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Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):

Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, just before the House gets underway I wonder could I ask Your Honour on behalf of hon. Members to send a letter of condolence to the family of the late Dr. Reginald Ball from Grand Falls, a well-known resident of the Province who served overseas. He was past President of the Newfoundland Dental Association, a life member of the Newfoundland Dental Association, a life member of the Canadian Dental Association. He was also involved in a variety of service groups and organizations, serving as President of the Lions Club, the Rotary Club, the Curling Club and the Golf Clubs. He was a member of the Newfoundland Curling Hall of Fame. He was also involved in the Air Cadet League. He was also politically active, I do not mind saying, as a former President of my own Association in Grand Falls. So I would like to ask the House to send a letter of condolence to the family.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On this side of the House we would

like to associate ourselves with the comments of the Opposition House Leader. (Mr. Simms). I knew Dr. Ball myself some years ago and recognize the contributions he has made not only to Grand Falls, but the Province as a whole.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure most Newfoundlanders, like most Atlantic Canadians, were shocked on the weekend to learn of the tragedy that happened at sea when eight fishermen were presumed lost, fishermen who were serving on a longliner fishing in that area. I think, Mr. Speaker, it would be appropriate if this House were to express to the families of the fishermen concerned our deepest sympathy.

So I would ask that Your Honour take whatever action is necessary to convey that message to the families of the fishermen concerned.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, we certainly would want to be associated with those sentiments. Unfortunately there were other occurrences as well, I believe, there were some other vessels that had a loss of life. So we agree with the sentiments of the Minister and would certainly want to be associated with any communication from this House to

the families of those people involved.

MR. SPEAKER:

I would like to welcome today, on behalf of all hon. Members, the newly elected Member for Trinity North, the hon. Mr. Hynes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Also we would like to recognize and welcome to the galleries today women and men who just attended a vigil in memory of the students who were brutally murdered in Montreal last week. I should remind these ladies and gentlemen that the House conveyed its condolences unanimously, I think it was on Friday, or Thursday, in this regard.

We would also like to welcome to the galleries forty-seven Grade V students from St. Peter's Elementary School in Upper Island Cove, accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Mugford and Mr. Lynch. We would also like to welcome thirty-five Grade XI students from Queen Elizabeth High School, Foxtrap, accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Don Sparkes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This Government came to office in May of this year. In that same month the interim report of the

Harris Panel on northern cod was released. It warned of an impending disaster in the most important sector of this Province's economy.

The total allowable catch for northern cod had already been reduced from 266,000 tons in 1988 to 235,000 in 1989. The interim report of Dr. Harris suggested that it should be reduced further to 190,000 tons in 1990.

This was the news which greeted the Government upon taking office. I immediately arranged a meeting with the Hon. John Crosbie, on May 26, to determine what the federal plans were for dealing with this problem. The Federal Government had established a special Cabinet committee and a task force of officials to study the problem and recommend solutions and measures to address the economic consequences.

I agreed with this approach and took steps to establish a parallel provincial structure; that is a Provincial Cabinet Committee, chaired by myself, and, a Provincial Task Force to analyze the dimensions of this problem, and recommend solutions.

This analysis proceeded over the summer months and was completed by early August. The findings were that the reductions in the TAC for northern cod and certain NAFO managed stocks on the Southern Grand Banks would lead to a cumulative loss of about 100,000 tons of groundfish to our offshore sector.

This analysis further indicated that the direct loss in economic output - when I say 100,000 tons, Mr. Speaker, I should point out that that is from the high that it

was in 1988 of 266,000 tons in the northern cod quota. This analysis further indicated that the direct loss in economic output to the Province would be about \$200 million. About 3000 person years of work would be lost; several plants in single industry isolated communities could face closure; and, about one third of our deep-sea trawler fleet would be decommissioned.

Thus, we knew by early August the potential economic dimension of this problem. I immediately arranged a meeting with the Federal Cabinet Committee. At that meeting, which took place on August 23rd in Ottawa, I presented our analysis entitled "Resource Crisis in the Newfoundland Fishery: A Preliminary Assessment". The Federal Government did not immediately accept our analysis, but indicated that it wanted to conduct a similar analysis of its own. Now, although I felt that the results of that analysis should be released to the Newfoundland people as soon as possible, I did agree to a Federal request to delay such release to permit a joint Federal/Provincial analysis to be performed. We waited several weeks, but when it appeared that the joint analysis was not proceeding as agreed at our August 23rd meeting, I had no choice but to release the Provincial analysis on October 5th, at which time a detailed media briefing was conducted. Our document of August 23rd did not just analyze the problems, it proposed response measures to alleviate the tremendous economic dislocations which our Province would suffer. The first approach was through the fish allocation process. Over the years thousands of tons of northern cod had been

landed outside this Province, in the mistaken belief that this was fish surplus to Newfoundland's requirements. We pointed out that not only was this perception wrong, but it violated the basic principles of the Canadian groundfish allocation policy. We advocated a return to those principles. Now, Mr. Speaker, many misconstrue this as a statement by this Government that we did not want Nova Scotia to have any fish, we wanted all the fish in Newfoundland. That is incorrect. Our position was, that they should apply the standard and well known principles that are part of their policy and if this reduces the quantity in Nova Scotia, so be it. If it reduces the quantity in Newfoundland, so be it, but, they should stick with the principles and apply it fairly. The strict application of these principles would take fish away from some Newfoundland users, and, from non-Newfoundland users, and if it resulted in proportionately more fish being taken away from non-Newfoundland users then this was the way it should be. The principles, we believe must be applied fairly and impartially and we must all live with the results. There is no room in this process for arbitrary decisions which would have the effect of protecting any one Province, and we are concerned that the Federal Government's approach may have that effect. We just cannot support an arbitrary decision based on proportionality. This would result in fish being caught off the northeast coast of Newfoundland and shipped past idle plants and boats in Newfoundland to other Provinces. These Newfoundland plants and boats are adjacent to the resource and have historic dependence and the

greatest economic dependency on the northern cod resource. The only allocation which should be sheltered from any reductions is the Inshore Allowance, and there is good reason for this. The Inshore Allowance was set at 115,000 tons in 1981 when the Canadian TAC was 185,000 tons. That inshore allowance did not share in any of the growth, as the TAC grew to 266,000 tons in 1988. Therefore, it should not be asked to bear any burden of the reduction as the TAC returns in 1990 to what was essentially the 1981 TAC level. Moreover, any uncaught portion of the Inshore Allowance should continue to provide a conservation buffer. We have made that position known and we have maintained it from the beginning, Mr. Speaker. Beyond the allocation measures, the Province, in its August 23rd paper recommended five basic response measures for the Government. These were:

(i) Short term compensation and income support, which the people that will be displaced by these plant closures will need in order to meet their everyday needs.

(ii) Fisheries operational considerations and management measures to rationalize and increase the efficiency of the fishing industry;

(iii) Alternative Developments in the fishing industry, such as non-traditional and underutilized species, including seals; aquaculture; additional value-added processing; marketing; fishery technology transfer and development; and fishing gear manufacturing.

(iv) An economic and industrial diversification program to create

opportunities outside the fishing industry for persons presently engaged in the fishing industry solely because they have no other alternative available to them. This will also broaden and strengthen the Province's economic base; and,

(v) Education and training in support of; greater efficiency in the fishery and preparing people for career change.

The Province's analysis was largely confirmed by the FPI announcement in the September edition of its company magazine "Soundings". FPI advised its employees that in 1990 it would have to de-commission 15 of its deep sea trawlers, and close several of its traditional offshore plants.

National Sea Products has announced today that it will be closing its plant in St. John's, with a loss of 492 jobs. The trawler base in St. John's will continue to operate. I believe this will provide something in the neighborhood of 130 jobs. The Province is disappointed with this announcement of closure, but takes some comfort in the Company's plan to maintain the plant so that it can be re-activated once stocks have recovered.

I am advised that FPI will be following shortly with an announcement which will add more detail to its earlier announcement in September. I anticipate this could result in further substantial job losses.

In the two major companies alone, FPI and National Sea Products, the job losses in Newfoundland will likely involve very large numbers of people. Furthermore, many of

our plants along the Northeast Coast which depend on the Resource Short Plant Program, the Scandinavian Longliner Program, and other allocations, may face job losses in 1990. Unfortunately, our forecasts of August 23rd are coming true. I wish we had been wrong, that we had missed some important fact which would have lessened the terrible impact upon our Province. But we did not, and we cannot hide from the horrendous conclusion that we are facing a calamity in the fishing industry.

We have worked closely with the Government of Canada on this problem. Despite some earlier differences of view on the magnitude of the problem, our discussions have focused largely on appropriate response measures, and I am pleased to state that these discussions have proceeded in a positive atmosphere of common concern and common purpose.

We have agreed with the Government of Canada that the response measures should contain three basic elements:

(i) A community/worker adjustment program designed to meet the needs of the communities and the workers where there will be a plant closure;

(ii) A community economic diversification program designed to provide in those communities an alternative employment opportunity;

(iii) A general economic diversification program designed to build a viable fishery and to broaden the economic base of the Province in order to lessen our economic dependence on the fishery.

I am pleased that the Honourable

John Crosbie has announced the first two elements of this program today. These will be funded mainly by the Government of Canada, because of its constitutional responsibility in the fishery. However, the Province will be participating in the Program for Older Worker Adjustment on a 70/30 Federal/Provincial basis.

I wish to commend both the Federal and Provincial Task Forces for the diligent manner in which they have conducted their work. There are still some differences between the Federal and Provincial Governments on allocation questions and on the level of funding required to respond properly. Nevertheless, I also commend the Federal Government for recognizing its ultimate responsibility for its resource management decisions.

Mr. Crosbie indicated today that the community/worker adjustment program will include the following:

A community Futures/Industrial Adjustment Service; Training Assistance; Emergency Response Funding to ensure everyone affected qualifies for unemployment insurance; and, A Program for Older Worker Adjustment.

There will also be a Community Development Fund for the communities that are directly affected, to develop economic alternatives for those communities. The Province will be working closely with the Federal Government on the implementation of these programs and expresses its willingness to work with the affected communities, through its Economic Recovery Commission, to promote the greatest benefit through the expenditure of these

funds.

The third element of the response program is to build a viable fishery and to broaden the economic base of the Province in order to lessen its dependency on the fishery. Considerable work and discussion have taken place on this proposed program which would be cost shared by the Federal and Provincial Governments. Such a program would be all-encompassing for all areas and economic sectors of the Province, particularly, though, the fishery. It would include measures to improve educational opportunities for the young, employment alternatives for workers, and enriched early retirement measures for older workers.

The Province would share in these programs of human resources and economic development measures. This would be a long-term process and the Province is prepared to provide a substantial sum each year for this program over the next 10 years.

We are working on the strategy and elements of this program as we speak and an agreement could be reached, and announcements made within the next two months or so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition Leader.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, ten days ago we saw the Premier rise in this House, on a Friday, I believe it was, and

deliver a statement detailing a tremendous loss of jobs in Grand Falls. At that time, we referred to the statement as being delivered on Black Friday.

Today we see the Premier standing again, for the second time in ten days, Mr. Speaker, detailing, first of all, the loss of about 500 jobs at the National Sea Fish Plant on the Southside of St. John's, and then going on to give a much more detailed statement of what we are to expect for the future.

Really, in essence what we have seen here, Mr. Speaker, over ten days, is the Premier of this Province having to stand in this Legislature and tell the people of Newfoundland and Labrador of the loss of 1,000 jobs. One hundred jobs a day have been lost in this Province over the last ten days, and the Premier has to stand in this House and tell the people of the Province, through this Legislature, of the tremendously difficult economic future this Province is facing.

Mr. Speaker, what we have seen here is an admission by the Government. Despite the number of opportunities the Government has had in this Legislature over the last several weeks, we have finally seen an admission by the Government that the Government knew all along, and we on this side of the House have been saying it for weeks, that the Province was facing a tremendous disaster in the fishery. Every time we rose in this House, Mr. Speaker, to ask questions in that regard, every time we proposed resolutions through the Private Member's process, we were accused of scaremongering, we were accused of trying to incite people for no

good reason. But finally, today, Mr. Speaker, we see the Premier again having to throw down the gauntlet and come before this House and admit the tremendous failure this Government had presided over in the last several months.

MR. SIMMS:

They did not like to hear that. They did not want to hear the truth.

MR. RIDEOUT:

The Premier takes a lot of pride in trying to tell this House and the people of this Province that one of their first actions as a Government was to detail and to lay out to the Government of Canada the principles surrounding the Groundfish Management Plan, principles that are as old as the 200 mile economic zone itself, principles, Mr. Speaker, that are as old as the Groundfish Management Plan itself, principles of adjacency, historic dependency, and usage, not new words, Mr. Speaker, to the vocabulary of the fishing language in Newfoundland and Labrador, I say to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, when the Premier was Leader of the Opposition, and I reminded the Premier of this in the House some weeks ago, he, in March of 1988, told this Legislature as Leader of the Opposition that when he became Leader of the Government he would see to it, there was no trouble to see to it, it was easy to see to it, that fish that was not surplus to the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador would not go outside this Province to be processed. That is what the Premier said.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

So, Mr. Speaker, we see again a lot of talk, we see again a lot of action, we see again a lot of rhetoric by the Premier, but certainly a lack of action in providing any concrete alternative to those one thousand people, 500 today and 300 or 400 ten days ago, who are facing economic despair because of the lack of action of this Government.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier goes on to point out some of the elements in the analysis that his Government did back in the first part of this year, and he talks about fisheries operational considerations and management measures to rationalize and increase the efficiency of the fishing industry.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows that before another couple of months are over, Fishery Products International will be making announcements similar to the announcement that was made today by National Sea. The Premier knows there will be fallout, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the potential elimination of the Resource Short Plant Program and other programs that delivered fish to plants along the Northeast Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador that were dependent on the seasonal inshore fishery. The Premier knows, therefore, Mr. Speaker, and has admitted as much in this House before, that the jobs of another five or six thousand Newfoundlanders are at stake yet, as a result of a downturn in the fishing industry. The Premier has not addressed that. He has given a passing allusion to it, but he has admitted it before in this House.

When you talk about rationalizing

the fishery, when you talk about making the industry more efficient, when you talk about a Community Worker Adjustment Program, what are you talking about, Mr. Speaker? I say to the Premier that the Premier may as well say now to Newfoundland and Labrador that you are talking about a massive resettlement program the likes of which this Province has not seen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

If you are talking about all this bad news, Mr. Speaker, on the Southside of St. John's, or if you are talking about it in Gaultois, or if you are talking about it in Grand Bank, or if you are talking about it in Fortune and Ramea, or if you are talking about it in Old Perlican and Bay de Verde and other communities around this Province, what are you going to provide as an alternative? What is this community adjustment that the Government is talking about? Are we talking about a microchip factory for every rural community in Newfoundland and Labrador, or are we talking about creating some sort of economic infrastructure in the larger centers of Newfoundland and Labrador, which means that the Gaultois of this Province are dead forever? Is that the kind of adjustment package we are talking about, Mr. Speaker?

I say to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, that the time has come for this Government to tell the people of Newfoundland and Labrador once and for all, what is it we face as a result of this disaster in the fishery of this Province? Stop pussyfooting around. Stop skirting around with the issue. Stop throwing your arms up in the

air and saying, 'Oh, we do not know.' But five or six weeks after the Opposition has been pounding the Government in the House, the Government has no other choice but to come to the House and admit that we know, we knew all long, but we still do not have a plan.

Mr. Speaker, this Province is on its knees as a result of the inactivity and the lack of action of this Government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the hon. the Premier. In view of the fact that about 600 employees of National Sea Products, in the St. John's division, have been given their notice today for effective closedown in March - almost 500 employees - and in view of the fact that this economic disaster will have negative impacts on St. John's, Shea Heights, Kilbride, the Goulds and a number of other communities around the Avalon Peninsula, and in view of the fact that it will have a negative impact on fishermen fishing at the Battery, Quidi Vidi, Bauline, Flat Rock and whole a host of other communities around the Avalon Peninsula, would the Premier tell the House what position this

Government adopted on the closure of the St. John's plant when the Government was finally made aware that St. John's was the National Sea plant that would close in Newfoundland and Labrador?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

I will correct one misstatement. The number, I understand, is not 600, Mr. Speaker, it is 492.

MR. RIDEOUT:

No, five hundred I said.

PREMIER WELLS:

Six hundred, I heard. Anyway, it is 492.

The impact will be hardest felt on Shea Heights. Just about half of the people who will be affected by this are from Shea Heights. So its greatest impact will be on Shea Heights.

We learned about it, I believe it was on Thursday. I am not sure. I think it was late Thursday afternoon we met with National Sea Products, or maybe it was Wednesday, I do not remember, with the request that we allow them the opportunity to go their employees first and tell the employees directly. Now, that is why - it was not a question of maintaining secrecy, as some editorial writer decided to write an editorial about. We did not want to keep it secret. We would have announced it immediately, except we honoured the request of National Sea Products. They said, we will do you the courtesy, Government, of telling you what the decision is, so would you please undertake to let us speak directly to our employees first? We did not think that that was an unreasonable

request, and to the editorial writer of The Evening Telegram I say, that was the reason for non-disclosure. It was not a question of secrecy at all.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Now, Mr. Speaker, that was a classic act of avoiding answering the question.

In view of the fact that the Premier avoided answering the question - I asked him what position the Government adopted when they were advised it was at St. John's that the National Sea plant was to close down - let me ask him this, Mr. Speaker: So that the people of the Province will know what the Government position was while National Sea was considering closing St. John's, Burgeo or Arnold's Cove, will the Premier tell the House whether or not, in fact, the Provincial Government made it clear to National Sea Products that if there was to be a closure of one of those plants in Newfoundland it had to be St. John's?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the Government did not say that to National Sea.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell the House what I said to National Sea Products: We are not prepared to stand by and see National Sea Products catch the great bulk of its fish off the coast of

Newfoundland, take them past idle plants in Newfoundland and process them in another province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, National Sea has made its statement today on the basis of an assumption that it told the Government, and I will tell the House now. The assumption is that it will have 25,000 tons of northern cod, because it assumes that everything will be taken down proportionately, including the inshore allocation. Now, Mr. Speaker, just stop and think of that. If you reduce the inshore allocation from 115,000 tons, that enables National Sea Products to get its share up from 19,000 to 25,000 tons. Where does that 6,000 tons go? It comes out of the Newfoundland inshore and gets taken to Nova Scotia. And we said, 'No, we will not tolerate that.' That is what we told National Sea Products.

We told National Sea Products that Burgeo was an isolated community on the south coast of Newfoundland where there is nothing else, no other reason for existence. And we reminded National Sea Products, as we reminded Fishery Products, when you make your decisions you cannot consider only the bottom line for the company, National Sea Products. Those fish are not on the balance sheets of National Sea Products and Fishery Products International, they are in the waters surrounding Newfoundland, where the fishermen fished for hundreds of years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we told National Sea Products you must take all of these factors into account and you must take into account the impact on any communities where you are thinking about closing plants. Because we will not sit idly by

and not bring pressures to bear on the Federal Government to reduce further the enterprise allocation of National Sea Products, if you do not take into account the interest of the Newfoundland communities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again the Premier did not answer the question. It was all very fine rhetoric. Let me ask the Premier this: Does this Government have a commitment and an assurance from National Sea Products that every fish that was landed in St. John's and processed in St. John's, will be processed in some other National Sea plant in Newfoundland and Labrador when the St. John's plant closes? Does the Premier have that assurance in blood, if necessary?

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

No, Mr. Speaker, I do not have the assurance, and I will tell the House why. I asked for it. I told Mr. Crosbie and I told the Federal Authorities exactly what we expected. We will not agree with it, and we will do everything within our power to resist, the kind of allocation of fish quotas that will allow this transfer from Newfoundland to Nova Scotia that would result from a pro rata

reduction of fish allocation. We have advised the Federal Government and we told National Sea Products in no uncertain terms, that we would use every means at our disposal to ensure that there was not a reduction of fish in Newfoundland and a transfer to Nova Scotia, and we will do so.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There is pretty weak support over there today.

Mr. Speaker, could the Premier tell the House whether or not the Government explored with National Sea Products any options for keeping its St. John's plant open?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

We could have looked at taking a few million dollars from the taxpayers of Newfoundland and subsidizing it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Well, why not?

PREMIER WELLS:

I will tell you why we did not.

PREMIER WELLS:

Free trade, which hon. Members opposite supported.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

The way that particular free trade agreement is worded, it would prevent us from doing that. Not only would it adversely affect National Sea Products, Mr. Speaker, it would affect the whole east coast. Not just Newfoundland, the whole east coast Canadian fishery would be affected by that. That is why that was not really an option. We did everything else we could within our power to pressure and cajole Fishery Products and National Sea Products, and cause the Federal Government to pressure them, to land the fish in Newfoundland, where they were catching it, in quantities sufficient to keep the Newfoundland plants open. They have already closed one plant in Nova Scotia, they are announcing the closure of another plant in Nova Scotia today, at Canso, where there is a very substantial reduction in numbers, and they are announcing the reduction of operations at North Sydney. So there is a very substantial reduction outside Newfoundland.

We are concerned, Mr. Speaker, because of the manner in which National Sea Products is trying to blackmail the Federal Government on the question of allocation, that Burgeo is also at risk, and we want to make sure that we do not have two plant closures in this Province.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter). In May,

1988, the Premier said, 'It is the position of this Party that no other province should have access to the Canadian waters around Newfoundland for catching fish as long as plant facilities and fishermen in Newfoundland do not have an adequate supply.' Now, he basically reiterated that today. I would like to ask the Minister formally, is this still the position of this Government?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. And I can tell the Member in the House now, and I sat in on those meetings with the Premier, of course, when he laid the law down to officials of NatSea -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

You can laugh if you want. It is no laughing matter.

MR. RIDEOUT:

You are right.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, yes, that is the position. We Newfoundlanders feel that under the principles we have established, that of adjacency and other principles, that Newfoundland should have first call on the resource and those are the principles we are going to stick with.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, in light of the decision by National Sea today to close their plant on the Southside in March, that plant ordinarily processed between 30 million and 40 million pounds of fish a year. That is a lot more product than will be picked up by the other National Sea plants in the Province, and the Premier is very correct, I think, when he says that the extra fish will go outside the Province. So really what we are seeing here is people in Newfoundland, plant workers and fishermen, deprived of markets and a place to work and the extra work and product will be going to Nova Scotia to create jobs. I ask the Minister, what is his position on that?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago, in his statement, the Premier made reference to the fact of how we would take a very dim view of seeing fish caught in Newfoundland waters, on board a vessel sailing past idle fish plants in Newfoundland, on its way to Nova Scotia. Naturally we are going to oppose that kind of an operation, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HEARN:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

MR. HEARN:

Has the Minister or the Government, then, or will they lobby Ottawa to have National Sea's quotas adjusted to reflect the extra product that will be leaving Newfoundland waters to provide jobs outside this Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, at a meeting in Ottawa between the Premier, myself and senior Cabinet Ministers, including the Rt. hon. Joe Clark and Mr. Crosbie, and again this morning, the Premier made it quite clear at those meetings, that Newfoundlanders were going to take a dim view of seeing that happen. We will do what we can, whatever is in our power to do we will do, to ensure that that does not happen.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier.

Ten days ago, on Black Friday as we call it, when the Premier announced Abitibi's ill-fated Christmas gift to the people of Grand Falls and Central Newfoundland, it has since been pointed out publicly that the full and clear story with respect to the job losses was not told. It is clear, first of all, that everybody was given the impression that 250 jobs were gone. Basically, it was attributed to the shutdown of No. 6 machine and the sulphite plant.

I would like the Premier to confirm two things for me: One, it was 271 jobs at that time not 250, but only 150 or so of those jobs were lost because of the shutdown of the sulphite plant and the paper machine; the other 100 or more were eliminated all

throughout the Mill, contrary to what we were led to believe. Secondly, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, I would like the Premier to tell me if he can admit or will admit, or has he had a chance to find out, that the real story should have been not 250 jobs as we were led to believe, but, in reality, 420 jobs were gone, because the 149 call-ins, who were all working regularly, have now been eliminated from the job list, so that the news is much, much more drastic than we thought.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

There are a couple of questions there. The first one with respect to the number, the number Abitibi gave us when I made the statement was 250. I repeated the number Abitibi gave us. If, as the hon. Member says, it is 271, I have no basis for quarreling with it. It may, indeed, be 271. We did know that it was 170 with respect to the particular machine that was being closed. The other seventy, they told us, related to the sulphite mill and other parts of the Mill that resulted from a combination of modernization and closing the sulphite mill, because they are going totally to thermo-mechanical pulp as opposed to the sulphite process. So as far as the machine was concerned, it eliminated only 170 directly, the other eighty jobs, they told us at the time, were related to improvements in efficiency and modernization and the change in the process, from sulphite pulp to thermo-mechanical pulp. The next thing we asked him about was the impact on the woods labour force. We felt there would be some significant impact there, because

you are going to take out of it something in the neighborhood of 50,000 cords of wood. They diminished that, gave an explanation and said, no, over the period of time -

MR. SIMMS:
(Inaudible).

PREMIER WELLS:
I am not hearing what the hon. Member is saying.

- the way we will run our woods operations will not result in a significant number of job losses in the woods. Now, you cannot cut out a significant quantity of wood to be harvested without affecting jobs, is my thinking, but I left it to them to tell me and to tell their individual members what the impact would be.

As to the number of temporary employees, what the hon. member has just said now of 421 -

MR. SIMMS:
One hundred and forty-nine on the call-in list.

PREMIER WELLS:
- 149 on the call-in list, who will not now be called in, I assume is what he is suggesting, and that they would all work regularly, that, Mr. Speaker, is news to me. That information was not provided to the Government by Abitibi at the time, and I am not in a position at this moment to advise the House as to whether or not it is correct. But I will take steps immediately to find out.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the

Premier may not be totally aware of it, and I would urge him to check it out. Because I think he will find that in fact the reality is 420 jobs lost, and, therefore, using the spinoff ratio that we agreed on, one to one, you are talking about 800 jobs lost in that Central Newfoundland area.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that negotiating an early retirement package, which is what the Minister said would probably happen, might mean that the unions may have to give up even more when they get into the negotiations, would the Premier use his influence and the Government's influence, and tell the company in this particular situation, because of the seriousness of the situation and as a sign of good faith, to offer early retirement and lower the age from fifty-eight to fifty-five because of the serious ramifications?

I might mention, Mr. Speaker, that the cost would be minimal, because they are going to save the salaries of 420 jobs, plus they have \$800 million in the company's pension plan. I am asking the Premier if he would use his influence and tell the company to offer this early retirement as opposed to letting it be negotiated, and let us get on with trying to minimize the effect as much as possible.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, we established a Committee consisting of the hon. the Minister of Development, the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture, the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, to deal with these matters. I

would sooner let them do an assessment of it first, before I rush in and say you are ordered by the Government to do this, that, or the other thing, because this is what the Member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms) recommends. As I recall the news report, the union said they disagreed with the Member's intervention on their behalf at the time, so I am not sure that his proposition now is the right one. I would prefer to leave it to the Committee to determine the right course and then take action based on that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am glad the Premier made mention of the references in the newspaper by a couple of union leaders. I should point out to him - and that is what makes me nervous about this Government, they are not up-to-date on things - that last Thursday night, at the election of officers, both those individuals were defeated for every office they ran for, so they no longer speak for the union.

Mr. Speaker, since the Premier has said that Government will do all it can to minimize the effect on the area and to minimize the disruption caused to the lives of people in the area, would the Premier consider - by the way, the recommendation I made was not mine, I talked to a number of union people over the weekend, when I was out there. But they have also suggested some other things, and I would like the Premier to consider these couple of suggestions from the perspective of trying to find a

way to minimize the effect. One, would he immediately instruct his Minister of Forestry and Agriculture to cancel any plans there may be to cut out the sixty or seventy jobs at Wooddale? Would he provide the ninety jobs needed by the Central Newfoundland Hospital to operate the new redeveloped hospital at Grand Falls, plus opening the rest of the beds in Botwood? Would he make a decision now, as a Government, to locate the Government's proposed and promised new university for Central Newfoundland in the Exploits Valley region? Those three suggestions, in particular, were passed on to me, which I pass on to the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

I am not in a position to announce any one of them. I can say to the House, Mr. Speaker, that all matters are under active consideration. The Government is actively considering at this time the manner in which it can make a start on the new Central Newfoundland university facility. Where it will be located will be determined primarily on the basis of Educational criteria. That has to come first and foremost, where it is appropriate to locate it in educational terms, so we must do that. And if it can help alleviate any job losses in the process, well done. That is an additional measure.

With respect to the matters he mentioned, the jobs in the hospital in Grand Falls and the beds in Botwood, it is all in the process of being considered, but that is a matter that will be announced in due course, our

position on that, by the Minister of Health. With respect to what is happening in the Wooddale Nursery, I do not know exactly what the Minister is doing right at this moment with respect to it, but when he gets back from his meetings in Ottawa, I will speak to him about it.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Premier, also. I would like to ask the Premier, does he think the Provincial Government should be doing anything more than it is doing now to address the incidence of violent crime against women and children? If so, what?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I do not come lately to this issue. The first speech I ever made in this House, twenty-three years ago, addressed that question, violent crime against women, because I had encountered a number of women in my legal practice who had been beaten black and blue by - it is difficult to call husbands anyone who would do that to their wives, anything short of some kind animal, because it is hard to understand how anybody could ever behave in that way toward another human being, let alone a wife. I recall, Mr. Speaker, that on that occasion I moved this House to consider implementing divorce.

Now, if you can imagine divorce in Newfoundland in the mid-1960s, it was not the most popular thing. But I had seen this. We have to take action, every action reasonable and possible, to ensure that we prevent to the maximum extent possible any physical abuse of wives and children that are perpetrated by - it is hard to categorize men who do that to their wives and families, but the Government has to do everything it can. But it cannot intrude on every individual household and monitor and watch. As Pierre Trudeau once said, 'Government cannot invade the bedrooms of the nation to see what people are doing'. We cannot do that kind of thing. But short of that, everything within our power will be done.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask the Premier if he will put his money where his mouth is. Last week the Minister of Finance told us that the current account surplus for this year has improved by \$47 million. Will the Premier have the Government spend some of that revenue and commit other public resources to, number one, implementing the planned Department of Justice Provincewide victim/witness court worker program; number 2, to allow the Department of Social Services to increase the number of front-line social workers; number 3, to have in the Department of Social Services fund resource centres for adult survivors of child sexual assault; number 4, have in the Department of Social Services

increased funding for the three transition houses for battered women and children in the Province, in St. John's, Corner Brook and Happy Valley; number 5, immediately have the Department of Social Services commence setting up new transition houses in areas with the demonstrated needs, specifically Gander and Labrador City/Wabush; and, additionally, have the Department of Health expand mental health centres and services for children and adolescents? Will the Premier put his money where his mouth is?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

I would be delighted to take the \$47 million decrease in our deficit, and it is a deficit not a surplus, except for the fact that the former Government put this Province in such deep debt that we must attend to the debt situation. We cannot go on forever burdening the children of the future with the sins of the former Government. We have to address those problems.

So that money would be available for a lot of things, including meeting the incredible deficit that we have in our pensions, except for what the former Government did in terms of managing the financial affairs of this Province. That greatly limits our ability to do anything financially.

Now, as for those specific four things, or five or six or seven or eight things, I lost track after awhile of how many questions there were, but as I listened to the litany of them, every single one of those things have been in consideration in the ordinary

Budget process for many months, long before the Member ever stood to speak about it, and one wonders why they were not implemented in the seventeen years before? We are now in the process of doing it. We are not going to be able to achieve it in one week's notice, because we announce to the House that the deficit will now be some \$47 million less than we had anticipated.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I stood to make these suggestions the day this Assembly opened, at the end of May 1989.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

The Department of Justice last year planned a province-wide victim/witness court worker program. The new Government abandoned the plan and did not provide any money in the Budget to improve in any way public services to victims of crime. My question for the Premier is, why? What is he going to do about it?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

There was no such program in place that I recall, Mr. Speaker. But it was planned. Oh, yes, a lot was planned in the Province. After seventeen years it ought to have been planned. If was so urgent to have it, why was it not in place many years ago? I did not think there was any such

program in place.

Mr. Speaker, I will take a look at the particular program or the particular plan that the hon. Member is speaking about, and bring back to the House information as to where the matter stands and let the House know.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation (Mr. Gilbert). I want to thank the Minister first for providing me with the departmental policy on the use of equipment within the Province on private property. Rather than read out any of this policy statement he gave me, I want to ask the Minister which parts of the Province, which communities, or which isolated areas of the Island part of the Province would qualify to have the Department of Transportation equipment and staff work on private property?

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not have a specific answer for him. I will certainly get it and table it in the House tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker, further to the same question, I want to ask the hon. Minister, to be more definite to him, would he tell me if the St. David's/St. Fintan's area would qualify under the provincial policy on equipment use on private property?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

I will table the information for the hon. gentleman.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I want to tell the hon. Minister that the most important part of the policy is that equipment cannot be used at all unless there is no equipment available in that immediate area. I know for a fact that the St. David's/St. Fintan's area does have this type of equipment available, so probably it would not qualify.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want the hon. Minister to confirm for this House that Departmental staff and equipment were seen, on November 9, doing work on private commercial property, owned by the Member for St. George's (Mr. Short).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, I will find out about

it and certainly report back to the House.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to revert to the topic I was dealing with earlier with respect to Grand Falls. I see the Premier has left, so I will have to direct the question, I guess, to the Government House Leader (Mr. Baker), the Acting Premier. I asked the Premier if he would consider a number of matters that might help alleviate the situation with respect to the significant job losses in Central Newfoundland, and I mentioned three specific areas - the hospital, Wooddale, and the university. I would like to ask the Government House Leader if perhaps he might consider one more matter and discuss it with his seatmate, The Minister of Development (Mr. Furey), who is on this so-called committee. First of all, I would like to know how many meetings this Committee, which was set up ten days ago, have had out in the Grand Falls area with groups involved, including the unions, the councils and all the rest of them.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker, I will take the question under advisement and check, because I have not checked

with the Ministers concerned. I understand the senior officials from all Departments were there on Friday to hold meetings. I am not sure how many other meetings they have held on the issue, but I will certainly find out and let the Opposition House Leader know.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Opposition House Leader, one minute.

MR. SIMMS:
That was not my question. I did not ask how many meetings the officials had. I know the officials were out there Friday, because I spoke with them. On last Friday, black Friday, the Premier announced this magnificent new Cabinet Committee, Chaired by the Minister of Forestry, and two other Ministers, to immediately look into the situation and respond to the difficulties. That was ten days ago. I am asking how many meetings that Cabinet Committee have had in Grand Falls with the people in the area who are involved in this drastic situation?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I understood the Member's question, and I started off by informing the Opposition House Leader that I would check into it and get back to him. That is all I can do right now. Do I have to repeat that again, Mr. Speaker? Because I did answer the question the first time, and I will get back to the hon. Member.

MR. SPEAKER:
Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works,
Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table
today the report of exception to
The Public Tendering Act for the
month of October, 1989.

Notices of Motion

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social
Services.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I
will on tomorrow ask leave to
introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act
To Amend The Day Care and
Homemaker Service Act (1975)".

0 0 0

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House
Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

In view of the dramatic news here
today, as outlined by the Premier
during Ministerial Statements, I
rise under the provisions of
Standing Order 23 to ask leave to
move the adjournment of the House
for the purpose of discussing a

matter of urgent public
importance, and I wish to put
forth the argument that the
regular order of business be set
aside today for the purpose of
discussing the issue of the
fishery, closure of fish plants in
St. John's, and so on, not only
because of the drastic news
outlined in the Premier's
statement, Mr. Speaker, but
because of the ongoing dire
situation we find ourselves in in
the Province, because of the new
unemployment statistics that have
just been made public, a 3 per
cent increase in the overall
unemployment rate, 12 per cent
increase in the overall
unemployment rate, Mr. Speaker, in
the primary sector, and because of
the NatSea decision, and so on.

It is clear, Mr. Speaker, at
least, I hope I will make it clear
to Your Honour, that not only is
the matter urgent, but, more
clearly, the need for an urgent
debate is also obvious. And I
have given Your Honour some
notice, by the way, of this
matter, I might say, not as much
as I wanted to.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

No, I told His Honour just before
the House sat.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we need to have
this debate, because we need to
know the Government's plans to
address this serious situation.
The people in St. John's now know
that their plant is closing. It
is no longer a questionable thing,
they now know it. And they
deserve to have their elected
representatives have an
opportunity to debate that matter
in a very meaningful way, and it

must be now. The debate is urgent, we say.

May I just give Your Honour a few references which I am sure Your Honour will find very, very interesting, and will help him in making this most difficult decision: May 31, 1988 in Hansard, the Minister of Fisheries, himself, when he was sitting on this side of the House, asked for an emergency debate on the fishery. Surely, if he felt the need for one then, he would have to admit a bigger need now.

Beauchesne, Fifth Edition, Section 286, says, the matter "must be so pressing that public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention." And that quote, I think, Mr. Speaker, certainly speaks for itself, it obviously needs immediate attention.

Section 287 in Beauchesne, Fifth Edition: "the subject" should "be brought on early enough and public interest demands that discussion take place immediately." Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that that, too, goes without saying. Hansard, 1978, May 29 the Speaker of the day said, and I quote, "It is a matter in which the Speaker's judgement has to be used." And he said in this particular instance, "I think the matter is urgent. The Chair has to exercise discretion with respect to whether there is a reasonable expectation that the matter would be debated within a reasonable period of time." Even though at that time, the Address in Reply and the Budget Debate were still on the Order Paper, the Speaker said, "We are dealing with parameters and I have to use my judgement of what hon. Members consider urgent. That should not be insulated from what the public

appears to think urgent and important. It would appear to me that if Standing Order 23 has any meanings, and I think that it does," said the Speaker, "that this is a matter which falls within that criteria", and then the Speaker allowed the debate.

Beauchesne 6th Edition - which my friend often likes to quote from - paragraph 390 says, "Urgency" within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means "urgency of debate," I cannot for the life of me see how anybody can argue that there is no urgency of debate.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me give you these two references. I want to quote the very wise words of Your Honour, our own present Speaker, in ruling on a similar situation in Hansard of November 14, this year - a matter which was resolved eventually by agreement - but these were Your Honour's words; first of all Your Honour said, "Whether debate today would do something to help the situation", that was one of the questions in Your Honour's mind, we obviously think that it would. But the second matter and more telling, is Your Honour's other quote, "The key matter is whether the debate should be held today, and in this matter His Honour would have to decide whether or not conditions in the fishery today are any more dramatically worse than they were yesterday." That is Your Honour's quote, Mr. Speaker. And I could not put it, I do not suppose, any more clearly myself. Your Honour has his ruling right there from Hansard of November 14, I submit to you, unless the situation is such that the fishery is not more dramatically affected today, but obviously it is.

So for all of those reasons, Mr. Speaker, and for the very obvious reasons, the need for debate is urgent, and we submit under Standing Order 23, that we should have a debate. I have the appropriate motion for Your Honour, should Your Honour find that the debate should be allowed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Opposition House Leader has done a tremendous job and obviously he has prepared himself well. He has taken the opportunity to get up and rant and rave for four or five minutes, perhaps to try to consolidate his position as Opposition House Leader, which I understand is under some attack from over there.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that if the Opposition House Leader had taken the trouble to check with me, he would have realized that on Friday I announced that we were doing some Committee stages today of Bills. If he had checked with me he would have realized that it was my intention to call Order No. 5, which happens to be the Committee of the Whole on a Bill entitled, "An Act Respecting The Department of Fisheries", just for this purpose, so that it would give us an opportunity to have a discussion on the fisheries. So all his meticulous research could probably be saved for another occasion, because I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the opportunity will be provided in just a very few minutes to have that debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, Mr. Speaker, the only comment I would make is that obviously in Committee of the Whole there is not the opportunity for a full-scale debate on such a pressing issue as a plant closure. Usually the debate in Committee of the Whole deals with clause by clause of a Bill. In fact Your Honour's own rules, your own references in Beauchesne, I am sure your Clerks will advise you, specify that the debate be very specific to the clause, when you are going through a clause by clause debate. So obviously, that is not acceptable. That would not be acceptable to the people of St. John's, who have the right to have their elected representatives debate this matter of such importance, particularly the Member for St. John's South. I would sure like to hear his comments and views on this matter. So I do not think that would be inappropriate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a Bill that deals with the whole of the Department of Fisheries, which has implications for everything to do with fisheries. We even debate the title and so on. There is room for very wide debate in many aspects of this Bill. The clauses in the Bill cover just about everything, Mr. Speaker, and I hope this will provide hon. Members on both sides with an opportunity to debate this issue that has been pressing for some

time, and will continue to be pressing for some time, I suspect, according to the comments made today.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit that there will be an opportunity in the next few minutes to debate this issue, and there is no need to go through the case so ably presented by my friend across the way.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair is ready to make a decision. I can tell the hon. the Opposition House Leader that the Chair does consider this to be an urgent matter, and does consider it a matter that ought to be debated urgently. I can only ask, in view of the suggestion made by the Opposition House Leader, whether the House would not agree to debate it in Committee of the Whole. The decision by the Chair is that it is a matter of urgent debate. Of course the Chair has to follow certain procedures here, but I am just telling hon. Members now that maybe in order to expedite the proceedings of the House, if hon. Members would want to follow the advice of the Opposition House Leader and debate it in Committee of the Whole. The Chair is open to that, but outside of that the Chair will make its ruling with respect to the specific suggestion by the Opposition House Leader, and that the Chair considers it a matter of urgent debate, but that decision will be made after this decision is made.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, obviously we have put forth our argument based on the grounds that we feel it warrants a

full-scale debate and not that it be confined to some piece of legislation that is sitting on the Order Paper dealing with the change in name of the Department, or whatever it does. We would prefer to let our request for leave to stand on its own merits, and we will be guided by Your Honour's ruling, whatever it might be.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

I would suggest to Your Honour that there is no need for the emergency debate as mentioned by the Opposition, simply because ample opportunity will exist in the next few minutes to have such a debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

We will recess the House for just a couple of minutes.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The Chair is ready to inform hon. Members of the decision with respect to the emergency debate. As the Chair indicated before we took the brief recess, the Chair believes the matter to be an urgent matter and believes that the matter ought to be debated immediately. However, in view of the fact that the Committee of the Whole was going to be debating a matter related to the fisheries, the Chair believes that it need not suspend the rules in this regard today, and that we can debate the matter fully in Committee of the Whole. I want to

remind hon. Members as well that in Committee of the Whole over the last little while we have been debating for ten minutes - but that is only by agreement. If we do it by the rules every Member is entitled to thirty minutes. So for this particular case hon. Members might want to go by the rules rather than by the agreement and speak for thirty minutes.

But in summation -

Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

But in summation, the Chair wants to point out that if it were not for the agreement, if you will, or the suggestion by the Government House Leader that there will be room for debate in the Committee of the Whole on this important matter - and the fisheries is a broad ranging topic - the decision by the Chair would have been otherwise in this rather important matter.

0 0 0

MR. BAKER:

Order 5, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we might have permission to revert to Notices of Motion to present a Notice of Motion, at least. Does

the Government House Leader (Mr. Baker) have any objection to that?

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

No objection at all, Your Honour. This is I suppose for Private Member's Day on Wednesday?

MR. SIMMS:

Yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Could I ask the Clerk to pass it back to me, I just passed it to her.

MR. SPEAKER:

Reverting to Notices of Motion.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

The Notice will be presented by the Member for Grand Bank. It is just a notice. So it is at the end of the day when we call our Motion for Wednesday.

Notices of Motion

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Be It Resolved that this hon. House call upon the Provincial Government to provide whatever assistance is necessary to keep all fish plants open in the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Orders of the Day

MR. BAKER:

Order 5.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order 5. Committee of the Whole on a Bill "An Act Respecting The Department of Fisheries." (Bill No. 26).

On motion, that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole on said Bill, Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman, just to clarify a matter that was raised by His Honour before he made his ruling about the debate, the rules for speaking and so on in debate, and the Committee of the Whole. Our agreement has been, thus far, ten minutes back and forth, and the suggestion was made by the Government House Leader or by the

Speaker, maybe we might want to consider a different agreement, a half hour each or something like that. But I would just like to indicate that we are quite prepared to stick with the original rules of ten minutes - ten minutes. So that will give more Members an opportunity to participate in the debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Okay, so we are debating Bill 26, and ten minutes each. Bill 26.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not think anybody in the House of Assembly or anybody in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador would disagree with the Opposition House Leader today when he made the statement that the crisis in the fishing industry is of utmost importance in the Province.

There is nobody at this particular point who is going to stand in the House, or stand anywhere or speak anywhere to the public of Newfoundland and Labrador, and not agree with that particular statement. What we have to look at is, are we going to do it just for the sake of being critical? Are we going to do it just for the sake of attacking a Government, or Government saying something against Opposition? No. I think it has gone far beyond that at this particular point in time. Hindsight is 20/20. If we went back over the last 10, 15, 20 years or 25 years and began to wonder, and began to think about

the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador, if we had to do it all over again, I think a lot of things would have been done quite differently. But unfortunately we blamed whoever we could point a finger at, and sometimes we all get carried away in our duties in the House of Assembly and our duties as politicians. I suppose in many instances we are all guilty of trying to impress on the public the sincerity of the feelings we have in trying to attract people to our side. But nevertheless, that is now gone, and it is time to shake it off and get on with the problems at hand. I have been involved in the fishery all my life, for the last forty-five years in fact. You can literally say I grew up in a fishing boat. I hauled cod traps and I hauled trawls and I jigged fish. I remember when I was nine years old, in the summertime, trying to get some money to go to school, out with my father in the back of the fishing boat trying to jig some fish. Most of us in this House of Assembly have had some experience and a very close relationship with the fishery in Newfoundland, because, Newfoundland survives on the fishery, and if the fishery disappears in Newfoundland, so does Newfoundland. Anyone who does not accept that concept, is not accepting reality. Rural Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders as a whole, cannot survive without the fishery in this Province. The Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador read a statement today that we are losing 492 jobs in the fish plants over here. Now, we would like to say, no, that is not going to happen, and I am sure Opposition Members and the general public would like to say it also, but unfortunately we cannot do that. There is going to be a loss

of jobs in the private sector. You are talking about another six hundred, seven hundred jobs, and it is unfortunate that this is taking place. If we could turn back history and do something about it, there are a lot of things we could have done. No.1. We could have been more protective over our stocks. No. 2. We could have been more careful of the number of offshore draggers - Canadian, that were getting involved in the fishery. No. 3. We could have been more protective over the amount of fish that they were catching on the spawning grounds off The Funks and the time of the year in which they were fishing. If we had only had the foresight to put enforcers on our draggers, not observers, but enforcers. We presently have only one observer per boat on all the Canadian draggers fishing the Grand Banks. You have one individual on the boat observing but he or she has to sleep sometime. Let us suppose they work an average day, twelve hours. They must get some rest, so they probably have to get some rest during the eating period and sleeping period. What happens, when they are no longer there watching the fish come aboard? What happens if the fish are coming out of the nets and they over-catch, what can an observer do about it, really, when they haul up a net full of fish, fifty, sixty thousand pounds at any given time, what do they do? They have grinders, they have grinders installed on the draggers to grind up all the small fish, so they can keep the largest fish to get more production and more dollar value out of it and bring it in, because of the quotas, and because they have to make a profit. If we had instead of two observers, two enforcers, working regularly, and

if they carried guns, and if they could say to a captain "sail to port" you would have a more effective guard of the fish stocks. If we had taken the three boats, the coast guard boats that we have available, and instead of surveilling the Newfoundland small boats - the sixty-four foot, eleven and a half inch boats fishing the Grand Banks, which cannot hurt the stock, they can fish forever, they will not diminish the stocks - we should put those out around the nose and tail of the Grand Banks on a permanent basis and keep the surveillance going, and keep the foreigners out of that area, keep them outside the two hundred miles limit. Possibly we could have saved millions and millions and millions of pounds of fish. If we had forced the draggers to use a larger mesh, we could have stopped the wastage and destruction of the small fish. By using a larger mesh we could have saved millions and millions and millions and millions of pounds, and that is not exaggeration. Over the last twenty-five or thirty years our own Canadian draggers, and foreign draggers from all over the world have destroyed the grounds. If Ottawa itself, regardless, of which Government is up there, whether it is Liberal or PC; if Ottawa had taken the attitude some ten, fifteen, twenty years ago, that the fishery is important to Newfoundland, that the fishery is important to Canada, that the fishery around the waters of Newfoundland is important to the world, what a difference it would have made.

What has been the attitude of Ottawa? The attitude of Ottawa has been that trade relations with foreign countries covering Central Canada, Montreal, Quebec, and

Ontario, on their manufactured goods, is more important to them than trying to drive the foreigners off the Grand Banks. We cannot take up guns and shoot them all, but we can make it difficult for them, we can keep bringing them into the courts and issuing fines, and it might deter some of them. But we did not do that. We can talk about it now but we did not do it. If only our own fishermen had had the foresight twenty years ago to stop using the gill nets. I have not seen a good fishery in Conception Bay for the last ten or fifteen years. Years ago when my father was a fisherman, we would take a thirty foot boat, and his partner would take a thirty foot boat, and we would go to one cod trap. We had eight cod traps in the water and we would only haul one a day and we would fill that boat right to the brim. We would go out again lunch time and do it and we would go out again in the evening. In fact the last year I was fishing we landed and salted, 2500 quintals in one summer, by hand, no hydraulics, no lifts, no gurneys, all by hand. You would not now catch 2500 quintals of fish if you put 10,000 boats and 10,000 traps in Conception Bay. Why? What happened? I do not believe it is the fault of the fish not coming in from the Grand Banks. I believe what happened to the fish in Conception Bay, and most of the bays around, is that the gill nets destroyed the breed of fish that were on the ocean. A lot of the fish breed within the confinements of the bay. When we used to go trawling out of Seal Cove once in a while you would haul up a fish, probably four or five feet long, and it was the breeder, the mother fish, but once the gill nets went into the water that was what was destroyed. What

happens to the gill nets? Just think about it. You put gill nets over the side of the boat, sometimes you get them back and when you do not that gill net is there on the bottom of the ocean and is fishing for years and years, the fish catch into it, it rots out and more are destroyed. Nobody can argue that. The problem lies with the officials who are making the regulations, the licensing programs, permitting the fishery to do certain things beyond the rules and regulations, and there is never any look into the future. Mr. Speaker, when we look at what is happening today we have to face reality, the fish are no longer there. There is no question about that. There is no point arguing and saying, let us keep all plants open. What man in his right mind in this Province would like to see any fish plant closed? There is nobody in this Province who would like to see a fish plant closed. There are eight fish plants in my District and none of them depend on National Sea, none depend on FPI, they depend on the Resource Short Plant Program and the local fishermen. There was a plant in Port de Grave, in my own community of Port de Grave which did not open last year. There were 275 people who did not go to work in that plant last year. Why? Nobody screamed and bawled in this House about that. They could not fish because the fish were not coming into Conception Bay, the fish were not being caught, so therefore there was no work. Nobody wants to see any plants closed. I for one do not. I can boast and be just as adamant about keeping plants open, or fishing in Newfoundland as anybody. I consider myself a Newfoundlander first, and everybody in this House of Assembly can say the same

thing, we are Newfoundlanders first and we do not want to see people suffer. Fishermen have a reason to be in Newfoundland, people have a reason to be, because of the fishery. Ever since Newfoundland was discovered it was fish, fish, fish.

MS VERGE:

Where is the Minister of Fisheries?

MR. EFFORD:

The Minister of Fisheries will speak for himself when he comes. I am speaking for myself now, the way I feel, and what is happening to Newfoundland and Labrador. I am sure when he comes back to the House of Assembly he will be quite capable of speaking for himself.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are not going to speak for your good friend are you?

MR. EFFORD:

No, Sir. I will make sure of that. I speak for myself. There is no question about that.

Getting back to the plant in Port de Grave. That was closed out and many other small plants around the Island. When did we last have plants operate on a seasonal basis? Do you mean to tell me that a seasonal basis is two months out of a year? How many plants in Newfoundland and Labrador, over the last ten years, outside the big national plants, have operated any longer than two or three months? Very, very few. Salfish Corporation plants are lucky to get four or five months and one time they operated for ten, eleven, or twelve months a year. They just closed down for repairs and renovations for the coming year. Nobody screamed. Everybody was contented, but now it is different. The Opposition

can stand and point, they can bawl, shout and they scream, but it is not going to get them any votes. There is not one Newfoundlander or Labradorian that does not know where the problem originated. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rideout) was Minister of Fisheries, the problem was pointed out to him. Do not bring in the Middle Distant Fleet he was told, over and over and over again. It was disbanded by all countries, Scandinavian, Norway, and all European countries. He leased the boats, he did not buy them. He leased the boats that were no good to them over there and brought them over here. They brought them over for the hook and line fishery. What did they do with them and the hook and line fishery? What are they doing now? They are gillnetting. The Middle Distance fleet are out gillnetting on the Grand Banks where the sixty-five footers are gillnetting continuously. That is the only way they can catch fish. It is one of the most useless ways of catching fish in this Province because they do not have the carrying capacity to make a profit. The crews and the boats are over-sized for the amount of fish they can catch. You can ask all the questions you like and you can talk all you like. Look, you shagged up the fishery in this Province and now you have to take the responsibility, or at least put your heads together and try to solve the problem.

Mismangement of the fishery came very clearly; from the former Provincial Government and from the Government in Ottawa.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Who were they?

MR. EFFORD:

Who were they? That is a good question. Initials PC, Tories. I will never forget. One day my father was sailing over to the codtraps - I did not know much about politics then, but there is one thing he told me, there is one thing that I will never forget, 'John, my son,' he talked like fishermen from Port de Grave, like I do, 'John, my son, never forget as long as you grow and as long as you live on this earth, that Tory Times are hard times and make no mistake about that.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Seventeen years certainly proved that and now we have to pay for the future. The fishermen and every Newfoundlander and Labradorian are now going to pay the price for the next four or five years. But thank God, Mr. Speaker, there is a Government now in power who has the concerns of the people.

MR. TOBIN:

Could we have a quorum call, please?

MR. EFFORD:

And I was doing so good.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

A quorum call.

Quorum

MR. CHAIRMAN:

We have a quorum now.

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is really disgusting to see them stand in this House of Assembly and talk about such an important matter. When you look across the floor and see the emphasis they have placed on the fishery here today and over the last week, you would think they were at least interested in debating it in the House of Assembly. What do they do? They play games. Now, that is the message that should go out. That is the message, Mr. Speaker. That is the reason the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are in the situation they are in, because all they have done over the last ten or twelve or thirteen years is play games. Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely unbelievable.

Right now, I could not care whether the Opposition speaks or not in this House of Assembly about the fisheries Bill, if that is all the emphasis they place on the crisis facing Newfoundland and Labrador.

Referring to the hon. the Member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy) about the plant closing. If you were serious about the accusations you are making in the House of Assembly, you would never pull a trick like that. I mean, you can play those games in the House of Assembly sometimes, when there is not an important Bill before the House -

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. EFFORD:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I take pleasure, once again, in standing in the House to take part in the debate on this Bill No. 26, "An Act Respecting The Department Of Fisheries". I guess it has been said at least ten or twelve times in debate that there are really only two changes to this Bill, one is the increase in fines; the other is bringing the Fishing Industry Advisory Board under the jurisdiction of the Minister. Basically, those are the only changes to the Bill. We have no great difficulty with that. But the Minister of Social Services took advantage of the occasion to talk about anything but the Bill. And, of course, we respect that right.

AN HON. MEMBER:
That is what you wanted.

MR. MATTHEWS:
You should let me finish now. I respect that right. It is going to be a wide-ranging debate, obviously, on all aspects of the fishery, which, of course, is good. Because, never before has the fishery been in such a state of crisis as we see it in the Province today. It has been close, on a couple of occasions, to being as serious a situation as we have today, but it never materialized. It almost materialized in the early 1980s. When the Premier today, a number of times, and the Minister of Social Services alluded to the prior seventeen years, which they tend to blame everything on, thank God, in 1982 and 1983, we had a

Government in this Province that stood up for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and the communities where the fish plants are located. We cannot say the same today, Mr. Chairman. We cannot say the same today for this Government which has been in power now for about eight months. For the first time, on a crisis of this nature in this Province, we have a Provincial Government that is going along with the wishes of the bureaucrats and the Government in Ottawa, to downsize the fishery. For the first time. On any occasion before, we could always count on the Provincial Government of the day to oppose such action. In 1982 and 1983, that is exactly what happened, and the Government of the day put up \$40 million to keep plants in Gaultois, Ramea, Harbour Breton, Grand Bank, Fortune, the secondary processing plant in Burin, Trepassey, all around this Province, opened.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. MATTHEWS:

It was a similar situation, just for a different reason. This one is a resource problem, that is the difference. Now, fish - if one believes - and I see the old biologist over there shaking his head. I told him a number of times he would have been better off staying teaching school than coming into politics. Now, if he is the biologist he pretends to be, he must agree that fish is a renewable resource. And, if the stocks rebuild, with proper management, there will be more fish come ashore to provide work for our plant workers, absolutely.

Well, that is why this Provincial Government should oppose and

object to any plant closure in this Province. Under the FPI restructuring privatization Bill, either level of Government can object to do that. If this Provincial Government wants to keep plants open in this Province, all they have to do is object, make a referral to a chartered accountant firm, that firm will determine losses consequently incurred by keeping the plant open, and the Government, then will underwrite the losses. But, for the first time in our history, we have a Provincial Government that will not object or oppose the closure of plants in this Province, the first time. As a matter of fact, over the last 3 or 4 months, the Premier and the Minister of Fisheries have lead the way in this Province and in this Nation on a move and a mood to downsize the fishery. Every time they have opened their mouths, they have talked about displacing 6 thousand people from the fishing industry, every time they have opened their mouths, with no consideration whatsoever that the stocks, with proper management, will rebuild.

Now, to the fish plant that we see closed today, and we are very, very sorry to see that happen in this Province regardless of where the plant is located, regardless of what the political stripe of the District where the plant is located, I feel very, very sorry and sad to see that National Sea Products plant faced with closure in early March. The same way I thought very sad in the early 1980's when I had a fish plant in my district that was threatened. And thanks to the persistence of the Provincial Government of the day, that plant is still opened. If this Provincial Government had the same persistence and the same

determination, it would not allow the National Sea Products plant in St. John's close, or any other fish plant belonging to NatSea or FPI in this Province close. But we do not have it, for the first time in our history. We have a Government that is leading the way to shutting down communities in this Province, and that is very, very sad.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Which Government?

MR. MATTHEWS:

Your Government. The Provincial Liberal Government lead by Premier Clyde Wells and his lieutenant in the fisheries, the hon. Walter Carter. Every time they open their mouth, they talk about downsizing the fishery, 6 thousand people.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the hon. Minister of Social Services said about agreeing on one thing about the crisis in the fishery. Well let me say to him that we on this side believe in an all-plants-open policy. We believed it when we were in Government, and we saw to it that an all-plants-open policy was adopted by putting our money where our mouth was.

Let me just say to the Minister of Social Services that the only ones in this legislature who can take meaningful action on this particular issue is the Government of the day which happens to be your Government. You can take that meaningful action by objecting to a plant closure or plant closures in this Province, and if it comes to putting up a few million dollars to do that, why not do it. As I said a few days ago, what are Governments for if they are not to do these kinds of things, because once these

plants are closed and these communities are shut down, they will never revitalize again. They will never revitalize again. Of course, that is the deliberate plan of both of the major fish companies.

Mr. Chairman, I do not know how many times it needs to be said before this Government receives the message. Fish is a renewable resource. The fish stocks off our shores will rebuild. If we could keep those fish plants operating at reduced capacity, as much as we want to see them at full capacity, until the fish stocks rebuild, more fish can be landed in each port, income for fishermen and trawler men will increase, income for fish plant workers will increase, and these people and their communities will have a future. But, again, the Premier is determined to downsize the fishery. He talks about diversification of the economy. And again, one has to ask the question, what do you do in these rural communities of Newfoundland and Labrador that are settled on the fishery? What other alternatives are there?

We hear things talked about today of programs for older worker adjustments to effect people 55 years and older. 55 years and older for the program of older worker adjustment. What is going to happen to the other hundred and in cases, thousands of people who will not fall under that particular program? They will be on UI for 40 or 42 weeks. What then? That is the question that has to be asked.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Fifty-five?

MR. MATTHEWS:

Well, they are talking 55 now, hoping to reduce it to 50. I am sure the Minister of Employment and Labour knows about that. Maybe she could take some time in the debate a little bit later on and mention about it. Perhaps she could answer some questions for us on it.

But, of course, early retirement is not the question, it is not the answer, early retirement or unemployment insurance. What people want in those communities is an opportunity to stay in their own communities and work. They want more fish. Yes, they want more fish, but we will only get more fish when the stocks rebuild. And if we manage it properly it will rebuild, but this Government, for some reason, does not understand that and is willing to go along with the wishes, number one, of the same bureaucrats in Ottawa that were there in the early 80's who wanted to chop this fishery to pieces, the very same people.

But they did not get their way then. We had a Federal Government of the day who wanted to do the same, but they did not get their way then. Why? Because the Provincial Government of the day led by Brian Peckford, violently opposed it. If we had a Premier in this Province today, who was as persistent and was as strong in a resolve to keep those fish plants open, they would not close, and I see the Minister of Development smiling over there. I do not know if he is smiling because he thinks I am right, or if he is smiling because he thinks I am foolish. I am not sure why he is smiling. I would rather see him smiling than to - maybe it is both, all of the above, yes. But, no, I am not foolish and we are in a situation

again for me, personally, that I did not think that I would be back in in six or seven years, to be very honest with you. We fought one battle in the early 1980s, a very serious, hard battle with people of the community for which I was born and raised in Grand Bank, and I did not think six or seven years later that I would be faced with the very same situation again, by the very same people. As I said, the only thing that saved the day then, was, we had a Provincial Government with the will and the determination, and was willing to put a few million dollars in to keep the thing alive and that is what is needed now, and if President of Treasury Board shakes his head and says you cannot do it, no, you cannot do it if you do not want to do it. You cannot do it, if you do not want to do it. There is an easy way out, to blame it on the last seventeen years or to blame it on the Federal Government.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What about Free Trade?

MR. MATTHEWS:

Free Trade is not the problem. It is not Free Trade, do not blame it on Free Trade. It is the lack of the desire and the willingness of this Government to put a few million dollars to keep your Harbour Breton, your Gaultois, your Ramea and your Grand Bank open. That is what is lacking, it is not Free Trade. It is the lack of this Government's willingness to put a few million dollars up to keep people at home working for a reduced period of time, we all accept that, everyone accepts, the trawler men, the fish plant workers accept that there is a problem with the resource.

MR. BAKER:

Talk to John Crosbie.

MR. MATTHEWS:

No, I am not going to talk to Crosbie, I will probably talk to brother George, who was part of the problem in 1982 and 1983. Brother George was the problem in 1982 or 1983. The Provincial Government of the day should put money up front to keep those plants working. Free Trade is not the problem and you can try to camouflage it all you like, it is not Free Trade.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The Premier supported Free Trade.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Yes, that is right. The Premier supported Free Trade over there. The biggest Tory in Newfoundland supported Free Trade, Clyde Wells. The biggest Tory, the biggest Tory.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He did not support Free Trade, did he?

MR. MATTHEWS:

No at his convenience, he will support whatever he wants. Now, Mr. Chairman, in concluding my remarks, again these people over there have an opportunity to speak when they so desire, they have got ten minutes, same as I have, and if they have any intestinal fortitude, particularly those who are representing rural Newfoundland communities and rural Newfoundland Districts with fish plants, trawler men, inshore fishermen, plant workers, they will stand in their place and take the same stand on this issue as I am taking. Keep the plants open until the fish stocks rebuild. If it takes a few million dollars from this Provincial Government to do that, then do it, and I could

tell you something honestly today, that if I were sitting in a Government that refused to do that, I would not be sitting there very long. I would not sit there very long and see my people that elected me to come to this legislature and represent them, that if my Government did not back me on that, I would not stay there and be part of any Administration that is willing to sell out this Province for what reason, I do not know. What reason, I do not know, that the Premier and the Minister of Fisheries and obviously the Cabinet is willing to sell out this Province, because that is what you are doing, and I look at Members over there with fish plants in their communities, one who has got bad news today and he has known it was coming for a number of days, I know how he feels, because I knew how I felt when I thought it was going to happen, when we thought we had the cookies before. I know how you feel today, I really do, and I know how the people working down there must feel. It is a terrible, terrible feeling, and I have two deep-sea plants in my District right now that are living in dread every day, wondering when the axe is going to fall on them and the only ones again, in this legislature who can do anything about that, to prevent that from happening, is the Government of the day. The Premier, The Minister of Fisheries and his Cabinet can do something about it. You know it is too bad that the Government House Leader does not take the issue as serious as the people around the Province take it, and maybe that is why this Government -

AN HON. MEMBER:

He is from Gander.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Yes, exactly. There are not too many boats tied up in Gander, this evening. We were supposed to be serious and we were serious about the Air Canada issue and the EPA issues in Gander. We did not slough it off that way, we took it serious, because people were being detrimentally affected, the same way as people are being detrimentally affected in a number of communities today, and all I am saying is, to the House Leader, to the other Ministers in the Cabinet is do not let bureaucrats, do not let the major fish companies, do not let the Federal Government terminate a way of life for thousands of our people living in fishing communities around this Province, because it is not going to stop with only the deep-sea plants either -

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please! Order. The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In concluding, there are going to be thousands of people negatively affected and the only one in this legislature who can do anything about it is the Government, so why do you not do something about it?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

MR. MURPHY:

Mr. Chairman, I have to concur with the hon. Member from Grand Bank. It is a sad day for me to have to rise in this hon. House. I do not think any one of the 52 Members who sit in this place would feel very good today if they had lost the major industry in their district, and that is what has happened to me. I have, in

theory, lost the biggest industry in the district of St. John's South. It is a sad day. It is black Tuesday. If the hon. the Member for Grand Falls can call it black Friday, then I will call it black Tuesday - black Monday. Black Monday.

But, you know, Mr. Chairman, I suppose one of the spiteful things I could do today would be get up and blame hon. Members opposite, blame our own Government, blame Ottawa, blame everybody, throw my hands in the air in disgust, make a political speech to suit the 492 people who are demised today, but that is not what this is all about. I think if we look at what has taken place, hindsight, as somebody once said, is 20/20 vision.

National Sea Products today made a decision that was a balance sheet decision. The Head Office of National Sea, in Halifax, decided that 1,600 people within their whole system were going to go to the proverbial wind. In that 1,600 people, approximately 500 of them got laid off or are going to be laid off on March 5th, 1990, in St. John's, and over 260 of those 492 live and work in my district, and that is not easy to take. I would want to talk to all hon. Members about what we have not done, not so much on what we can do, and I will hopefully have enough time to do that, Mr. Chairman.

We have to look over our shoulder and see the anxiety and the tremendous thrust of the rebuilding of Fishery Products International and their trawler fleet, as the hon. the Member for Grand Bank knows only full well, as the hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West knows, when

Atlantic Fish ran the plant in his district, and when Booth Fishery and Bonavista Cold Storage and all the rest of them were out there scrambling and scrabbling, and we have all heard, Mr. Chairman, for years - and the hon. Member for Fortune - Hermitage well knows, and the hon. Member for Fogo, and every hon. Member in this House knows. And today St. John's got it. And that is the last place you would think would get it, St. John's, because St. John's does not come into the context of being a fishing town or a fishing city. But St. John's got it today. You all know of the great demise in 1982, and that the fishery was over and done, but, at the will of the then Government, and I will pat them on the back, they sat down with some very knowledgeable people and they put together Fishery Products International with the help of the Federal Government, with the help of the Provincial Government and the help of the then receiver, the biggest receiver in the fishing industry, the Bank of Nova Scotia. And that company came together, Mr. Chairman, and from that company there was a great lobby, a great push, a great shove to kick that plant off with a smack, and they did it. And I do not want to bring up other things, but the impact today is because of other things. That company had a TAC beyond the capacity of the fishing grounds of this country in 1986 and 1987, and we all know it. And who knew it better than the trawler skippers, the inshore men, all of them? They all knew it. And we had a tremendous lively and vibrant marketplace because of a situation that took place in Russia. 'Now, what kind of foolishness are you talking about, Murphy?' somebody will say. What I am saying is Chernobyl happened

and the people in Europe would not eat meat because the cattle were feeding on the grass after the Chernobyl disaster, and the Icelanders and the Norwegians pumped their product into the European market, getting top dollar, which left the very affluent United States market for us. And we had a grand time. We had a super time. I know, because I was part of it. Who ever thought, as the hon. the Member for Grand Bank knows, that we would realize \$2.45 for a pound of cod block? I do not need to talk about all the other species and all the other products. It was beyond our wildest dreams. We watched a company come together and go to the stock market with \$12.50 of value, and go to \$22 because of the tremendous amount of profit they were making in the fishing industry. That was but two short years ago. Am I right, or am I wrong?

Now, National Sea did not have the same great grab that FPI had. And FPI today are suffering. The Member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Langdon) is over there, like I was last week, shaking in his seat, waiting for Mr. Young and those people to make an announcement that is going to impact on places like Gaultois, Ramea, Harbour Breton, Grand Bank, and the hon. Member knows what I am talking about - do they have the capital funding to hold on?

Now, I have talked to the Premier and the Minister of Fisheries. I have done everything I could possibly do to try to initiate some relief for St. John's South and the plant at National Sea. I have done that, and I can honestly tell this House that without reservations.

Mr. Chairman, the sad part about it is we still have to be realistic, and hon. Members know what I am talking about. We can stand up here and politically grab. Politically grabbing is one thing, but the lives of 6,000 Newfoundlanders may be affected in the coming months through no fault of any politician in this House, Mr. Chairman, through no fault!

Mr. Chairman, let me say this in all honesty: When a bureaucrat who sits behind a desk in Ottawa can tell the fishermen of this Province what they can and cannot catch and what they should and should not catch, then we are wrong.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Your Premier -

MR. MURPHY:
Never mind the Premier. The system is wrong.

MR. WARREN:
He is Your Premier, boy. He is your Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. MURPHY:
May we have order, Mr. Chairman?

For a bureaucrat in Ottawa to tell the Newfoundland fishing industry what they can and cannot catch, is wrong. We know it is wrong. I know eighty trawler fishermen just as hon. Members opposite know them, and they know what is wrong. You cannot throw bag after bag after bag of fish, seven and eight inches long, over the side of a deep-sea trawler and expect to have anything left for the future. Let us all be realistic.

Now, it is a sad day, Mr.

Chairman. It is an extremely sad day for the district of St. John's South; but, more than the district of St. John's South, it is a sad day for the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. And we will not, Mr. Chairman, gain anything, not one single, solitary point in being political over this issue; it is too near and dear to all of us for us to be political. We need to be constructive. If we are going to stand in this House and stand in our place, let us not throw barbs, verbs or adjectives at each other, let us be constructive among ourselves, the fifty-two of us, and ensure that what has happened in 1989, in a renewable resource industry which is the guts of this Province, nothing short of the guts of this Province, ever happens again. And we can hope and dream of all the other things coming in, Hibernia, Lower Churchill, all of that wonderful stuff, but the guts of this Province is the fishery. It is the guts of it, and we all know it. I would ask hon. Members, and remember this, Mr. Chairman -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By-leave, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MURPHY:
Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Mr. Chairman, remember this, if this Government starts to put its hand into the public purse to subsidize, and I say this in all sincerity and you can criticize me if you so wish, to pick up everything that is going to fall in the next year or year and a half, it will just be impossible, we will set a precedent that is beyond us. We just cannot do it.

If, in the fishery, every offshore or every inshore resource plant

fails and we have to go down every time, then surely heavens we have to do the same for the hon. Member for Grand Falls in the forest products industry. Would we not be expected to do the same for the hon. the Leader of the Opposition in his District, in Baie Verte, with the asbestos mine - a dirty word? We would be expected to do that.

And you, gentlemen and ladies over on the other side, when you governed, and I know what you had in the public purse, you tried very hard in many areas. You tried very hard to subsidize and help and hold on and bring back. What did it amount to? The hon. the Member for Grand Bank knows we do not have enough fish to supply the plants and the full-time fishermen. We do not have enough groundfish out there. It is not there.

Let me say this in closing, Mr. Chairman. I will tell you I have not given up. I have given up on the piece of steel on the Southside, on the configuration of a plant, but I am not giving up on the people, Mr. Chairman, I can tell you that right now.

MR. WARREN:
Resign!

MR. MURPHY:
Mr. Chairman, if I did not feel in all honesty today that on December 11, 1989, there was a sincere heart and a sincere feeling for the people of St. John's South and the plant workers in that plant, then I would do what the hon. Member suggested. I would do what you did, Sir. I would run across the floor as fast as I could get there. But I do not have that feeling. And I will tell the hon. Member that I will never have that

feeling.

Mr. Chairman, it is a sad day. But I will tell this hon. House that time will prove that with patience, perseverance, hardwork and a belief in the future, the people of St. John's South will be back in that fish plant cutting fish.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Chairman, let me say to the hon. Member for St. John's South that I do not think there is anyone in this House who doubts his sincerity. I do not think anyone on this side doubts his sincerity. We understand exactly where he is coming from. But I have to say to the Member in all sincerity that your Premier, Sir, your Leader and the Premier of this Province, has shown absolutely no concern for the people who work in the fish plant in St. John's or any other fish plant in this Province.

MR. WARREN:

That is where the Member (inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, there is no question in my mind about the sincerity of the Member for St. John's South. I agree with a lot he had to say this afternoon about the fishery and the trawlers and the whole bit. But when he says of all fifty-two people in this House there is not one of us who can do anything about it, I beg to differ with the hon. gentleman, because the Premier and the Cabinet of

this Province can, indeed, do something about the fishery in this Province. As a matter of fact, it is part of the restructuring agreement. No plant in this Province can close, according to the FPI restructuring agreement, Sir, unless you and your fourteen colleagues support and agree to it. That is where the St. John's plant is somewhat different. But to say no one of this fifty-two can do anything about it is not necessarily right, in that the Government of this Province can indeed do something about plant closures.

We are looking forward to the Premier doing something about it, but I must say I have great doubts, as do most Newfoundlanders, about the interest and the commitment to rural Newfoundland by the Premier and his Administration. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, I would go so far as to say that rural Newfoundland to the Premier of this Province is something that he would like to be able to kick out of his way. The Premier of this Province cannot relate to people who fish in the boats and who work in the fish plants, the same as we can on this side, nor the Member for St. John's South. The Premier of St. John's, the Premier of Newfoundland - yes, probably I should say the Premier of St. John's, because I believe if he has any commitment it is to the high-flung multi-million dollar lawyers in this City and other people he associates himself with.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
No, I have great concern. I am very, very concerned about what is

taking place in this Province. I am very concerned, Mr. Chairman. How many jobs have this Government created is not the question any more, it is how many people have been laid off, jobs gone since this Government came into office?

I believe the Leader of the Opposition, when he was speaking today, said a hundred jobs a day had been lost in the last ten days. That is not a record that anybody should be proud of. And it is going to get worse. Because FPI are going to make a proposal to this Government to close three and probably four plants.

AN HON. MEMBER:
They already did.

MR. TOBIN:
Yes, they probably did. Yes, three and probably four. But this Government can say no. Do not anyone kid themselves, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Premier and his Cabinet, have the right to say no to FPI, no plants are going to close, we are going to support you financially. That is where it is. Nobody kid themselves on that. And if the Premier and his Government are committed to rural Newfoundland and committed to the fishery and to the people who work in the fishery, they will do something about it. But it is nothing but contempt day in and day out towards the fishing industry and rural Newfoundland by this Government.

Last Friday it was the forest industry, with Abitibi-Price driving almost 500 people out of jobs. Today they are in making announcements in conjunction with or on behalf of NatSea, another multi-million dollar national corporation which, in some cases I

believe, shares the same philosophy as the Premier as it relates to people working in fish plants. A Government not only has to have an economic vision, a Government has to have a social conscience. They have to have a commitment to people, to people who are being displaced. But there has been no evidence in the seven or eight months we have sat in this Assembly that this Government has a social conscience.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

They have no conscience. This is a Government, Mr. Chairman, without conscience, a Government without direction, a Government without commitment to the rural people, a Government without commitment to the working people in this Province.

And I know how the Member from St. John's South feels today because I was in a similar position back in 1982. My colleagues know the position I was in when Burin was closing down, and I was strong, and I was firm, and I went to the Premier of the day, and the Minister of Fisheries of the day, and I laid my case pretty tough. I laid my case on the table. And the only difference between me and the Member for St. John's South is that we had a leader and a Premier who cared for rural Newfoundland and who believed in listening to his colleagues and the direction they wanted to see their District going in. And as a result of Premier Peckford, more so than anyone else, as a result of the direction of Premier Peckford, and I will never forget his words, and my colleague was with me, he said, 'Tobin, Burin will survive, and I will see that nothing happens to

Burin.' The Federal Government said no to Burin and Brian Peckford said Burin will survive. We will put a secondary processing plant in there, the Refit Center, and my colleague from St. John's South knows about commitment or the lack thereof, of FPI to really commit themselves to the funding for the secondary processing plant in Burin, and it was again Brian Peckford who interceded, got the \$8 million and built the plant in Burin. That is the type of leadership, that is the type of Premier we had in this Province before. That is the type of Premier we had. We had a man with a social conscience who went down and signed the agreement to give Burin the secondary processing plant, and who gave life and hope and work to the people of Burgeo, and Grand Bank, and Fortune, and Marystown, and Catalina, and St. John's, and Gaultois, and Ramea and all the other places. That is a Government with a vision. A Government with commitment.

Today we see the Premier come in this House and read a paper, and there was absolutely nothing in it except what National Sea had told him. National Sea or FPI should not be telling the Premier how they are going to run the Province. The Premier and the Government should be telling National Sea and FPI how they are going to run the Province.

Mr. Chairman, I remember when Roger Simmons, who is now the Federal MP and then was the Federal MP, and Pierre DeBane, and I am sure my colleague from Grand Bank remembers it well, came to Newfoundland, held a press conference and announced unilaterally what their plan was for the fisheries. There was no Burin, there was no Grand Bank,

there was no Gaultois, that was not the Liberal Governments philosophy of the day. It was to close these communities down. And I can tell you something, Mr. Chairman, that any Newfoundlander, regardless of their political stripe would be some proud of Brian Peckford that day when they made their announcement. They would be some proud of Brian Peckford that day, and for those of us who were around him. I can see the man now. How frustrated was he? I will tell you one thing, he made it quite clear to all of us, over my dead body as long as I am Premier, will they gut rural Newfoundland.

And he got on, Mr. Chairman, and he was accused of being this and that. The Federal bureaucrats in conjunction with the Federal Government wanted to bury rural Newfoundland, but Peckford would not let it happen, and he survived. But we got a Government today, lead by a man who has no commitment to rural Newfoundland, no commitment to the fisheries, does not understand the fisheries, does not care about the fisheries, and does not care about his colleagues in the House who are concerned about the fisheries.

Now, Mr. Chairman, what are Governments for? You know the Premier talks about finding money to diversify the economy. What are they going to do to diversify the economy in Ramea or in Gaultois? What are they going to do in Gaultois to diversify the economy, to take it away from the fisheries and put something else there? We have \$2 million -

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. Member's time is up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave.

MR. TOBIN:

Can I clue up for a second? We had \$200 million-

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, and he was more sincere in what he had to say than what you were. We had \$200 million to diversify the economy of the Burin Peninsula away from the fisheries as a result of it, let me say to the Member for St. John's South, and everybody went scratching their head to see how we could diversify the economy. Do you know what we did with most of the money? Marystown Shipyard with the cowhead project, that was not diversifying the economy. St. Lawrence Fluorspar mine, the secondary processing plant in Burin, fisheries again, refit centers. So how do you diversify the economy? You had a Marystown Shipyard that you could support, you had a St. Lawrence Mine that you could support, you had a secondary processing plant in Burin that you could support, but what do you do in Gaultois? Take the community of Gaultois and diversify it from the fishery. It is very, very difficult. I would say to my friend from St. John's South, that I sympathize with you sir, I know where you are coming from, there are going to be others in this House over the next few days share the same type of feeling that you have right now. And it will never change. The only way anything like that will change is when the Premier of this Province and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador changes.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am very anxious, since the hon. gentleman over there was talking about the crisis in the fishery - constructive ideas on how to solve the problems in the fishery. I never took time to write them down, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I have recognized the hon. Member.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you.

I was just wondering, Mr. Chairman, because I thought I heard you recognize me, and then when I heard the two babbles over there on the backbench I thought they were recognized.

Certainly, Mr. Chairman, you can listen to it and you can listen to it and it is not going to do anything. You can stand up there, you can sit down for the next twenty-five years and you can say anything you want, do not even reach that far without even going through the body, do not even reach that far, just keep on babbling.

Let us talk about what we did when we were over there and the now Leader of the Opposition was sitting here, yes as a matter of fact, I believe it was this very, very seat he was sitting in and the numerous times that we stood in the House of Assembly and asked constructive questions, questions pertinent to the future of the

fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. Let us take one, that mattered.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

Now, if you take the marbles out of your mouth I might understand what you are saying.

Mr. Chairman, we asked the Minister of Fisheries questions. And we debated back and forth and we asked questions of the then hon. Minister of Fisheries, and the then hon. Minister of Fisheries is going to listen to what I am going to say and he is going to agree with it. Because we were concerned about the future of the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. What were we concerned about? We were concerned about the overfishing, the depletion of the stocks, number one. When the stock depletes so go the jobs.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

Let me make a statement, I have to say something about my brother. There is no question about it. Let me say this much. When I went into politics I sold all of my business assets so that I would not get into a conflict of interest, unfortunately, the days of selling slaves was over so I could not sell my brother. Secondly, if I had shot him or shipped him out of the country that would have been illegal, if I had drowned him I would have been hung for that, so I had no other choice only keep him. If I had done anything else I would have been criticized for that. Now my brother also made the unfortunate mistake of electing me as MHA for

the Port de Grave District, and being an MHA I thought I was elected to represent all people in the District. Now I find out that I have nine brothers and sisters, I have a mother and I have all kinds of cousins, uncles and aunts that I am not allowed to represent. Now, they have to move to the District of Harbour Grace so who is going to pay for it?

MR. TOBIN:

Who said you were not allowed to represent them?

MR. EFFORD:

Now, Mr. Chairman, back to the former Government, back to the people who are now sitting on the opposite side. We really like to see them over there scream, haggle, and baggle on the back benches over there. It is becoming to most of them. The hon. Member for St. John's and I have become fairly good friends so let us keep it at that now. Leave it up to those people over there. It is not becoming of you to do that. Seriously, let us get back to the problem at hand. It was caused by mistakes, made mainly by Ottawa because the Ottawa Federal people draw up the rules and regulations. They set down the guidelines, they set down the quotas. They set down everything that is going to be done with the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. The only thing that we can do, and the only thing the former Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador could do, as he used to do, is take out his battle axe and go to Ottawa. He went on a fighting campaign. He went on a fist fighting campaign. He went on words of fighting, jumping on the former Government, and what did he accomplish? He wore himself out. In fact in his days end what did he say? I cannot

contribute anything else to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I have no fight left. The then Premier, Brian Peckford, said that very publicly, and said that clearly. I cannot accomplish, and the main reason why he said it, understanding now and looking what he had around him as a Cabinet, in most instances -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh, oh!

MR. EFFORD:

I am listening to him. I have to listen. The number one thing we spoke about was the factory freezer trawlers. How many people voted for the factory freezer trawlers? What did we tell you when the license for the factory freezer trawlers was given? Jobs would be gone in the fish plants. There would come a day when the fishing stocks would be depleted and you would have to make a decision.

AN HON. MEMBER:

We fought the factory freezer trawlers -

MR. EFFORD:

Well, boy, oh boy, oh boy. Now, come on, if you are going to say something say it with some accuracy. How come they are licensed here? You were then the Government. It is licensed, it is operating. You were the Government and you fought with your battle axe, you took your baseball bats, and what did it accomplish? You are telling us now, as a Government, that we let the Province down, that we can keep all plants open.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You can.

MR. EFFORD:

We can keep 223 plants in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador open and you could not keep one factory freezer trawler out. Now, come on. It is a time to say you have been defeated, it is a time to say you have lost. There is a difference in all things but you have to be realistic in what you are talking about.

What I can look at now, Mr. Chairman, is the result of mismanagement by Ottawa. Nobody in Newfoundland can disagree with that. If you have any conscience about the fishery whatsoever it was total mismanagement by Ottawa.

MR. TOBIN:

By whom?

MR. EFFORD:

By Ottawa. You are not going to argue that one. You will argue just about anything under the sun but you surely would not have the nerve to argue that one.

This is what this day has resulted in, two political parties arguing back and forth. That is what really tires me, and really discourages me, two political parties arguing back and forth and trying to put the blame on one another. What are you accomplishing? If one Member of the Opposition stood up today and said, look, I disagree with what is happening in the Province. I do not like what is happening in the Province but this is what you should have done. This is the way to solve the problem.

MR. TOBIN:

We did something about it.

MR. EFFORD:

All you said, was, keep the plants open, an-all-plant open policy.

That is all you have said for the last two or three weeks. You have not even asked a constructive question. What do you do if you keep all plants open? Subsidize the plants. What can you do about that? Free trade. Who voted, and who agreed with free trade in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador? The one clear thing that we showed on the Opposition, what would be the effect of free trade in relation to jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador. I sat in my seat over there in the backbenches and I listened. There is no way Free Trade can affect jobs in Newfoundland. We will gain jobs all over Newfoundland and Labrador. There is no way the fish plants can lose jobs, there is no way we can lose jobs in the fishery or in private industry.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Who said it?

MR. EFFORD:

Brian Peckford. He stood in this House of Assembly, the then Premier of the Province, and he preached that day after day, after day, and when it came to a vote in the House of Assembly it was voted on as all Governments do, as this Government now can out-vote the Opposition anytime. We told them basically what was going to happen once you start implementing subsidies into the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador now, and into Canada. What happens to the people in the United States? What do the government in the different states do? It is having a dreadful effect on secondary processing in the Province. So again it is another problem, that is hindsight. We said it was going to happen and the Government of the day agreed with it, and it happened. There is no question.

So now it is not going to prove anything by shouting over there and saying, you keep four plants open, you keep the industry going, you put people in the plants and there is no fish to process. But as the Member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy) said the one thing that we can look forward to is that it is a renewable resource. What we can also do is we can all take note of the mistakes of the past and be sensible, be practical about it. But the one thing that we must do in the future; we must have more say into the management of our fish stocks.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. EFFORD:

Newfoundland and Labrador, the people of this Province has to have more say. We have to have people involved with the decision-making -

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. Member's time is up.

MR. EFFORD:

Do you disagree actually with that?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave! By leave!

MR. SIMMS:

Your time is up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave!

MR. PARSONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern.

MR. PARSONS:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Premier, or Mr. Chairman, I was thinking about the Premier when I stood up.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

It is too bad he is not in the House. Of course, I do not know when you get up in the House now whether we should address the Premier or the Head of the Commission of Government. Which one?

MR. EFFORD:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

Now only for you interrupted me I would have remained as such, but seeing that you interrupted me I said I did not who to address over there. And I never know now when I get up because in reality I am wondering today why we did not have an announcement signed by Dr. House? Because more than likely he had something to do with this as well.

MR. EFFORD:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

Look, let me say this to the -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. PARSONS:

He wrote it. I will guarantee he wrote that statement. This is the Commission of Government. That is what we have over there. There is not one Minister over there has anything to say in this matter. Nothing to say as far as those plant closures are concerned, because if they did every Member of Cabinet for the St. John's area would say no way, you are not

going to close that plant because there are 500 or 600 people involved in it and you are not going to close it. That is what would have been said, but they had nothing to do with it because they have nothing to say in the matter. It is the Commission. The Commission is running all of this. The Commission here, to save money. I heard the hon. Member saying there is nothing could be done about it. In 1981 this Government did something about it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. PARSONS:
They said Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are not going to be thrown to the wolves. They are not going to be put on the streets. I mean that is what we are talking about. It is not a political issue. This is a moral issue.

MR. R. AYLWARD:
We need one more Cabinet Minister for St. John's.

MR. PARSONS:
Yes, we need one more. If the hon. Member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy) had been in the Cabinet I doubt very much if it would close. I know that the Ministers over there were against it, were closing that plant.

But let me say this to you, it is out on the street, it is common knowledge that the Premier said in one of the first meetings that he was prepared to let St. John's go.

MR. R. AYLWARD:
They could all go to work for Bowring's I think he said.

MR. PARSONS:

Yes, he was prepared to let St. John's go. He said there were places on Water Street, there were the Woolcos and Woolworths of this world that would take up the slack.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Chambermaids.

MR. PARSONS:
Chambermaids, yes. Look the hon. the Member for Port de Grave (Mr. Efford) should know. I am surprised at you to get up and go on with the nonsense that you went on with, because you do understand, you come from an area where people are fishing.

Shea Heights - what is going to happen to Shea Heights? I mean men worked in the plant. Women worked in the plant. What are you going to do?

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Two and three in the fish plant.

MR. PARSONS:
Woolco is full now. Woolworths, they are blocked with people over there.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:
That is right.

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Bring in Sunday shopping.

MR. PARSONS:
Yes, bring in Sunday shopping and hire them for Sundays. Look, there is no employment here. Everyone knows that. The Premier in his place said, we are going to create jobs. We are going to bring them all home. I was coming out one morning and I was listening to open line and this poor fellow called in from

Toronto, and he wanted all of his family, I think, there were seventeen members to his family in Toronto, he was wondering when could they come home. What they are going to have to do during the year, and I dread the thoughts of it, is close the schools down, take all the school buses, line them all up and send them all to Toronto, a whole bunch of them. That is the only way. The exodus is going to be so great.

MR. MURPHY:

I thought you lived in Canada.

MR. PARSONS:

Look, let me say to the hon. Member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy) it is a sad day for St. John's. It is a sad day for Newfoundland and it is a sad day for everyone concerned. The people on Shea Heights, the people in Petty Harbour, the people of St. John's West - I know a lot of them - the fishermen from the Battery who bring their fish across, those are the people who are suffering today.

We brought into the House an all-plants-open resolution. We knew it was going to cost the Government money, but we felt it was not the fishermen's fault.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

What is the Minister saying?

We said it was not the people's fault, it was not the fault of the fishermen in Newfoundland. It was not the part-time fishermen who caused this, it was the Federal Government, because of poor management. We know. We talk about the factory freezer trawler, we talk about the implementation

of the mid-distance fleet, about the Resource-Short Plant Program. Let me say, that would never have happened but for the wrong advice given by the biologists and the scientists in the Federal Department of Fisheries. Those are the people who told us. Dr. Kirby said, 400,000 tons by 1988. 'Go out and try to get rid of it because excess will be given to some other part, so go out and reef it, because, if not, Newfoundlanders are going to lose their jobs.'

MR. MURPHY:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

No, this is what we are talking about. Let me say this to the hon. gentleman from St. John's South. I believe, in the statement given today, it was said that the fish locally caught and from the trawlers would be landed on the Southside, and transported, then, to Arnold's Cove. But, we know a bit about the geographics of it, they catch the fish off the coast, well, not directly off Trinity Bay, but in that given area. Why do they not come in and land it at Chance Cove? I mean, how long do you think that agreement is going to last on the Southside? You know the Premier should never have gone along with that. They are going to take the fish out of the boats on the Southside, truck it all the way around to Arnold's Cove, when they can come right straight in and land it at Chance Cove, Sunnyside or Norman's Cove. All they have to do is go across the highway. How long do you think they are going to do it? Do you know what I am saying? - the economics of it. They are going to truck it all the way from here, right up the Avalon Peninsula into Arnold's

Cove, when they can come straight in with the ships. And there are fine docks up there, fine places to land their fish.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) deep-sea port. The deep-sea trawlers were saying they have never seen as much fish before.

MR. PARSONS:

Yes. Yes, I have heard it. I was speaking to a guy from Torbay who came in only last Friday, and he said they had never seen the likes of the fish there before. All the deep-sea skippers are saying that.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They have never seen the likes of it.

MR. PARSONS:

Yes, it is a strange world. I mean, it is true what Dr. Keats said in his report, no one out there can really give an educated guess as to how much is there. And until such time as someone can guarantee us that that stock is great enough, has great enough strength to keep the fisheries viable, then we should say it is not out there. We should make sure.

Mr. Chairman, the thing that gets to me is when someone gets up in this hon. House and says, the problem out there, what is happening in the inshore, the part time fishermen should be gone. Our people caused this problem the same as everyone else, it was not mismanagement by the Feds. We are going to have to clean up our act. We are going to have to make sure. There are 6,000 Newfoundlanders who have to be laid off. I mentioned the other day that I am not sure if the Premier meant that that was 6,000

fishermen or people in the fishing industry.

AN HON. MEMBER:

In the industry, all told.

MR. PARSONS:

Well, there are 6,000 people who caused this dilemma when they had nothing at all to do with it, Mr. Chairman, nothing whatsoever. In 1986, the then Government, of which I was not a part, - well, I was at Christmas - was telling them then that they were overfishing the stock. We were telling them. Everyone could see it. They were overfishing the stock. But what I am saying is, when the inevitable thing arrived at our doorstep, that we had to close down a plant, then Federal money should have been injected to keep it open, the same as was done in 1981. What happened here was, and again I repeat myself and it is common knowledge, the Premier and the Minister of Fisheries sold St. John's down the river in some of their meetings. They said they did not care about St. John's, that St. John's could absorb it - it was mentioned - keep Burgeo. Now I admit that Burgeo has to be kept, but when we brought in that resolution it was not Burgeo alone that had to be kept, it was all plants.

MR. TOBIN:

We are saying Burgeo and St. John's should have been kept.

MR. PARSONS:

That is right. Again, I am surprised.

MR. GILBERT:

What is wrong with keeping Burgeo open?

MR. TOBIN:

Burgeo and St. John's should have

been kept open.

MR. PARSONS:

Right. Will the hon. Minister get up when I am finished and tell us why it could not be kept open? I have seen it and you have seen it over the past number of weeks -

MR. GILBERT:

It was brought in by the previous Government (inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

The previous Government! The previous Government did what? In 1981 they had the same crisis on their hands and they solved it by making sure that the plants were kept open and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were kept working. What is the average now, a thousand jobs a day? This is not a political thing, it is a moral thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. Member's time has elapsed.

MR. PARSONS:

Every one of us had the opportunity, and we still have the opportunity, to say to Ottawa, Look, the problem is yours. You caused the problem, now stick with us. Every hon. Member who gets up here in this House will always say it is a renewable resource, and perhaps it can renew itself in a very short period, three years hopefully. Now, if the Federal Government is not strong enough monetarily to hold those plants open for three years, then it amazes me. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Member for LaPoile.

MR. RAMSAY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, as we are debating the Fisheries Bill, I, like most other hon. Members, will not delve into the Bill exactly because there are some very serious things happening and some suggestions being made that could certainly use a bit of qualification as to the viability of said suggestions.

If we look at the way Members opposite would prefer us to manage the current crisis, to put in Provincial Government monies to see to it that all plants are kept open, to see to it that we operate businesses completely at loss, if that has to be the case, to keep all the plants currently in existence in the Province open, let us look at the possible consequences of doing that in the future. We see some of the consequences today of what was done. Let us say it did have something to do with what was done three and four years ago, with the poor scientific information that was provided. Some of the decisions that were made along the way definitely had an impact on why we are where we are now.

So, if today we choose to put money into all the various plants and plant operations and secondary-processing operations throughout the Province to keep them operating even if they are losing money, we then create an uncompetitive industry, an industry that will be at the mercy of the market, and in the future we will be, as a Government and as a people, depleted of the capital that is needed when things get better, when the allocation increases, and then we will not have the capital required to rejuvenate the industry and make it competitive.

So what do we do? Do we put the

money in now in order to keep this going, as a form of social conscience, I suppose, and then set ourselves up for another three or four years down the road of having to have a much more serious problem again? Are we just delaying the consequence? I would say the consequence is real. It is here now. So are we going to do this? I do not think so, Mr. Chairman.

I do not take much pleasure in having to stand and say there is possibly a small bright spot to be seen in the situation with National Sea, but I do have to offer my sincere displeasure at what has happened to the people in St. John's, because I know what it is like to go to the homes of people who have no jobs because the fish plant is closed.

I currently have three fish plants closed, and we are hopeful that some will open soon; these are inshore plants in my district. But they have been closed, and we have been used to the six-month years, of these plants being open very sparsely and people having to survive on the unemployment insurance system for the bulk of the year. The only possible bright spot we could see out of this is that National Sea are closing a plant in Nova Scotia, as I understand it, and some of the fish from this particular plant will now come back to Port aux Basques, the North Sydney area, and that some of that Canso stuff will come back over. So, that is a small bright spot which will hopefully add some security to the jobs of the people in the inshore plant in Port aux Basques. Now, I do not take much pleasure in gaining something for the people in my district at the behest of the people of St. John's South,

but that is the reality of the situation as it stands now.

Recently, with some negotiations that have been ongoing, Mr. Chairman, the company, Connors Brothers, have endured and will, as I understand it, be taking a three-year lease to operate the plant in Port aux Basques, which will employ some 600 people. They managed, up to midnight on Friday, through very difficult negotiations with the union representing the fish plant workers in that plant, to come to some form of agreement. I know it is not fully finalized yet, but it will be today or tomorrow, and I think this is a small bright spot and we can say, Look, all is not bad. It is a matter of how we go about it. And this is without any large Provincial Government contribution, as I understand it. This is free enterprise. If we needed Provincial Government help, I am sure they would have been there to assist. But this is a free enterprise situation, where the company will undertake to operate the plant there and see to it that the people of Port aux Basque are not without employment this winter, as last winter was very poor.

But we have to be very careful in assuming that because of the demise of the St. John's South plant, and I would say temporary demise, because the plant is not going to be scrapped, as I understand it, they are talking about mothballing it, keeping it ready for when the resource improves, but we have to be careful in assuming that Burgeo will automatically prosper, although these are the plans. With NatSea having endured such financial hardship, I would say it is going to be tough in the

competative aspect of the fishing industry now, with the pollock from out around Alaska coming into the market. It is going to be very tough for NatSea itself - the company - to survive. And the people in Burgeo are going to have to be very careful in approaching this, because it may be a bit of false hope, depending, of course, on the strength of NatSea.

We also heard mentioned, and it is something that should not go by without me commenting on it, the overfishing. We currently have a situation where the Federal bureaucrats do not see fit to put enough observers and, as you say, enforcers on the deep sea trawlers, and also on a lot of the otter trawl boats. I think if that was handled in a much better way, we could then look forward to knowing exactly how much fish is being caught and how much the fishery has been abused. And this is something the hon. the Minister of Fisheries and a delegation, when travelling to Ottawa, will have to stress to the bureaucrats in Ottawa through their Minister, that enforcement and also the Fisheries Observer Program must be expanded. If we want to look at a way to prevent this from happening again in 3 or 4 years, this will have to be done, Mr. Chairman. If we endeavor to see to it that things are straightened out now, then, hopefully, we can look towards a brighter future. I am very confident, and the people, even though right now I am sure they have a bad feeling in the pits of their stomachs since they are losing jobs, and I have seen it and I have felt it with them and for them in times in the past, they can hopefully look forward to a brighter future. And we can natter all we want about whether we will be able to create jobs

that are necessary in the interim, but I think it is a very bad move to suggest that we should keep these plants going as a losing cause. Mothball them if we must, but to keep them going and operating unprofitably is counterproductive for the long-term future of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Where is your social conscience, boy?

MR. RAMSAY:

Social conscience is one thing, but that does not necessarily mean that we have to keep these plants operating. A social conscience is one thing that Liberalism is all about, Mr. Chairman, and the long-term social conscience is something we have to look at, as well.

Mr. Chairman, with that I will allow someone on the other side to have the floor. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

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

MS DUFF:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am sure all Members of this House feel very sad about the news today, but as a St. John's Member I asked my caucus to let me speak today because I do have fishermen in my constituency who are going to be seriously impacted by this decision. In fact, throughout the community of St. John's there are fish plant workers and families of workers who must be feeling the terrible disappointment at this news that has been pending for a

number of weeks.

I can feel for the Member for St. John's South. I have known him for a long time, and he spoke with a great deal of passion and pent-up frustration today as he tried to, in some way, justify a position of his Government on a decision that must make the people of his constituency wonder why they ever voted Liberal in this election. My disappointment today is not only with the fact of 492 lost direct jobs, but it is with this Government's inaction, the fact that they sat passively by rejecting every alternative, did not fight, and, in fact, threw the people of St. John's like sacrificial lambs to the slaughter.

This Government did not even try to keep the St. John's plant open. The Premier as much as said it today when he was asked a question as to whether or not he said that if a plant had to close, it had to be St. John's. No, he said, of course I did not say it had to be St. John's, I just said it could not be Burgeo or Arnold's Cove, which is saying the same thing in other words. And that fact will not be lost on the people of St. John's, with their misplaced confidence in this Government who looks at a bottom line, who keeps talking about rationalizing industry, who keeps talking about competition, who keeps talking about all those things except the people who lose their jobs. It does not matter if you lose your job in Burgeo, or Arnold's Cove, or Gaultois. If you are working in a fish plant, your chances of getting employed are no better, and if you are on welfare, it is no easier on your family. In fact, it might ever be harder because you are in St. John's.

I think I know why this Government sat by and did nothing. They are a Government that very readily appreciates the business plan of a big multinational like NatSea whose agenda ultimately is to lower the overcapacity in their other plants, and it fits very conveniently into their long-range business plan, but also because it is part of the hidden agenda of this Government to rationalize the fishery - rationalize - that wonderful word I keep hearing all the time. In other words, downsize the fishery. In other words, treat it as if it were nothing more than a bottom line regardless of the consequences, not only to rural Newfoundland but to urban Newfoundland.

They could have found a way. They keep falling back on countervail and blaming it on free trade. Well, countervail existed long before free trade, so take that off the agenda. It had nothing to do with free trade. That just gives you an excuse to do what you are always doing, which is blaming it on the Tories. They countervailed in 1982, and the Government before you cared enough about the fishery and the people in the fishery to do something about it. They became shareholders in FPI to get around the countervail. You people did not even try. You did not lift a finger, because it fits right in with what you ultimately see happening in the fishery.

If you had faith in the fishery, if you believed in the fishery, you could have negotiated a period of grace through an all-plants-open policy, and supported that financially if you believe this fish plant will ever open. But I do not think you will believe it will, and I do not

think you care if it does or not.
That is the bottom line.

Mr. Chairman, I have a lot to say on this, but I have thirty seconds left. I think the best thing for me to do right now is adjourn this debate and come back tomorrow. Hypocrisy is the one thing that makes me madder than anything else, and that is all I have seen on this issue from the other side of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:
I move that the Committee rise and report progress.

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

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

MR. BARRETT:
Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred, have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

On motion, report received and adopted, Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker, we will be following the same Order tomorrow as we were on today.

I move that the House at its rising do adjourn until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow, and that this House do now adjourn.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, in keeping with our agreement in the past, with one exception I think, last week when the Government failed to acknowledge or announce on Monday, as we agreed what their Private Member's resolution was, we would like to indicate to the House that the resolution we will be putting forth for debate on Wednesday is the one introduced under Notices today by my colleague, the Member for Grand Bank, with respect to an all-plants-open policy.

MR. SPEAKER:
It is moved and seconded that the House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 2:00 p.m.