:

You cannot say indirectly what you cannot say directly.

MR. EFFORD:

I certainly withdraw that remark, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

### Petitions

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, my petition is from 484 residents of my district of Menihek, plus my own signature on it, as you would.

Mr. Speaker, the petition concerns double daylight savings time and a particular problem that has occurred in my district which we have written the minister and informed him about, but the individuals wish to present the details of the problem in much more detail to the minister and to the House itself. It concerns the problem that the Labrador mall in Labrador City has with its particular employees and the fact that under the double daylight savings time regime they are actually losing more of their evening leisure hours than they are gaining.

Let me explain that, Mr. Speaker. Just South of Labrador City is a town in Quebec called Fermont. Fermont is on Eastern Standard Time, not on Atlantic time. At the best of times, we are an hour ahead of them. Under the double daylight savings time position, we are now two hours ahead of them. Mr. Speaker, as a result, the Labrador City mall, which does a lot of business with residents from Fermont, who come to the area to shop, has modified its hours on Thursday and Friday evenings and instead of closing at nine o'clock, which has been its norm for the last number of years, it is now closing at ten o'clock.

In other words, instead of getting additional time in the evenings to spend with their families, as was the original intention of double daylight savings time, we are actually getting less time for these individuals to spend with their families and they are quite upset about it.

There are close to 500 signatures on the petition, which is an incredibly large number considering that that would

probably include virtually all the staff of the Labrador mall and probably a considerable number of the people of Labrador City and Wabush.

One of the reasons I would like to have the minister responsible for this programme speak to the petition is the unresolved question, at this point, of how the whole concept of double daylight savings time will be evaluated so that we will not continue on with has proven to be a somewhat less than desirable innovation this year.

The minister has indicated that he will do an evaluation. I wrote him asking for that. He wrote back saying that Cabinet has not agreed on it. This petition, I would suggest to him, is one method of registering a complaint about it. By the way, the 484 signatures is, in my estimate, something like ten times as many letters as he received in favour of it, so I hope that that will rebalance it at this point.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the minister to tell us what the procedure is going to be, who he is going to listen to, how the Cabinet will evaluate this procedure. Because although the intentions, I think, were probably noble on the government's part, it is turning out that we are much more integrated with the rest of Canada than we ever thought possible. Even sports fans, who are looking forward to additional daylight activities to indulge in hockey and baseball and softball and other sports during the Spring and Summer, are finding that they are compensating for it because they cannot keep up with televised sports in the way of baseball, and especially hockey. As everybody

knows, the Stanley Cup Playoffs are starting tomorrow night and I believe it is quarter past twelve in the morning when the game is televised from Edmonton.

So, Mr. Speaker, I table this petition for the minister and ask him to get up in his place and address these very real concerns and give us some indication of how we are going to deal with what may have been a noble experiment but, under the circumstances, has not worked well at all.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to support the petition presented by the member for Menihek. I can confirm for the House that the people in Labrador West, generally, are most upset at the imposition this proposal has forced on their lives. It has upset people throughout this Province, from one end of the Island to the other, particularly the people the hon. member was just speaking about who work in the malls in Labrador City and Wabush. They are affected in that way. If you can imagine dealing with your neighbours nextdoor with a two hour time differential, everything is out of whack. And that is what is happening in Labrador West.

But it is not only Labrador West. The coastal part of Labrador has the same problems with it. It has upset everything there as well. The minister went off on a tangent with this proposal to bring in double daylight savings time, and it is difficult to understand how he could do it with the support, apparently, of thirty-two representations that may have

involved 150 or 170 people. That is a small fraction of 1 per cent of the population of this Province. Clearly people are not in favour of this proposal and the minister ought to have admitted it and ought not to have proceeded. Now comes the difficult part, Mr. Speaker, undoing it.

And those petitioners who signed that petition have a serious problem, as do many people throughout this Province have a serious problem. And we would like the minister's indication now, Mr. Speaker, that they will not proceed with such a foolish move again in the event that they do not have an election between now and next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. BUTT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In responding to the petition let me say that I respect the views of people who signed the petition and who oppose double daylight savings time. In fact, I am on public record as saying that one of the legitimate concerns I have recognized, in particular, has been in the Labrador West area of the Province because of their affiliation and integration with the neighbouring community of Fermont in the Province of Quebec. I recognize that.

And the other area of concern that is sort of being focused in on and

has gotten a lot of attention is in the area of television programming and so on, that, for the most part in the Province, has its origin in and out of Toronto.

I could, just by way of responding to the petition, Mr. Speaker, and for the benefit of the hon. gentleman who presented it, say that, in fact, the people who are opposed to double daylight savings time appear to be vehemently opposed to it, while those who support it support it not to the degree of those who oppose it. And, of course, there are a lot of people, there in the middle, who have not expressed any opinion one way or the other.

In the beginning, when this double daylight savings time was implemented, the people who came forward first were those who opposed it, and not only in writing letters to me, but copied them to the papers and so on to get visibility and everything else.

But now I am finding, particularly as we get into a little warmer weather, that there are a lot of people, an awful lot of people who are very much in favour of this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell all hon. members, because I have really maintained a very neutral position on this and I have no axe to grind with anyone on it, that this experiment will be carefully assessed as we go down the road and the views of all of our constituents out there in Newfoundland and Labrador will be taken into consideration. And after a very careful and unbiased decision, then we will address the problem of the time zone here in the Province and whether we will continue to use double daylight savings time or revert to the

traditional time zone.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just simply want to say that I respect the opinions of those people who oppose it, and I will be elaborating further on this topic of double daylight savings time as we move further into this experimental stage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Orders of the Day

MR. SIMMS:

Motion 5. The Meech Lake debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Meech Lake debate - the debate was adjourned by the hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon, with just a couple of minutes remaining before adjournment, I rose to have a few words to say on the amendment to the resolution as proposed by the hon. gentleman for St. Barbe.

I will say, now, Mr. Speaker, that I only intend to have a few words to say on the amendment. I had spoken earlier on the main motion itself, and the substantive remarks I wanted to make regarding the Meech Lake Accord I made during that time.

We have indicated that we do not intend to entertain amendments to the Meech Lake resolution that is now before the House. That is no secret. That is not new news. We do not intend as a government to support the amendment. We do not intend to do that, Mr. Speaker, for a very simple, up-front reason. If Meech Lake survives, I suppose is the first premise that

one has to address, and we do not have control over that, we only have one-eleventh of that control here in this Legislature, but if it survives and if there are to be amendments to the Accord, the Accord, obviously, will have to be amended in the same way that it was arrived at; it will have to be amended in the same way that it was conceived; it will have to be amended by the First Ministers representing all of the governments, the national government and the ten provincial governments. That is the way that Meech Lake was conceived, and that is the way that Meech Lake will have to be amended, if there are amendments.

It is not within the sole prerogative of this legislature, or the legislature of New Brunswick, or the legislature of British Columbia, or the legislature of Canada, unilaterally. It is not within any of our legislative competence to unilaterally amend, it is not, Mr. Speaker, because all the rest would have to agree with it for this to become a reality.

So we have an Accord, we have an agreement that is presently surviving. It might be precarious in some parts of the country, but it is presently surviving and we as a government put our signature, our word, our credibility on that document knowing full well what we were agreeing to.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

There is a lot in the Meech Lake Agreement that we think, Mr. Speaker, will be beneficial not only for Newfoundland and Labrador but beneficial for Canada. It is

a step along the road of nation building, Mr. Speaker. It is not the only step, it will not be the last step, but it is a step and, in the opinion of those of us who support the government in this House, we think it is a step in the right direction.

There may be others in the House, there may be others in the Province who do not agree with us. That is their right. That is their prerogative. But in our opinion, as supporters of the government, we believe that it is a step closer to the kind of Canada that we would like to see. We think it is an improvement on the Constitution Act of 1982 or 1983, whenever it is. We are not saying that there cannot be other improvements. We are not saying that at the end of a ten or a twelve or a fifteen or a twenty or a twenty-five year process there will not, in fact, be other significant improvements to the constitution. We are not saying that the constitution has to be written in stone forever and a day and not changed. We are not saying that. What we are saying is that we have moved a little bit along the road and in the direction that we as a government can support. Assuming all the other jurisdictions were to approve this Accord, we, as a government, are not going to approve any silly, foolish amendments in this legislature that would be detrimental to and therefore make sure that the Accord was never implemented at all. We are just not going to do it, Mr. Speaker. And we are not going to support the amendment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is basically on the amendment that I wanted to say a few words today. I was really enthralled yesterday to

hear the hon. gentleman from Fogo talk about the great nation builders, and he talked about Trudeau, Lalonde, and Marchand. Now, Mr. Speaker, these are the nation busters. They are not nation builders.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

I mean, do you call a group of political leaders who inflicted on this country the National Energy Programme Nation Builders? The Foreign Investment Review Agency, Nation Builders? The offshore dispute that raged here in Atlantic Canada, and in Newfoundland and Labrador in particular, all during the life of that government, and the lack of national reconciliation, Mr. Speaker, that existed in this country in 1984, are these the trademarks of Nation Builders? These are the trademarks of Nation Busters, Mr. Speaker, and they had just about busted this country before the people of the country saw fit to bust them.

And then the hon. gentleman says, 'Thank God for Mrs. Carstairs'. Thank God for her, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, when the hon. gentlemen singled out the people I just mentioned as the Nation Builders, and say thank God for a Mrs. Carstairs, they have to, obviously then, be saying, Well, down with Turner. He is for this. They have to be saying down with Peterson, down with Bourassa, down with Ghiz. You cannot talk out of both sides of your mouth, Mr. Speaker. That is the problem



with the Opposition. They will get up and talk about the great Nation Builders, Trudeau and Marchand, and they will give thanks to the Creator for Mrs. Carstairs, and then the Leader of the Opposition will be out on the public airwaves saying, But we have to support the Leadership of Mr. Turner.

Mr. Turner, Mr. Speaker, is for this.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He is not.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, he is on record as having voted for the Meech Lake Accord, is he not? Mr. Speaker, I suspect that one of the political problems facing Mr. Turner today is the very fact that the Liberal Party across Canada, like the Liberal Party here, is so divisive on issues like Meech Lake and Free Trade; more than a majority of them want it, but then you have the little factions, like here in Newfoundland, who do not want it.

Mr. Speaker, I was interested to see in the **Globe and Mail** yesterday, in the **Quotable Quote** section, this particular quote. This is a quote from John Turner. He says, "I see a headline that says that John Turner wins the country. His caucus demands a recount." That is the problem.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He said that here.

MR. RIDEOUT:

He said that here, did he? They did not say where he said it, but it is there in the **Quotable Quotes**.

MR. SIMMS:

Leo said the same thing.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I am sure there are other gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, who know about that. So you cannot have it both ways.

Again, the hon. member for Fogo, in his remarks yesterday in talking about the fishery and trying to dodge the very unfortunate situation they have created for themselves over the last several weeks, in particular, referred to an amendment to a resolution they brought in in this House last year, and he indicated that the Opposition had proposed an amendment saying that the appropriate - how was it they put it? - amount of legislative authority should accrue to the Province. He read it into the record yesterday, saying, 'That the appropriate amount of legislative authority should accrue to the Province.' This is in Hansard from yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition, even though he was in the gallery last year when this particular amendment was put down, by implication, I suppose, the message the gentleman from Fogo was trying to get across was that the then Leader of the Liberal Party and now Leader of the Opposition wanted to convey to the press, to the public, and to us that this was his amendment, that he wrote it, that this was his creation, 'that the appropriate amount of legislative authority come to the Province through constitutional change.'

Well, Mr. Speaker, this year it is totally different. This year it has changed again. This year, the official position of the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal Party is that we have more than

enough legislative jurisdiction over the fishery now. We have more than we can handle now. Why do you want more now? Do not be so foolish, you cannot handle what you have! So you cannot, Mr. Speaker, square those two arguments.

I have noticed, Mr. Speaker, over the last several days and weeks in this House, that the Opposition have become very uncomfortable. They have become very, very uncomfortable. If you get up and you debate a fisheries jurisdictional issue, they immediately have to get up and try to put back on the record a position they say is their position, yet it is so flimsy, it is so cloudy, it is so muddy, Mr. Speaker, you would not be able to identify it as anybody's position. That is what is happening to the official Opposition in this House on a number of major issues over the last several months.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Flip-flopping,

MR. RIDEOUT:  
Just flip-flopping. Last year, when news of the Accord was announced to this House, the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island (Mr. Barry) welcomed the Meech Lake Accord on behalf of his party, welcomed it here in this House. We have seen the Hansard. He welcomed it on behalf of his party. He said that some progress was made and he was pleased with it. He spoke the other day in the debate, basically articulating the same thing.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Fortune - Hermitage, yes, but the member for Mount Scio spoke in the debate only a few weeks ago and he still indicates his support, as he did previously, for the Meech Lake Accord.

So, Mr. Speaker, what is happening here, obviously, is you are getting flip-flops, you are getting the Opposition trying to say one thing in here and you are getting them trying to say something else out there.

MR. SIMMONS:  
A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMONS:  
I am sure the member for Baie Verte - White Bay desperately wants to make a case, but he should base it on facts. Now, he just told the House that he had a copy of Hansard where last year the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island, on behalf of the Opposition, had made certain undertakings. Now, they are going to have to dig deeper, Mr. Speaker, much deeper. As the member will know, the Meech Lake initiative was taken late in May, as I recall. At that time, the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island was not the leader of the Opposition. I spoke on behalf of the Opposition and our position is outlined.

As I understand it, the member for Bell Island did not speak in that debate. When he spoke two or three weeks ago, he spoke as an individual and that was made very clear. But my point on rising, Mr. Speaker, is to ask the member not to mislead the House on this point. I want to hear his

argument, but I plead with him that his argument be based on facts and not what he would hope would be the facts of the case.

MR. SIMMS:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. SIMMS:

If the hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage wants to deal in facts, perhaps he can tell us whether or not he was accurately quoted on May 5, 1987, indicating that while he supports the Meech Lake Accord, he does not agree the provinces should have a say in the appointment of senators. So, while he supports the Meech Lake Accord, quote May 5, 1987, if the hon. member for Fortune Hermitage wants to talk about details, perhaps he can tell us whether that is an accurate quote. Is it an accurate quote?

MR. SIMMONS:

What are you reading from?

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously, there is no point of order, and I think it just points out what I was saying earlier. I do not know if the hon. gentleman was in the House then or not, and that is the sticky wicket the Opposition have gotten themselves in those days. What cannot be denied is that a few months ago, a year or so ago, whenever it was that Meech Lake first came on the

scene, the official position of the Liberal Party in this Province, and in this House, was that it welcomed Meech Lake. Now there is a new leader, a new face, and the official position of the Liberal Party is Meech Lake is not worth the paper it is written on. Now, Mr. Speaker, what changed over there? Are there fifteen or sixteen new people over there? Is there a brand new Liberal Party that suddenly came out of nowhere, with all new faces, sitting over there, or is it the same people, with the exception of one, who were there a year or so ago?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Two.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Two. The same people, with the exception of two, who were there a year or so ago.

AN HON. MEMBER:

There are going to be thirty-four.

MR. RIDEOUT:

That may well be. Just wait and we will see. At the moment, it is one person who has taken what used to be the position of the party and turned it around completely. Now, that cannot be denied, Mr. Speaker. It cannot be denied that the Leader of the Opposition, representing the Opposition Party, has, on several occasions, both inside and outside the House over the last number of weeks and months, indicated that this legislative jurisdiction over the fisheries that the Province is seeking is something that is foolish, is something that is for the birds; you have more legislative jurisdiction than you can exercise now, so get off that foolish kick and get on to something else.

Before I finish, Mr. Speaker, just a word or two on the particular amendment itself. The amendment proposed by my friend for St. Barbe says, 'Newfoundland and Labrador be recognized as constituting a distinct society within Canada.' Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to say to the hon. gentleman, and I will say it anywhere from here to Nain, in any community, that I find the amendment insulting, I find it patronizing, I find it useless. There is absolutely no reason for anybody in this Province to feel that we are less than somebody in Nova Scotia -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:  
- or somebody in British Columbia, absolutely no reason! I have no desire, Mr. Speaker, to have it written into the Constitution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:  
If some other part of Canada has a desire to have it written into the Constitution, that does not snub me one bit, Mr. Speaker. It does not make me feel any less a Newfoundlander or a Labradorian. It does not make me feel any prouder a Canadian. If some other group, be it French Canadian or Ukrainian or somebody else, wants to be recognized as special and distinct in the Constitution and we decide to give it to them, it does not bother me in the least, Mr. Speaker. I feel comfortable as a Newfoundland Canadian. I feel totally comfortable. I feel comfortable with my culture, comfortable with my heritage, comfortable that I can contribute anywhere, in any part of Canada,

the bit of talent that I may have to contribute, and I have no desire to be patronized and insulted by proposing a useless, silly amendment to have that enshrined in the Constitution, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WELLS:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise, Mr. Speaker, to speak on the amendment that I said would not be, that I said would not exist. Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge what the hon. the Minister of Fisheries has just said about the government's position on Meech Lake. Everybody knows that this government entered into this arrangement with the other nine provincial governments and the federal government to put before their respective legislatures the Meech Lake resolution, and it contemplated no amendment.

I knew there was going to be no amendment. I know this amendment cannot pass, could not be accepted at the time that it was moved, and that is why, when I spoke first, Mr. Speaker, I said clearly that the Liberal Party would not be moving any amendment because I knew that it could not be accepted.

When we listened to the debate, particularly from members of the opposite side, Mr. Speaker, it became clear that they were trying to make the argument that the Meech Lake Accord provided for Newfoundland to be a juridically

equal part of Canada; they talked about the juridical equality of the provinces. Well, the fact that they have to reject the very amendment that would put it on a totally equal footing with the Province of Quebec means clearly that they are wrong in their representation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:  
We know they have to vote against it. We put it there so they could vote against it and say to all the world, 'We do not really mean what we are saying.' That is the position they are in. They are not acknowledging the equality, and that is why the amendment was moved, Mr. Speaker, not that we expected it to be passed or wanted it to be passed. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I have to admit we would not vote for the Meech Lake Accord even if it were so amended because it is basically an unacceptable document.

Before I go on to address a couple of points I want to deal with on the amendment, I just want to address what the hon. the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) just said and address, again, his misrepresentation to the House. I cannot say that it was deliberate. It may have been innocent, but it was nevertheless, a total misrepresentation of the truth. So I have to tell this to the House to correct that misrepresentation.

Here is the resolution passed in this House June 17, 1987 which, Mr. Speaker, in its final form, I either wrote or had a significant hand in writing.

MR. TULK:

You wrote it.

MR. WELLS:  
I wrote it, okay.

Here is what it says. If hon. members would listen they would hear so they will not, again, misrepresent, maybe innocently, but they will not again misrepresent to this House or anybody else what our position is with respect to fisheries matters. Here is what was voted on, and here is what they all voted for, Mr. Speaker. This is their position, too, not just mine. Here is what it said:

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the government of Newfoundland and Labrador assert its faith in the inshore fishery by continuing to pursue a comprehensive programme of revitalization and development such as an inshore fisheries agreement, debt restructuring, and", and here is the key part, Mr. Speaker, "an appropriate provision for provincial involvement in the management of the fishery."

That is what we are asserted, and that is what they approved!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:  
It has nothing to do with legislative jurisdiction. We said then, and we say again, this madcap scheme that this government is off on seeking legislative jurisdiction can never be achieved and can only cause harm in the long run.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
(Inaudible) give it all away.

MR. WELLS:

No, we seek a proper role in the management of it. So, do not misrepresent the position of the official Opposition anymore. It is there on the record, it was endorsed by this whole House.

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible) jurisdiction would be madness. That is what you just said.

MR. TULK:

No, he did not.

MR. WELLS:

I said it is madness for this Province to seek legislative jurisdiction over the fisheries and have to pay the cost of administering 200,000 square miles of North Atlantic. Now, that is stupid! We cannot even keep hospital beds open! We cannot feed our people!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. WELLS:

We cannot provide adequate education without having children go out and beg for money to buy chalk! No wonder it is madness.

MR. SIMMS:

So you are against it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:-

Oh, oh!

MR. WELLS:

Our position has been stated clearly many times, and it cannot be misrepresented by the hon. members no matter how desirable they find that misrepresentation.

Mr. Speaker, back to the debate at hand. I listened to the Minister

of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Dawe) say that Meech Lake, and here are his words: "Provides an opportunity to recognize Provincial juridical equality."

That is a nice mouthful of words, but if he were here, I would ask him to tell us how. It is clear that it does not and it cannot. How does Meech Lake provide an opportunity to recognize provincial juridical equality? It does no such thing, and cannot do any such thing.

It does, Mr. Speaker, in fact, just the opposite. It sets about immediately saying Quebec is something special. How do we get provincial juridical equality out of that?

Then he went on to say, 'Quebec, of course, always had a veto.' That is absolutely wrong. Obviously, the minister did not know it. I do not suggest he was deliberately misleading the House, but Quebec never ever had a veto. That was the problem. Quebec wanted a veto, but a Nation builder, like Pierre Trudeau - and hon. members had better bear in mind that the day will come when historians will accord to one Pierre Elliot Trudeau the greatest contribution any man has made to the building of this Nation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. WELLS:

People will recognize that the man had principle enough to stand up for what was right without regard to the narrow interest of his own province, Quebec, when they wanted this kind of special status and

veto. He was a man of principle and he understood principle.

MR. BAIRD:

He was arrogant, just like you, arrogant!

MR. WELLS:

He may well have been arrogant. I do not question that. I say to you he was a man of principle and he knew what he was doing in leading the Nation.

MR. J. CARTER:

He was a snake.

MR. PATTERSON:

Tell us about the gays, when he legalized the gays.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the comments of the Minister of Health (Dr. Collins) were kind of lighthearted, obviously not serious, but this is a very serious matter. He suggested that I referred only to the United States and the United States example. That is clearly not so.

I referred him to Australia which is a situation that is very much like Canada. He neglected to mention that. It makes it clear, Mr. Speaker, they do not understand the fundamental principles of federalism. That applies whether we are dealing with a presidential and congressional system, like the United States, a presidential congressional republic, or a prime ministerial parliamentary federation like Canada. The principles of federalism apply no matter what the basic system.

If you have a federal state you must have institutions that acknowledge and provide for the proper functioning of a federal state and provide for recognition of the two essential equalities in a federal system. There are two, Mr. Speaker.

Every individual in this country is equal to every other individual. His or her vote must have the same weight wherever they are.

MR. PATTERSON:

What about the (inaudible) salary as great?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. TOBIN:

Answer the question 'Bill'.

MR. PATTERSON:

Their leader's salary is greater.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about something important.

MR. PATTERSON:

Something different.

MR. WELLS:

I am talking about something important to this Nation.

If those hon. members opposite have so little regard for the future of this Province, as they appear to have when they make these silly, stupid remarks, they do not care about the people! It is obvious by the performance of this government that they do not care about the people. They just care about their own self-preservation when they make those silly remarks.

If they had any regard for the

country as a whole -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. WELLS:

- or for this Province, or its people, they would not make these remarks. They would treat these debates seriously, as they ought to, Mr. Speaker.

MR. J. CARTER:

Would the hon. member permit a serious question?

MR. WELLS:

No, I would not permit a serious question, because I have not heard a serious question come from the hon. member since I have been in the Chamber.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, a federal state must, if it is to be a true federal state and be a fair federal state, working fairly, provide federal institutions that effectively give voice to the two equalities in the state. The first equality is the individual citizen. Every individual citizen is equal to every other individual citizen and his or her vote should have the same weight no matter what province or section of the country they live in.

MR. J. CARTER:

What about Churchill Falls power?

MR. WELLS:

I will deal with that at the appropriate time.

MR. DINN:

He already dealt with it.

MR. WELLS:

The second essential equality, Mr. Speaker, is the equality in the status and rights of each of the constituent parts. Whether you call them states or cantons or provinces or whatever, you must recognize that essential equality.

The members on the government side talk about it. They mouth the appropriate words, but they clearly do not believe in it when they support Meech Lake, because it immediately sets about saying that Quebec has a special status. The Constitution is to be interpreted in such a manner as to give recognition to the special role of the government and Legislature of Quebec. That is the basic problem with Meech Lake, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DAWE:

What did Mr. Turner say?

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Turner said exactly the same thing. The difference between Mr. Turner and me, with respect to Meech Lake, is he is prepared to say, 'For the sake of getting Quebec's approval, I am prepared to vote for Meech Lake, even though I disagree with it.' Now, that is what he said.

I disagree with that approach. I have to protect the interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and that is what I am doing. That is exactly what I am doing.

MR. TOBIN:

The way you (inaudible) on the offshore, you protected Newfoundland, did you not?

MR. SPEAKER:



Order, please!

MR. WELLS:

Yes, I most certainly did.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. TOBIN:

There are thousands of  
Newfoundlanders unemployed today  
because of your actions.

MR. WELLS:

One of these days the members will  
recognize truth when it jumps up  
and hits them right between the  
eyes on election day, then they  
will recognize the truth.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

(Inaudible) sell out Newfoundland  
and now it is okay (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the  
speech from the hon. member for  
Mount Scio - Bell Island (Mr.  
Barry) and I am sorry he is not in  
the Chamber at the moment to hear  
these remarks.

MR. DINN:

You would not have the guts to say  
it if he was here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:

Silly babbling over there again.

He said his original position was  
essentially the same as mine.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh!

MR. WELLS:

'As a small Province, it is  
important for us.'

MR. TOBIN:

Do you hear that?

MR. WELLS:

I am just quoting what he said in  
Hansard. I checked it in  
Hansard. Never mind, the minister  
can babble on if he wants to, but  
let him say something intelligent,  
if he can, when he stands up to  
speak.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the  
hon. member for Mount Scio - Bell  
Island. He said his original  
position was that it was important  
to Newfoundland that there be a  
strong federal government to  
protect the interests of  
Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. TOBIN:

He said your position is frozen in  
the past.

MR. SIMMONS:

He is not in his own seat.

MR. WELLS:

He said it was important. This  
was his view. Then he says he  
changed his mind as he  
participated as a part of  
government, as a member of the  
Cabinet and found that he could  
not make any headway against the  
federal government or improve  
Newfoundland's position. That was  
his difficulty. Newfoundland only  
has seven votes and Newfoundland  
was not listened to. I heard the  
Premier say the same thing, I have  
heard others say the same thing,  
and I said the same thing myself.  
That is a major problem.

Newfoundland has only seven  
votes. We do not and cannot have  
the kind of impact on the national

institutions that we should have. That is a major problem. He says he changed as a result of that and felt that he should try and increase the influence and powers of Newfoundland. He supports Meech Lake because, he said, it increases the powers of Newfoundland and diminishes further the powers of the federal government.

I agree with the major problem. I share the view of the Premier in that regard. It is a major problem. I share the view of the hon. member for Mount Scio - Bell Island in that regard. We have seven votes in the House of Commons, but what I disagree with is their solution.

I suggest their solution, what they propose, the Meech Lake type solution, is only going to make matters worse. It is not going to improve it at all.

MR. TOBIN:  
Stop attacking your colleague when he is not here.

MR. WELLS:  
Mr. Speaker, would you please ask that hon. member to keep quiet so that we can speak in the House.

MR. TULK:  
And go to his own seat.

MR. WELLS:  
Mr. Speaker, the major problem is they propose the wrong solution.

The real problem that Newfoundland has in Confederation is that it has seven votes. Ontario has ninety-five, Quebec has seventy-five, and together they have 60 per cent of the votes in the House of Commons. Newfoundland is as nothing in terms of voting power in the House

of Commons and we are unable to make headway and unable to make impact because we do not have the voting power.

Now, Meech Lake will increase the powers of the provinces, it is true, and diminish the powers of the federal government. That is true. What the members fail to take into account, including the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island, is that in increasing Newfoundland's powers vis-à-vis the federal government, you are also increasing Ontario's and Quebec's. We will be worse off as a result.

What we ought to be trying to achieve is diminishing the influence and power of Quebec vis-à-vis Newfoundland, not putting them up proportionately which is what the government wants to do.

The way you achieve that is a Triple 'E' Senate. That is how you achieve that.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
How are you going to get that with the power of Ontario and Quebec? Do not be unrealistic.

MR. WELLS:  
I am not being unrealistic.

We were well on the way to getting that, well on the way to receiving that, working toward it, in the end, and with the proper amending formula, I feel we can achieve it in the end.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
You are living in a dream world my boy, you are living in a dream world. Quebec and Ontario (inaudible) that every day.

MR. WELLS:

We need only Ontario. We need only the approval of Ontario to achieve it, and it is because of that that Quebec wanted the changes that were made in Meech Lake. All it does is preserves the positions of Ontario and Quebec against our own interests and that is what is fundamentally wrong with it. The government's solution is basically wrong.

Our position in Canada is dependent upon having a Triple 'E' Senate to protect the interests of the smaller provinces because what Meech Lake does is give proportionately more power to Ontario and Quebec. That is our fundamental problem. Our problem is not Newfoundland vis-à-vis the federal government, it is Newfoundland vis-à-vis Ontario and Quebec and the level of influence that we have nationally.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

By more power in the fishery does not necessarily mean more power to Ontario. That is where you wrong.

MR. WELLS:

I disagree, Mr. Speaker. What we have got on fisheries is the right to talk and nothing else. What we ought to be striving toward, Mr. Speaker, is more voting power and clout for Newfoundland.

Australia works well as a parliamentary monarchy, a federal system, and so does Switzerland. West Germany works a little differently. West Germany has a federal parliament that passes the laws and states that administer them, but do not make them. So it is a different kind of federal system.

Where we have a division of legislative powers, as we have here, then this Province must at

some point have some means of having an equal say with every other province in the exercise of federal legislative jurisdiction and in the expenditure of federal funds. Unless and until we do, we will never have our proper place in the Canadian Confederation.

That is the fundamental flaw of Meech Lake. It increases the powers of Ontario and Quebec instead of diminishing them. That is where our real problem is.

You have only to look at the last federal budget. Just look at the last federal budget and a great flurry of announcements about ACOA. The Prime Minister was going to inflict prosperity on Atlantic Canada, against its will, of course. He was going to inflict prosperity on Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Wilson in the federal budget destroyed that prospect completely by making provision for the equivalent of ACOA for Ontario and Quebec and Western Canada. As soon as you do that,

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) Northern Ontario.

MR. WELLS:

It does not make any difference whether it is Northern Ontario or Southern Ontario or Northern Quebec or where because it relieves the Province of Ontario from that burden and takes it into the federal government. In every programme proposed to date to solve regional disparity, that has occurred and the result is that each one has been a successive failure.

Meech Lake really has only one purpose and that is what was wrong with it. I do not say it was a

wrong end. It was a desirable end, to get political approbation from the people and the Legislature and the government of Quebec, that was a desirable end for Meech Lake. I do not depreciate that. That is highly desirable. But we cannot do that no matter what the means or no matter what the result. We have to look at the impact on the nation as a whole.

The Premiers, no doubt, were attracted to it for that reason. And I understand that. I have been involved in constitutional discussions and bargaining and proposals and I know what it is like when these proposals are being put and when representatives of Quebec are making that kind of argument. I understand that. And I understand how it can be attractive to governments to do it.

It also was attractive to them because it gave them as individuals more apparent power with the First Ministers Conferences and so on.

But it is now been widely recognized, Mr. Speaker, as a result of Mr. McKenna's comments in New Brunswick, and Mr. Filmon and Mrs. Carstairs' comments in Manitoba, by the events that took place in Saskatchewan recently, that a lot of people's views about Meech Lake have changed. Views are changing and people are stopping to take a serious look at what eleven men did in a back room on a couple of occasions.

Constitutions are too important and too significant to be developed in that way. That is the process of collective bargaining for a year or two, down the road, as an intermediate

solution to solve it until the end of the contract. It is not the kind of approach you take to developing constitutional principles.

Premier Peterson -

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Where were you? It went on for a couple for years.

MR. WELLS:

Meech Lake went on for a couple of meetings essentially.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No, it did not!

MR. WELLS:

Essentially it went on for a couple of meetings.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

This is more than I can allow here! I was a part of this process. The Leader of the Opposition does not know what he is talking about! It went on for a couple of years after the constitution patriation occurred in 1982, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WELLS:

This is no point of order, Mr. Speaker.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition is misleading the House. That is incorrect.

MR. WELLS:

The hon. the Premier can tell us what happened.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

That is wrong.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order. It seems to me that it is a point of clarification.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, this constant discussion about constitutional changes, that has been on the go for many years now. I agree with what the Premier is saying in that regard. What materialized in 1982 as the constitutional amendment started in 1967 and 1968. That is when those discussions started.

I realize that there were developments going on, but the Meech Lake deal was worked out in a rush kind of deal, 'This is it',

-

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No.

MR. WELLS:

- and it worked out in this way.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No, you are wrong. You would like to be right, but you are wrong.

MR. WELLS:

The events of recent weeks, Mr. Speaker, have made it clear, particularly what is happening in Saskatchewan, just the kind of reaction there is going to be to Meech Lake, and more recently the comments of Premier Peterson, where he said he was prepared to consider amendments to Meech Lake.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

And then he wishy-washed it later.

MR. WELLS:

I am not quite sure what he did

later. I did hear him say that.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

He said that and he backtracked later.

MR. WELLS:

He may have backtracked later, I do not know. I did not hear his backtracking. The Premier says he did.

But it seems clear now that Meech Lake is not going to pass in its present form. It is possible, but at the moment it seems unlikely that it will pass in its present form, particularly in the light of those comments by Premier Peterson that he is prepared to consider amendments.

I do not know whether he has considered amendments in the resolution before the Ontario House now or not, or he means he is prepared to sit down with the other premiers and discuss amendments. I am not quite sure what he meant by the statement, but in any event, Mr. Speaker, it seems clear that we will be discussing these constitutional changes or proposed constitutional changes for some time.

Meech Lake will obviously not be affected as it is. It is not good for the country as a whole as it is, for the reasons that I have already given, Mr. Speaker.

The basic problem with Meech Lake and what it did that I find so difficult, is what it did to Section 41 and 42 of The Constitution Act, as it stands at the moment, or what it proposes to do.

As well as providing for a general amending formula, Mr. Speaker, the Constitution at the moment

provides for amendments that are of major significance. Section 41 provides for five amendments or possible amendments that are of major significance. Amendments to (a) "the office of the Queen, the Governor General and the Lieutenant Governor," etc.; (d) "the right of a province to a number of members in the House of Commons not less than the number of Senators; (f) subject to section 43, the use of the English or the French language;" and the composition of "(g) the Supreme Court of Canada," that is, how it is made up, but all other matters can be provided for; "and (j) an amendment to this Part."

They would require unanimous consent. That is what is there now, but only those fundamentals of our country would require that. Section 42 provided for six different things that could be amended, essentially by the general amending formula.

What Meech Lake does is take all six of those and put them in a situation that requires unanimous consent to effect any amendments. Which means that we will forever be a small have not Province without an opportunity to play our proper and full role in this nation, Mr. Speaker, because we end up with only seven votes.

Unless, and until, we get to a situation, Mr. Speaker, where we can have real effect and real voting power, along with every other province in this country, that is what we will end up with. If Meech Lake goes through as it is now, it virtually seals forever the Senate in the form in which it is now.

Just stop and think of the silly situation we have at this moment.

You have a situation where British Columbia with 3 million citizens has six Senators. So does Newfoundland. That would not be so bad if every province had six Senators, but, Mr. Speaker, New Brunswick with 715,000 citizens has ten Senators. How can British Columbia live with that? How can anybody with making a fair-minded assessment of where we are live with that?

We will be blocking forever any chance of getting a correction of that basic inequality if we insist that there must be unanimity; that we cannot amend the constitution by the normal means of the approval of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the provinces having 50 percent of the population.

What is wrong with Meech Lake essentially, its primary problem, is that it puts all of Section 42 into Section 41 and requires unanimous approval of all of the provinces to effect such an amendment.

It is the process that is wrong in Meech Lake. It is essentially being rammed down the throats of Canadians by that particular procedure. That is what is unacceptable about it.

As the member for Gander (Mr. Baker) said yesterday, that is not the way you make constitutional changes. That is not the way you develop or amend constitutions. You give everybody an opportunity to debate it and have input, as we should be doing in this House. Eleven men, working for a few hours, is no substitute for that kind of broadly based national debate, as took place in the early 1980s, when the Constitutional Amendment of 1982 was put in.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

There was just as much work done on Meech Lake as was done on the patriation.

MR. WELLS:

There was nowhere near the work done on Meech Lake as was done on the patriation.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I know. I was there.

MR. WELLS:

So do I. I was involved in the patriation debate.

MR. BAIRD:

You were involved, looking after Bowater.

MR. TOBIN:

And you were involved in the offshore.

MR. WELLS:

I have been involved in discussions at the national level on constitutional matters since the late 1960s, Mr. Speaker, and I know what I am talking about.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:

The Minister of Fisheries jokes and says he has no demand for hearings. Well, that is true. The people of this Province are too consumed with the problems of putting food on their tables and finding jobs and finding means to stay in the Province, not having to leave, fifteen a day every day for the last three years. That is why they cannot be consumed with Meech Lake, and they have not been given the full story on it yet.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party will give the people of this Province an opportunity to express

their opinion fully on Meech Lake after the next election. Because if the proclamation is not made by that time, we would use the provisions of section 46 and put in a resolution to revoke the existing resolution and give them an opportunity to decide whether they do, indeed, want Meech Lake, and whether it is, in fact, in the best interests of this Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition's time has elapsed.

MR. WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Liberal Party will look after the interests of the people of this Province in the long run.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, at the outset, when I first heard the Leader of the Opposition speak, I was going to say that it was perhaps one of the most naive speeches I ever heard. I have to add to that now. It is not only the most naive, it is the most arrogant. Here is the Leader of the Opposition over there, who knows exactly what went on day by day during the whole patriation of the Constitution, and knows what went on day by day during the meetings leading up to the Meech Lake Accord, and the Leader of the Opposition, whether he did it willingly or not, is completely wrong when he says that the Meech Lake Accord was done over two or three meetings. We were at this a couple of years; it was an ongoing

commitment by the Governments of Canada through their Intergovernmental Affairs Departments, every province. Quebec then got into the fray about a year afterwards and met with all the provinces, then all the provinces met with the federal government at the Intergovernmental Affairs level, then the First Ministers met on numerous occasions and it went on for a couple of years. It was not something that was forged overnight or in two or three meetings, and it is inaccurate, totally inaccurate for the Leader of the Opposition to say that.

It is very popular to say. There are a lot of people across Canada who have said it and gotten a lot of headlines on it, 'Done in the darkness of night,' and all that, 'The First Ministers did it.'

When Mr. Trudeau was Prime Minister of Canada and we talked about the patriation of the Constitution with the other First Ministers and the meetings we had, I guess, if you did a tally, there were more meetings with First Ministers on Meech Lake than there were on the patriation of the Constitution. It was just the reverse, Mr. Speaker. There were just as many meetings and consultations and debates and discussions and negotiations between the eleven governments of Canada on Meech Lake as there were on the patriation of the Constitution. And they were more meaningful discussions and negotiations. Because when it came to the patriation of the Constitution, only one person was allowed to speak, when there was eleven of you in the room, and that was Trudeau, and his word was supposed to be omnipotent. And the Supreme Court of Canada had to

bring Mr. Trudeau to heel on that, as it related to the convention of the Constitution, the conventions that were here, and he had to back down and accommodate.

So it is erroneous. It is not right. The Leader of the Opposition does not know what he is talking about. It makes for good press, I suppose, to keep saying 'the darkness of night', and 'two or three meetings.' But that is not the core of the debate I had with the Leader of the Opposition as to how many meetings were held, or was there a process or was there not? I know there was. We can prove the series of meetings that went on. It was a legitimate process to get to where we are today as it relates to Meech Lake. But that is not the core of the argument that I have with the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition and his party are being extremely inconsistent in the way they are approaching this. The amendment asks that Newfoundland and Labrador be recognized as a distinct society, Mr. Speaker.

Now, as most people know, that phrase in the Constitution will not automatically give powers to the Province. It is an acknowledgement of a linguistic and cultural reality which is expressed to a degree in Quebec, in reality, that is not expressed in any other Province. Even though we can say, and do say, that we have certain cultural differences with the rest of Canada, we cannot say linguistically, as it relates to a different language like Quebec has.

So, on the one hand, the Leader of the Opposition and his party are saying no more powers in the



fishery, instead give us a clause which says we are a distinct society. The best way to translate a distinct society in Newfoundland terms in Canada is not to say for some nebulous view that we are distinct, but to make that nebulous view real and to give it some power so that our fishery has some chance of success in the future, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
It is not nebulous statements like 'distinct' that are going to put bread on the tables of the fishermen and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. It is not some nebulous, theoretical view of our degree of distinctiveness within Canada that is going to help us. Let us get pragmatic! It is something extremely specific.

So, on the one hand, the Liberal Party is saying, Yes, we should have more by calling ourselves distinct; No, we should not have more by not giving us any more power over the fishery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
That is what they are saying.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Shame! Shame!

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
What they are trying to do is say, in some weird way, so that we can all go around with no more fish in our nets, or no more fish in our boats and we are starving to death, 'We are distinct.' And I do not think anybody who has a few fish in his net is going to be

very proud about being distinct, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
That is the key to it.

Now, the proposition, Mr. Speaker -

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

MR. BAIRD:  
His leader is telling him to get up on a point of order. Have the courage to do it yourself. Do not be so sneaky. Do not be so sly.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the member for St. Barbe.

MR. FUREY:  
Mr. Speaker, I am just wondering if the Premier would permit a question?

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
No, I will not permit a question, because I am busy developing an argument here.

MR. PATTERSON:  
Do it yourself, Clyde.

MR. SPEAKER:  
There is no point of order.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
I will take a question tomorrow morning on it, but I am busy developing an argument.

MR. PATTERSON:  
Get out, boy. Go on. Lackey! Lackey!

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
Mr. Speaker, that is, in my view,

a real flaw in the Liberal position. It is schizophrenic, it is inconsistent with the whole way of looking at Newfoundland's place, that the way to look at Newfoundland's place is to get into the Constitution the word 'distinct', and then somehow decide how that is going to go down in British Columbia or Saskatchewan or Alberta or Nova Scotia or PEI, or somewhere else. Distinctiveness is a very relative term when it really comes down to it except for, because you have to deal in the real world on it, where you have the linguistic, especially linguistic which leads to cultural, differences that you have in the Province of Quebec, Mr. Speaker.

More importantly, though, and linked to this, is the proposition by the Opposition that Meech Lake is going the wrong way and by giving more powers to the provinces you are keeping the status quo, and as Newfoundland gets a few more powers as it relates to immigration, as we get a few more powers as it relates to social programmes, so does Ontario and Quebec. But, Mr. Speaker, this is where they are very, very wrong again. Yes, it is true that we are all getting the powers related to immigration of people, and we are also getting certain programmes in the social sphere that can be amended and still get the money, federal compensation from the Government of Canada, which, by the way, is more particular to Newfoundland and Labrador and to PEI, and perhaps British Columbia, than it will be to Ontario and Quebec, especially Ontario, because there are those differences in Newfoundland and Labrador, with the delivery of social programmes because of the nature of our society, which are

not as pronounced as they are in Ontario. So one can even make the argument that even though theoretically we are all getting those powers on immigration and the social side, that it will be to the benefit of provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador more than it will be to Ontario, even though theoretically we have the same powers being transferred.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

You can make that argument. But one area which holds out some promise for Newfoundland, because we were able to get it into the Meech Lake accord for a re-examination of the whole question of powers in the fishery, is not applicable to Ontario.

So if the Leader of the Opposition is really sincere in trying to articulate getting more powers for Newfoundland in Confederation and getting those powers into something that really matters, what matters more, long-term, as an ongoing renewable resource for the well-being and the economics and the socio-economic fabric of this Province if it is not the fishery?

It is a great argument for the university, it is a great argument for the academics, but it is not an argument in the ongoing play of the body politic of Canada at this point in our history to start arguing that what we have to do is to get that Triple 'E' Senate in. That is a bit of a mixture, too, where the Liberal Party is going to have some problems. They cannot argue on the one hand, yes, you are not getting more power through the Meech Lake Accord, which is wrong, because we are,

and we are getting some in fisheries which we do not have, or we have the potential of getting it, more than we have had in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Okay, but it is there now to be discussed and Mr. McKenna is opposed to it. But if you are going to increase the powers of the Senate and have an Upper Chamber stationed in Ottawa, that automatically decreases the power of the Provinces. You can cut it as you like. Look at Australia - you used Australia - or anywhere they have an elected Senate, efficient and all the other 'Es' that go with it, and you will find that the powers of the provinces or of the states are diminished. So you will leave it in the hands of an Upper Chamber, who are stationed in Ottawa, and, therefore, you are diminishing the powers of the provinces. My preferred route to go, because we have not taken a formal position on the Senate, is the route that we are now going, whereby we have an opportunity to get powers under the Constitution as it exists and as it is amended to the Provinces, as we are now doing in the social programmes and as we have the potential to do in the fishery.

Now, the other point is that even if the Senate option was something for one to consider, the likelihood, given that you are more concerned about putting bread on the tables of Newfoundlanders today rather than looking at some theoretical thing in the future, the likelihood of getting, even if

you did agree by having a more powerful Upper Chamber, the Senate that people are looking for in the foreseeable future is just not there, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FENWICK:

Are you saying it is unattainable?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

It is unattainable at this point in our history.

MR. FUREY:

Why are you doing all the talking about it if it is unattainable?

MR. BAIRD:

Be quiet!

MR. J. CARTER:

Keep him quiet.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

You can ask your questions or make your speeches.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

The hon. member if he does not know should know, that Ontario and Quebec are not going to see their powers diminished under the Constitution. The only way you can approach it, then, is through the way we are approaching it, Mr. Speaker. It is the only way. To be provincial about it and parochial about it -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

PREMIER PECKFORD:

We are going to.

If you look at the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador today, you have to look pragmatically not theoretically and hook oneself up on a little thing here and there.

You have to really look at it pragmatically not the theory; something will work in theory and, therefore, does not always work in practice. Because that is the problem with this business of looking at the Senate from a politically practical point of view, with it being attainable, one, and two, what powers it would have and, therefore, how much the provinces' would be diminished and what that would do, in effect, to provinces like Newfoundland as it relates to the fishery. Because you get bargaining then by all the Senators up there, by Quebec and Ontario and others.

And I can see the bargaining. For example, in a Senate situation when you get bargained out - the Baie du Nord proposal, or whatever it is called. - Where is the Minister of Fisheries when I need him? - New Brunswick and Quebec have a proposal in - let us get down to basics - on getting more Northern cod. They have a proposal in and they are lobbying their heads off every hour of the day, every day of the week, and have been now since last year.

AN HON. MEMBER:

And give a little bit to France.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Exactly.

Then you have the Canada/France thing. You also have the Nose and Tail of the Banks being raped, and the boats are being refuelled out of St. Pierre and Miquelon now that they are not allowed into Canadian ports. You have those at least, besides the ongoing problem with the inshore fishery, because there is really not enough fish offshore to swim inshore. All of the other theories about what is wrong with the Northern cod stock,

in my view, are simply theories, and I think my theory is just as good as any of them. What you need for the 2J+3KL to have a vibrant inshore fishery is not lots of fish offshore, you need lots and lots and lots. And when you have lots and lots and lots, some are going to be pushed inshore. Alverson and the scientists who have looked at this will tell you that this is just as credible a theory as any other that they have been able to come up with on the biology and the migration patterns of the Northern cod.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Well, it is just as credible at this point in time.

Now, if you look at all of those problems and how they are going to be solved and you look forward to the day when you have this so-called panacea to our Canadian federal system called this Senate - you see, it is like everything; everything is always better when it is thought about than when it actually happens.

MR. TULK:

So is Meech Lake.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Well, no, because it is on paper. That is the difference. The other is theory. We know what Meech Lake means, because all the clauses are there. We do not know what the Senate means, because we do not have its structure or powers defined.

Now, you look ahead into the future as it relates just to the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador, and you are looking at

an elected Senate, or some kind of a Senate that has more powers, even if it is only partially elected or whatever thing comes out of it - obviously through negotiations it is going to be something less than we would prefer, otherwise, everything we say comes true to 100 per cent, and it is unreal to consider that. So look at some system where there is an Upper House in Canada which has more power, whether it is elected, partially elected, appointed, or whatever, and you are into, as they are in the United States from time to time, bartering - the barter system goes on. No matter how many Senators we have, the bartering goes on.

Do you mean to tell me that I can feel secure in looking ahead to that day and that kind of a system that is taken out of the Parliament of Newfoundland, taken out of the Government of Newfoundland, as some powers are going to be, and put into this Upper -

MR. WELLS:

No power will be taken away.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Oh, yes, there has to be, otherwise, it will not work. And Alberta will never go along with it.

MR. FUREY:

You do not understand it.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Oh, yes I do, only too well. I know what is being proposed, Mr. Speaker.

And even moreso if it still goes through the Parliament and the Parliament has the last say. There are certain checkoffs in

some of the proposals that are coming from the Western Provinces where, in certain areas, the Senate does overrule the House of Commons.

These are proposals that are not floating around through the system and, I will tell you, if the Western premiers are going to keep their constituencies onside, they are going to have to go with some kind senate system like their constituents are proposing, and that is a system where the Senate has not only more power but power in the real sense, where it overrides certain things that happen in the House of Commons.

All I put out to the House is this: Are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians supposed to feel comfortable about that as it relates to the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador? Canada/France, the Nose and Tail of the Banks, Quebec and New Brunswick looking for more fish, the EEC and some of the other countries looking for more fish, are we going to have more power as a Province then, or will it be four, five, six or seven people from here up there deciding that in the bartering system under a new arrangement in Canada? That is the question that you have to ask yourself, Mr. Speaker, in practical terms, as you look ahead to the future. We all know, for God' sake, the erosion that has occurred since 1949 in the fishery, the 200 mile limit notwithstanding. Eighty-five per cent of the people who prosecute the fishery are in the inshore fishery, 73 per cent of the income that is generated in the fishery in a given year comes from the inshore fishery. I saw those numbers this morning.

MR. TULK:  
Where?

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
In the Province.

MR. TULK:  
Probably.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
Not probably, that is the study that was just done.

MR. TULK:  
You are not sure.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
Well, it is 85 per cent and 73 per cent. Those are the two numbers, 85 and 73. Then knowing the attack that is coming on 2J+3KL with four or five years of failures in the inshore fishery, and looking ahead to put this into some other system, the only answer if we are genuinely concerned about the future of Newfoundland vis-à-vis the fishery, there is no other answer but for the Province of Newfoundland to attain greater say and powers over that fishery. One of the most startling things that came out of the whole restructuring process was - and they are still amazed by it today, those people who were involved in restructuring, including Michael Kirby and Pitfield and the others I negotiated with at the end, in a hotel in Toronto - was their abysmal lack of knowledge on the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador, because it is different than it is in other places, and its all-pervasive influence upon our economy and upon our society. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not going to change as Canada becomes more urbanized and as we centralize certain things in so-called national - federal institutions. And we will be held accountable someday. The

legislators of this place and the government of this place, we will be held accountable some day for that. And what will happen next December and January when once again the federal government is under pressure, under the gun with that proposal from Quebec and New Brunswick? You gave some to France, you have to give some to Canada. What happens when the EEC nations start to agitate, as they are beginning to do already, if one of our members in the EEC gets some fish, so do we - so do we - and starts turning up the pressure on that? And how are they going to deal with the Nose and Tail of the Banks where the rape continues unabated, aided and abetted by France? And at the same time as France is aiding and abetting the raping of the Nose and Tail, they, themselves, are going to get it through the front door in a negotiation with Canada. And then add all the rest of it in their as well, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition is talking about a very nebulous - he does not know, neither do I know for sure, and you are going on what you do not know, that somehow you can construct an Upper Chamber, stationed in Ottawa, that is going to be more interested in protecting the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador than the people in this room, Mr. Speaker. How foolish! How silly to ever contemplate it. Regardless of the representation in the Chamber, the whole atmosphere, the whole mental outlook from a national level will be such that we will be into a worse state as it relates to the fishery of Newfoundland than we are today and, God knows, that is bad enough.

And the Leader of the Opposition's position completely ignores that

we have an opportunity that we did not have since 1949, with all of the Provinces onside, to re-examine the roles and responsibilities in the fishery, especially as it relates to this Province. They all agreed to it. We have that chance. And that does not mean, therefore, that all the others - Ontario is not going to have the same, because they are not into the fishery.

So to say that what Meech Lake does is make all the Provinces more powerful and therefore keeps Quebec and Ontario more powerful than us is not true, because the fisheries provision completely destroys that.

Now, besides all of that, Mr. Speaker, you cannot, even in a federal state, govern this country constitutionally. If you have 6 million or 7 million people outside the Constitution, whatever we think about Quebec as it relates to hydro and other things,-

MR. SIMMS:  
Right on!

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
- that is an impossible task. The Constitution just will not operate without that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:  
They do not understand that.

MR. TULK:  
Quebec is not outside.

MR. FUREY:  
They were never outside.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
They are outside.

MR. TULK:  
Oh, no! No.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
Look, boy, it is only a technicality. Do not give me that. I have heard that so often that I am sick and tired of hearing it.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot do it. If, in that bargaining process, which it was over a couple of years, you better equalize the country at the same time by providing more power to the Provinces, by looking at the problem in the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador, that is all to the good, at the same time as you are bringing them in.

And it is suddenly put in here - what a stupid way to go about it - that all the Liberals want is for us to have a couple of words in the constitution, 'We are a distinct society too.'

MR. SIMMS:  
Will they pass it then?

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
It is a lot better, if you are true blue Newfoundlanders to say no - this business of us being distinct with Quebec and all the rest of it - no, we want more say in the fisheries so we are not going to be sold down the drain any more; we want more say in the delivery of some of our social programmes because we are different.

Then you have all of the details which automatically meanger the state, you give it meaning. You just do not mouth it in some vague nebulous concept, but by what you do in the fishery and the powers you have in the fishery and the powers you have over other things, you are then automatically distinct.

I do not want to go out tomorrow and say I am the best boxer in the world. What I have to do is go and get in the ring and after I destroy Mike Tyson, then everybody knows I am the best boxer in the world, Mr. Speaker. That is what you do. You do it by your actions. One must make some of these concepts of constitution mean something to people on the ground. We can theorize over it all we like, and that is good and that is proper. There is a place for that too, both here and in the universities and everywhere else. But you do not get to the root problem of Canada, more particularly Newfoundland, by putting 'distinct' in the Constitution. As it relates to Newfoundland's predicament and problem, you do it directly to try to attain greater say over those things which will dictate your future in a meaningful, concrete way to people in Triangle, or people in Francois or -

MR. SIMMS:  
Parsons Pond.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
- people in Parsons Pond.

MR. BAIRD:  
Port au Choix.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
- or St. Anthony Bight.

MR. SIMMS:  
I got no fish, but I am distinct, boy. I can hear it now. I can just hear them up in Parsons Pond now.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
And that is always one of the arguments in this constitutional building that you find from other nations when they are doing it, and some of the great poetry that

you find contained in the Constitution of the United States. But what you have to do is, after you put your principles in as preambles to your Constitution, then put some meat into the rest of it.

A beginning, middle, and end - was it? - Aristotle said? In my view, the middle is very important, because, otherwise, the two ends just drop down and they mean nothing. Therefore, you can have your beginning and your articulation of democratic principles and all the rest of it for a democratic country in the Constitution, and you can have something at the end which is somewhat similar, but in the middle there has to be some guts to it and some meat to it.

And this silly business of trying to hoodwink this House, to bring in an amendment and then we are all going to go away great because the hon. the Minister of Finance's deficit is going to go down another \$150 million next year because we are distinct, Mr. Speaker, smacks of - what shall I call it? - an intellectual disguise because they do not want to deal with the real matters, because they are still confused about where they stand on the fishery. That is what it really comes down to, Mr. Speaker. It is a ruse by the Opposition to disguise their confusion over the fishery. The Leader of the Opposition, 'Give some Northern cod to the French.' That is what he said. That is what he stands by.

And for the Leader of the Opposition - and I will end on this - to say, 'We cannot take any more powers over the fishery, we still have educational problems,



we still have health problems.' We want more say over the fishery so we will have more fish and more management and, therefore, more jobs in the fishery which will give us more taxes to put back into education and health and the other things; Mr. Speaker. That is the whole of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Without economic levers at your disposal, you will always have problems in education and health and everywhere else. That is what you have to have.

We are not good enough - that is what the Leader of the Opposition is saying - to have a bit more say over our traditional, dominant, major industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are not good enough, 'because I do not think we can handle it, and it is going to cost us a lot of money.' No, it is not going to cost us a lot of money. The proposal has been out there for how long?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Since 1982.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Since 1982 or before: Licencing inshore fishermen and their boats; negotiating the sharing of the TAC among themselves; - if provinces cannot agree, the matter goes to arbitration - setting local quotas for bays and certain sectors of the coast; licencing fish plants - which we do now - approving the harvesting plans of fish companies, inland fisheries and fish farming, aquaculture. That was the separation. The federal government still has licencing and policing over foreign fishing fleets, and so on. There was a

separation of powers which was not going to lead to a humongous amount of money. But even if it amounts to more money, which it should, it then gives us an opportunity to manage many parts of the fishery so that there are more jobs and more wealth created for education and health. You cannot do it any other way.

So I think the Opposition are just absolutely crazy. And this business of affirming a distinct society for Newfoundland is just so much pudding, so much porridge, so much mishmash. That is not where the action is, whether we are called distinct or not distinct. Where the action is is to give it meaning and to put some meat on the bones and to say with one voice, yes, we are capable and should have more say over the fishery, Mr. Speaker, and then we will travel down the road to being more distinct and being ourselves. What are we going to be distinct over, nothing? Because you have it all given away and somebody else is managing it? Your distinctiveness is your empty stomach. That is your distinctiveness then, Mr. Speaker.

So what the Liberal party is proposing here is silly, foolish, a ruse because they do not want to deal with the real issue of the fishery. They are embarrassed by their own position, and we will continue to point out to Newfoundland just how red they are going to get before this is over.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier might not be the best boxer in Newfoundland, but he certainly is the best shadowboxer. The Premier, when he was up, was talking about the deal that he got when he sat around the table with his friends in Ottawa, the eleven ministers that sat around that table.

Why did he not hold out for the deal and get full jurisdiction over the fishery, instead of the right to talk about it? That is all the Premier has gotten now. He comes back and tells us that he has got the right to talk about the fisheries. But if he was as strong as he is letting on right now, when he was at that meeting with his eleven colleagues, he would have held out and got the control over the fishery that he is talking about. That is what he should have done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:

When I listened to the arguments back and forth on the Meech Lake Accord, I wondered what was the reason for the argument. Why should we keep it up? It is going to be passed anyhow. The law of the jungle prevails so that might is right. It really does not matter what we say over here.

I guess it was the member for the Strait of Bell Isle (Mr. Decker) yesterday when he said that he wanted to be remembered for getting up and stating his case for the generations of Newfoundlanders yet unborn so they would know there were people who

were there and were against this that motivates me.

It reminded me of a line from Henry V: "And gentlemen in England, now a-bed/Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,/And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks/That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day."

MR. DECKER:

"Or close the wall up with our English dead!"

MR. GILBERT:

That was what got to me. I think everybody who has the right to speak on this should speak and make their points as far as this Accord is concerned.

We heard the Premier yesterday when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Wells) asked him if he would consider an amendment. He said, 'No.' He was not going to change his mind one bit. It would seem to me that he was the fellow who was locked in history when right now the public polls across this country are showing that the majority of Canadians disapprove of Meech Lake and that Quebec has been given too much power by being recognized as a distinct society.

I have an article here about Desmond Morton. He is a University of Toronto historian. In a press interview he said, "The general emotion among Canadians is puzzled anxiety, if not dismay, that constitutional change was reached in such a short time. People are more used to seeing 200 steel workers get a contract through this kind of sweatbox, a twenty-hour grinder."

MR. LONG:

He is an NDP historian.

MR. GILBERT:

Well, he is an historian so he has some idea of what he was talking about. In twenty hours this thing was ground out and they came out with an agreement. The Premier says that it went on for two years, and all the negotiations and everything culminated in this twenty hours work. But this is not the impression that was given across Canada. The people across Canada, everybody else, even the Premier himself when he came back said how the agreement was reached in an overnight session.

Yesterday we heard the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) talk about how he was not overwhelmed with telephone calls from people wanting to discuss the Meech Lake Accord with him. I would say no, maybe he was not because, as the Leader of the Opposition said, the people of Newfoundland are too busy trying to make a living. They are not aware of the long-reaching terms and affects this is going to have on them.

I would point out to the minister they said they were not getting any calls on the famous DDST, the Double Daylight Saving Time either, but we know they are getting complaints on that right now.

I wonder why the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Doyle) stood in this House yesterday and decided that they were going to change Bill 14. They were going to change the traffic act. They were going to put in a point system for drivers in Newfoundland. Why did they decide to cancel that? I will tell you why they decided to cancel it. They realized the political ramifications of it if they went through with it. They were

instant and immediate.

With this thing here, the public of Newfoundland can be hoodwinked. They will not know the ramifications of the Meech Lake Accord until some years down the line.

Another quote I have is from Stephen Scott, a Professor of Constitutional Law at McGill University. He said, "I am biting my fingernails as to the long-term implications of the concessions made by the provinces. This deal marks a major decentralization of power within an already decentralized state."

I tell members opposite that the people of Newfoundland will be concerned when they find out what happened to their position once this Accord is signed and brought into law.

In the Meech Lake Accord, one of the things we see happening is that there are going to be two federal - provincial conferences each year. There is going to be one to discuss the state of Canada's economy and other points that may be appropriate. The second one is to discuss Senate reform and roles and responsibilities in relation to fisheries and such other matters as agreed upon.

Then they have the appointments to the Supreme Court and immigration. As my colleague from Bonavista North (Mr. Lush) said, it should be not immigration, but emigration. People leaving Newfoundland is the problem here.

The federal - provincial conferences were there before they decided they were going to entrench them in the

Constitution. It gave the Provinces a chance to air their local concerns. The Premier could get on national television and at least point out the concerns that he had for his Province.

Now you are going in to discuss the economy. I wonder will it be a deep, dark secret and hid away, like the union negotiation you had on Meech Lake, or will they now come out and discuss it in public and see how he can perform in public, or how the Premier is going to perform.

The second conference is going to be about Senate reform and fisheries. Our position has been clear on the fisheries. The Premier can stand up and, as I said, he can possibly be the best shadowboxer in Newfoundland, but there is no doubt about it, it would be foolish for anyone to stand up and say we do not want the best for the fisheries in Newfoundland. We realize the fishery is the most important industry we have in Newfoundland. We made our point clear back on June 17 of last year as to what we feel about it. If we are going to have responsibility for the fishery, Mr. Speaker, we must also have the funds to be able to perform the job.

This is interesting. When this comes to mind, I think about McCallum. We are talking about wanting jurisdiction over the fisheries. I think about the community of McCallum in my district where we have a community stage and a wharf that are a provincial responsibility. It was put there by the Province.

When I went to the provincial Department of Fisheries to ask for funding to have this wharf

extended, because there are forty of fifty fishermen using it and it not big enough, I was told there was no money. I then went to the federal department and they said, 'Yes, we can possibly come up with something through the Small Crafts/Harbours Board, but we would have to get it transferred to our jurisdiction.'

I presented a petition from the fisherman of McCallum in the House and the Minister of Fisheries was only too glad to say that he would immediately make the arrangements, once he received a letter, to transfer over this fish shed he has in McCallum, that was a provincial responsibility. He would now be only too willing to give it to the federal government.

I think that is a classic example. It proves the point we are trying to make. It is great to have jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, but if you are going to have jurisdiction, then you got to have financial responsibility. This is what we have not got with this fisheries item the Premier now wants discussed.

The Premier is saying he is going to talk about it. He is going to talk about fisheries at a federal-provincial conference once a year. That is great. As long as he does not have to assume any responsibility for it, there is no problem. You can talk all you like.

The next thing they are going to talk about at their federal-provincial conference is Senate reform. As has been pointed out by many of the speakers on this side, whatever chance there was for Senate reform is going to be virtually impossible from now on because it

would need unanimous approval of all the provinces.

It was interesting when I heard the Premier talking about the Australian Senate, that it is too powerful and the states have lost their power. I just happened to be reading this morning an article on the Australian Senate. The criticism that comes from the people in Australia is that they do not think their Senate is powerful enough. They would like to see it have more power. Somehow or another, I think when I talk about the Premier being shadowboxing, I think he might have been shadowboxing a bit when he talked about the Australian Senate too because obviously he had not read the information that is available on it.

The Triple 'E' Senate we are talking about we suggest would be one way to do away with the regional inequalities that are in Canada, and do away with the 'have' provinces and the 'have not' provinces. Most of the provinces have made some progress down through the years because of improved economies in the Western provinces, I suppose, and because of the political will that was put to place in Quebec.

But I can remember 1955, the first time I was in Canada, there was only one 'have' province in Canada, and that was Ontario. The rest of the provinces at that time were not. But through the gradual working of the system, there has been a movement towards equality, in all except Newfoundland. Newfoundland was going to wait until 1979, and then Newfoundland stopped progressing with the current administration. When the current administration took over, Newfoundland started to fall

further and further behind. We have had years of this government shouting and screaming, 'We want this. We want that,' but they still have never been able to perform and Newfoundland has fallen further behind.

The big thing in Canada we have always known is the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec have 170 seats out of the 282 in the federal parliament. This means that they can do exactly what they want. It means that the Provinces on the peripheral the Newfoundlands and anyone else outside of that centre block have got to be in trouble. As I have said, because the economy has improved in certain Provinces, their inequalities have been smoothed out somewhat and they are doing a better job than Newfoundland.

For a federal system to work, there must be a majority of the people represented in a House that represents that country. But there must also be a House that represents the majority of the provinces. So this is where the Triple 'E' Senate would come in.

We have the 170 MPs from Ontario and Quebec and yet we do not have the counterbalance that is in the federal system to take care of the needs of the Province. As has been pointed out through this debate, the Province of Newfoundland just has not the clout politically to do make any waves as far as getting a programme approved for Newfoundland.

All the programmes that have been approved to increase regional equality, the DREEs, the DIREs and now ACOA, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Wells) has pointed out, this has now been watered

down because there is now provision made so that Ontario and Quebec are going to get the benefits that are there through this system, because they have the political will to put it in force.

The point, Mr. Speaker, is that until we have a system in place so that the provinces can equally decide what is good for them, tempered to the fact that the people are represented in the House of Commons to make the decisions, which again has to be approved by a Senate that is looking out for the interests of the Province, we are not going to have equality. So an elected Senate, as I said, and equal representation from each province.

Now, the effective part of that, the last 'E', says that it would mean that each province would have an equal voting power and no measure could become a law, and no change in the Constitution, unless it was approved by the Triple 'E' Senate. Then, I say to the Premier, and only then would we have a situation in this Province where there would be no more.

The serious concerns in this Meech Lake Accord is, of course, the fact that we are giving Quebec the right to be a distinct society, whatever that means. They are going to be different.

I point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that when the negotiations were going on leading up to the Constitution being signed in 1982 and brought home, that the provincial government in Quebec at that time was not at all interested in signing any agreement with the rest of the Provinces of Canada. I point out, for your information, that at that

time the Party Quebecois and Rene Levesque had made a decision that they were going to be separated from Canada. They wanted no part of Canada. As a matter of fact, some of you will remember that there was a referendum and the people of Quebec decided that they wanted to stay in Canada, as did the people of Newfoundland under Mr. Smallwood when Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949.

I would point out that really Quebec is not different than the rest of the Provinces, and had the same rights as every other Province. To recognize now that they are distinct means that they are different. I do not believe that in Canada there is any difference from one Province to the other.

We recognize that Quebec is special. It is special because the majority of the people who live in Quebec speak French. But we have taken care of that. We have entrenched two languages in the Constitution so that there is no problem about Quebec being different from that point of view.

As my colleague for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) talked about yesterday morning, there are Ukrainians, Italians, Spanish. Everyone else who lives in Canada has special interests but the Provinces themselves are each as equal as the other.

Now what is going to happen is Quebec will have veto power over future constitutional changes because Quebec is a distinct society and cannot be treated the same as the other provinces. We have said this in the Constitution right now, that Quebec is different. Provinces in the

Constitution are left as being interpreted as one way for nine provinces and it is going to be the other way for Quebec.

Can the Charter of Rights be different in Quebec than in the remaining nine Provinces and the territories? I say no. Again, the experts out there that we hear about all the time are talking about it.

One of them again is Stephen Scott. He says, "When Mulroney talks about bringing Quebec into the constitutional family, that is a political concept, not a legal concept. The Accord is the price to stop them from sulking."

If that is the reason that the Meech Lake Accord was signed, if it was a political and not a legal concept, I do not think that is a good reason for changing our Constitution because once we do it, we have lost whatever equality we had in Canada and whatever chance we ever had of being a nation.

The fact is we are now becoming the most decentralized country in the world by doing this. I think Creighton said in his history of Canada that Canada is two nations warring in the bosom of a mother state. Now we are going to have ten nations warring in the bosom of a mother state if we do not do something about this.

I feel, by virtue of the fact we have seen people come out now and the public pressure is starting to build, that there are going to be changes made in the Meech Lake Accord. The pressure is already out there. If the same poll was done now that was done last year in June, asking the people of Canada how they felt about the

Meech Lake Accord, you would find that the vast majority of them now feel that Canada is not going to be well served by passing this Meech Lake Accord.

I assure you, there is where the problem is, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the people of Canada now are dissatisfied and feel that they are being ill-used by having this Meech Lake Accord inflicted upon them. I think that is the word the Premier used today.

When we see Premier McKenna in New Brunswick having decided, he would like some more answers before he is ready to sign this; we see the Saskatchewan government deciding that they need to see some further moves before they agree to do this; I feel there is possibly some hope.

It is unfortunate that we have to stand here in this House with the Premier refusing to admit that maybe he should now have public hearings. That is the point I feel we should be very concerned about, Mr. Speaker. The people of Newfoundland have not been made aware that there are serious problems in the future if the Meech Lake Accord becomes law.

It can be passed in this House. It can be done very easily because there are more members over there than there is here, so they can inflict upon the people of Newfoundland all the serious problems we, here in the Opposition, and people all across Canada have pointed out that are in the Meech Lake Accord. I think that before we jump into this and make any serious mistakes with it, now would be the appropriate time to say we will hold off on this for a while, have our public hearings, go all over the Island,

get input, put a white paper out and explain to the people exactly what is in the Meech Lake. Tell them.

When we hear the Premier talk about fisheries and what he is going to get in fisheries, we know what he is going to get in fisheries. He is going to get the chance to talk about it. We know that when he comes to talk about it, it now has to be unanimous, ten provinces have to agree. Ontario might not be interested in the fisheries, but before he is allowed to talk or get any benefits from it, every province in Canada has to say, 'Yes, Mr. Premier of Newfoundland, we are going to give you what you want.'

He might say that he has something Ontario has not gotten in this Accord, but I tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, ten provinces have to say, 'We agree, you are going to get it.' That is where the problem comes from, Mr. Speaker, because we realize that in these Maritimes of ours, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are very jealous of Newfoundland fish. We have had our troubles and we know what it is to protect what we have in Newfoundland.

When we talk about the situation that is there, we hear the Premier get up and say, 'This Meech Lake Accord is going to be great for Newfoundland because we are going to talk about our fisheries.'

That is what we are doing, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about our fisheries. We have no right to do anything about it and for this reason what you make up on the roundabouts, you are going to lose out on the swings.

As far as I am concerned, when you

have a situation as we have where nine provinces are equal and then we have one that is more equal, this does not make for a really good union.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, if the thing is allowed to remain as it is, and passed into law, then there is going to be very serious problems for Canada, particularly Newfoundland, because it is not going to do anything to improve the inequalities that we have in Newfoundland because of the fact that we are in the Province that we are in.

The concern is going to be that the regional disparities are still there. The fact that we have one Province out of ten that is more equal than everybody else does not make for a strong Confederation.

Mr. Speaker, I say that we had the opportunity to work the way we were towards an elected senate. This would do more, or would clean up the irregularities and the regional disparities that are in Canada.

So, the granting of Quebec's special rights in Canada is not going to do anything for the overall benefit of Canada. It is going to weaken it, if anything.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support either the motion or the amendment. The amendment was put forward by the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey) to point out that it was wrong that one province, Quebec, be given special status under Confederation. It is certainly wrong. We in Newfoundland have as much right to special status as any province in Canada. God knows we have more disparity than anywhere else.



We should have the right to special status, but we feel that it is not right. We feel that a Canada that is controlled by a change in the Senate to the Triple 'E' principle will give Newfoundland and the other have not Provinces the equality that is needed to make Confederation bloom and blossom.

In closing, I believe that every Province in Canada should be equal, and we should not have one more equal than the other.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:

Before we adjourn the debate for today, I would just like to make a brief intervention in the debate.

We are on the amendment as proposed by the Liberal Party. I understand the rules are flexible enough that we can debate the issue in its broadest terms, and obviously, as we have seen in the last couple of days, the many speakers on this debate have not just addressed themselves to the Liberal amendment.

I did want to say it has been quite interesting in the last two days to listen to the members of the Liberal Party speak to the amendment proposed by the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey).

At first I was surprised when I first noticed the member for Gander (Mr. Baker) saying that he could not support the Meech Lake

Accord and he also could not support the amendment. Then I was even more surprised to hear the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Wells) stand up and say the same thing. Now the most recent speaker, the member for Burgeo - Bay D'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert) followed, so I really must say, Mr. Speaker, before I close the debate to pick it up the next day that it is quite clear to me, in sitting and observing what many speakers have referred to as the historic debate of great importance to the people of Canada and certainly to the people of this Province - the member for Gander yesterday talked about the unfortunate fact that there has not been much media coverage of this debate - but, it is quite fascinating to see the gyrations and the gymnastics the Liberal Party is going through on this..

It is quite clear to my own mind that what they are doing with this debate is simply playing political games and are not at all addressing themselves in a serious fashion to what is obviously a very critical debate facing the people of the entire country.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn the debate for today and pick it up the next time around.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, had we known that the member for St. John's East (Mr.

Long) was going to take that approach, we probably would have given him leave to carry on for a couple of hours. Anyway, it will be interesting to hear the debate. The hon. member is a new member, and the other thing he has not seen much of in this House thus far is a filibuster, and I think that is what you are seeing here these days.

Mr. Speaker, before I move a motion to adjourn, I want to give my daily little speech, -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No, no!

MR. SIMMS:

- particularly for the benefit of my own hon. colleagues here on this side. Some members want to know what kind of business we are going to be doing in the House the rest of this week. I know the commissionaires up there are very interested in knowing what goes on, if the hon. members are not. I will tell them.

On Thursday, we are going to be carrying on with the Meech Lake Debate. Actually, first of all, Mr. Speaker, we will be doing Order 31, Bill 32, which I believe I have an agreement with the three parties on to try and put through the three stages. It is a minor amendment on the Atlantic Accord to change a date or something, but we have to go through committee and third reading. So will be doing that first item of business, then Meech Lake.

On Friday, we will again continue with Meech Lake. Unless, of course, Meech Lake has been concluded by the end of Thursday.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) other amendments.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, unless there are other amendments.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to keep my colleagues much longer.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3 of the clock, and that this House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until Wednesday, May 18, 1988 at 3:00 p.m.

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