



Province of Newfoundland

FORTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND

Volume XLI

First Session

Number 32

VERBATIM REPORT
(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Tuesday

[Preliminary Transcript]
[Preliminary Transcript]

14 November 1989

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, I wonder if I might ask the support of the House to pass along sympathies and regrets to the families of a couple of well known Newfoundlanders who passed away over the last few days, and specifically I refer to Mr. Graham Mercer who certainly is a well known Newfoundlander who has contributed a lot to this Province over the years having served, I know, as the President of the Board of Trade, I believe, at one time. I believe he was also Chairman of the Pippy Park Commission at one time. So he served the public as well. And, of course, he was also involved, I believe, as a member for the Fishing Industry Advisory Board at one time.

So I would like to seek concurrence to send a message of condolences to the family of Mr. Mercer.

And while I am on my feet there was another individual who passed away suddenly last week, an individual who is associated with our Party, but also served in a number of capacities, and in his few short years contributed a considerable amount, I think, to the well being of the Province. He served as the President of the Council of Students Union at Memorial University. He was a former Mayor, I believe, of

Cartwright in Labrador, and presently and politically he was involved in our Party as a Provincial Executive Member, and I refer to Mr. Ralph Trask of Grand Falls. I wonder if the House might not express its sympathies to his wife and young son and other members of the family as well.

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

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

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We on this side endorse the suggestion made by the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Simms). Both gentlemen have contributed not only in a localized community way, but also in a Provincial way. So we endorse the sentiments expressed by the Opposition House Leader.

Statements by Ministers

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to inform this hon. House that the Province has arranged \$150 million public offering of its debentures in the Canadian Capital Market. The issue has a term of twenty five years. It bears an interest rate of 10 1/8 percent and was priced

at par. The debentures will be dated November 22nd, 1989 with the Province receiving the proceeds of the issue on that date. This financing now completes the 1989 - 1990 Budgetary borrowing requirement. Mr. Speaker this issue of the Province's debentures was very well received by the market, particularly amongst retail investors. The offering is managed by Scotia McLeod Incorporated, R. B. C. Dominion Securities Incorporated, Merrill Lynch Canada Incorporated, Richardson Greenshields of Canada Limited and Wood Gundy Incorporated. In addition to the managers, the underwriting group is composed of fourteen other investment institutions. Mr. Speaker along those lines I would like to add that the rate of 10.18 is, for Canada, a good rate. It is one of the better rates that we have been able to accomplish. I might point out though, that we did borrow earlier in the year in the United States at 9 percent, and in Japan quite recently at 5.4 percent. The rate of interest in Canada is quite high, and it is, by comparison to the interest rates in these other countries, something for us to be concerned about in a Province where one dollar in six goes to pay the interest on our Provincial debt. This is a serious concern - this interest rate borders on the usurious - but at the same time we have to realize that if we do borrow in foreign markets we are always fearful of changes in the exchange rate, and if changes in the exchange rate go against us, we could be in a bad state. So we must continue to borrow, I believe, most of our funds in Canadian markets, but, at the same time, the rate is exceptionally high.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for providing me with a copy of his statement and I thank him also for the information he just gave us, which really was in response to the question that I asked him in replying to the Japanese yen issue recently. I asked him what his policy would be with regards to distribution of borrowing in foreign currencies, U.S. currency, Canadian currency. I am pleased to see that the policy of maintaining a major portion of borrowing in Canadian dollars, which protects us from exchange fluctuations, is being pursued. This is indeed, as the Minister has said, a favourable rate in today's market. The interesting thing is that the Minister was able to get 25 year term which has not been too readily available in the local market. We had to go abroad primarily for 25 year money, so it shows, I think, a confidence in the Province, and this is important, and a confidence in the financial integrity of the Province that I think the previous Administration can take some credit for, as well. But I certainly am pleased to see that this relatively favorable rate in today's difficult money market was able to be achieved, and I hope that we can continue to borrow like that, but no more than we have to.

MR. SPEAKER:

Further Statements by Ministers.

Before getting into Oral Questions, on behalf of hon. Members, we like to welcome to the gallery 52 grade IX students,

accompanied by their teachers, Ms Careen, Mr. O'Brien and Ms Murphy from Mary Queen of the World School.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

We would also like to welcome to the galleries a former Member and a former Minister of this Legislature, Mr. Ted Blanchard.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

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

Could the Premier tell the House whether or not during the course of the recently concluded First Ministers' Conference he had an opportunity to determine from the Prime Minister when the Government of Canada will be making a definitive announcement on the present response to the crisis in the fishery in terms of the long-term proposal to deal with that present crisis? That will have to be a proposal, I suspect, that deals with the next four, five or six years. Has the Premier been able to determine from the Prime Minister when the Government of Canada will be making that announcement?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Do not be wasting the time of Question Period.

PREMIER WELLS:

They cannot resist it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I should tell the Leader of the Opposition that I have not ascertained it from the Prime Minister personally because, of course, the Federal Government has set up a special Cabinet Committee, headed by the Right Hon. Joe Clark, Minister of External Affairs, with a number of other Ministers and we have been dealing directly with them. We hope that by the end of this month we should be in a position to do something fairly definitive. But that is not a certainty. There is a lot of work going on between the two committees. The Minister of Fisheries in the Province is greatly involved in it and the Federal Task Force headed by Ken Stein, and the Provincial Task Force headed by the Deputy Minister of Fisheries, David Vardy, are working virtually day and night, I guess it is true to say. I give the Federal Government fair credit for their involvement in it; they are working day and night on this and hopefully we will have something more definitive before the end of this month, but I cannot say definitely this month.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, a supplementary.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, would the Premier be able to tell the House whether or not he has had an opportunity to find out from the Government of Canada whether they intend to proceed to make the announcements, whatever they are, before the total allowable catch is set for 1990, or if, in fact, it will be delayed until February of 1990?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I expect it will be made well before the total allowable catch is set in February 1990.

We have made specific representations to both the Prime Minister and to Mr. Clark and to the Federal Task Force directly on this question. Our representation to them is that we cannot wait that long. We must deal with it now. It is not appropriate to wait until January, when the problem is upon us, and then decide that this is the course of action we think should be taken and take another two or three months to get ready for it. So we are in the process of doing the planning now, and hopefully it will be well before the end of this year.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, would the Premier tell the House whether or not there was an occasion during the recent First Ministers' Conference on the Economy for the Premier to seek the support of the Prime

Minister, and other Premiers in fact, to have an all-plants-open policy in any policy document or policy position that the Federal Government might soon announce to address the crisis in the Fishery?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, there was no opportunity during the First Ministers' Conference to get into a specific assessment as to what policy should be followed in any specific area. There was an opportunity to discuss the impact on the Province and on the economy of the Province, of the reduction in the total allowable catch and the reduction generally, whether it is an all-plants-open for a part-time basis or a close-down on the basis of one or more plants for a longer period of time. There was no opportunity to discuss the detail, but there was an opportunity to make known during the public session and, as well, during the private session, the concerns about this matter.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, could the Premier tell the House whether or not there was an opportunity in the private sessions of the recently concluded First Ministers' Conference to make specific proposals to the Government of Canada to deal with the horrendous unemployment rate in the Province, a rate that is, at this point in time, two full percentage points ahead of what it was this time

last year? Were there any specific proposals made by the Premier on behalf of this Government to the Government of Canada to deal with the tremendously high unemployment rate that we still have in this Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, but if I had to take the time to go into complete detail, it would take all of the time of Question Period. Now, I am prepared to do it if the hon. gentleman wants me to, or I can go through it very quickly, in a very superficial way, but I do not want the House to say that that is all that was done. I just warn the hon. gentleman fairly, that it would take all of the time to do it in detail.

Mr. Speaker, we spoke at length in the private session. We addressed it as well in the public session, but there was a substantial amount of time spent on it in the private session and in discussions privately with other Premiers and other people concerned, the horrendous unemployment rate in the Province and the real causes, not the immediate problem or the symptoms of the problem, but the real root causes of the unemployment problem, including the fact that this Country has for the last 125 years been governed on the basis of what meets with the approval of the majority of the MPs who are to be found sitting in the seats represented by Ontario and Quebec.

Largely what has happened over the many, many years, despite great goodwill on the part of the Federal Government on many

occasions in an effort to try and find ways to correct regional disparity in Atlantic Canada and in Newfoundland and Labrador in particular, because we do not have an effective Senate, and we will never have an effective Senate until we get the amending formula that is provided for in Meech Lake straightened out, because we do not have that, we have a real serious problem in trying to cope with the regional economic disparity in Atlantic Canada and in Newfoundland and Labrador in particular, indicated for the most part by the horrendously high unemployment rate in the Province and the very low earned income level by comparison with the Nation as a whole and, in particular, by comparison with Central Canada.

I spent a great deal of time addressing this issue and putting proposals before the Federal Government as to how to deal with it on a proper basis so that, in fact, we would be dealing with the real problem instead of providing make-work projects to deal with the symptoms of the problem. So a great deal of time was spent. It would take the whole of Question Period for me to detail it, but, to answer the hon. gentleman's question, yes.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

The Minister tabled in the House a couple of weeks ago a report on

the effect the changes to the UI Program will have on the workers of Newfoundland and Labrador. The report indicates that about 20,000 people in Newfoundland may not qualify for unemployment insurance this winter because they will need two weeks, three weeks, or maybe one week of employment in order to qualify.

Would the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations indicate what plans she has to put in place a program to help those people who will be short the one, two or three weeks this winter to qualify for unemployment insurance?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, although I have not officially heard, I have heard, Mr. Speaker, that there have been changes made to the boundaries so that people living in the rural areas of the Avalon Peninsula are not going to be affected as dramatically as we had first indicated; they will not have to search for those extra three weeks work. So that is one positive thing. Secondly, regarding what steps are being taken to deal with that problem, we in the department are now in the process of trying to put together a plan that we can present to Ottawa with suggestions. At this stage, it is certainly not ready for release to the public.

MR. DOYLE:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

Yes, the boundary has been changed on the Avalon. As a matter of fact, we heard about that a couple of weeks ago; but there will still be hundreds and hundreds, probably thousands of people in Newfoundland who will not qualify for unemployment insurance.

The Minister has the Employment branch attached to her Department and she now has a direct responsibility and a direct role to play in job creation. Can the Minister reveal to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador how she can approach the Federal Government condemning unemployment insurance cutbacks when the Provincial Government has cancelled out its own employment program? Did the Minister even remotely think that there is a credibility problem there? If not, can she shed a little bit of light on how she expects to convince the Federal Government to make some changes to Bill C-21, to go a little bit easy on Newfoundland? Can she indicate that to us?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if that was a question or a rhetorical statement. However, no, I do not feel the least bit embarrassed, or whatever the word was he said. We cancelled one employment program; meanwhile, we have other programs going on, very useful programs, the Graduate Employment Program, for example. We have just become involved with a plan to help older workers adjust in the case of major layoffs. We are in the process of evaluating the former Women's Program and have funded

WISE over the summer. Some of you who are familiar with WISE will know that it is a very effective program in providing women with the skills they need to find long-term attachment to the labour force, and it is the type of program that we as a Liberal Government heartily support. So, no, I certainly do not feel any embarrassment because we happened to decide that one program was not particularly meeting the needs of Newfoundland's people, nor will it affect me in any way when I go to Ottawa.

The Premier has already sent forward to Ottawa a statement from this Government on the changes to the UI program, and I am in contact with Barbara McDougal's office, the Minister responsible, in an attempt to get a meeting with her as well. And, as I said earlier, in my department we are beginning to look at ways that we can have as suggestions for dealing with the problem when I do get to see Barbara McDougal in Ottawa.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister is aware that I recently received information from her own department that indicates that approximately 61 per cent of the people who were employed each year under the Private Sector Employment Program remained employed even after the term of that particular program had finished up. We had 3,000 people working each year on the Private Sector Employment Program, 60-odd

per cent of that is 1,800 jobs. Does the Minister now realize that these people are counted among the ranks of the unemployed in Newfoundland? And will the Minister not agree, as the Board of Trade called upon her to do a couple of weeks ago, and a month ago, and two months ago, to reinstate that program so that people can be helped out this winter, will probably receive contributions toward Unemployment Insurance? Will she not reinstate that Program, as the Board of Trade has called upon her to do?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I would like to say that those particular statistics did not come from my office. I do not know where the gentleman found them, but they are not available there. I think he has fallen probably symptom to that old expression, if you torture numbers long enough, they will confess to anything. I do not know, frankly, where he found those statistics.

However, not to be flippant in discussing a matter that does affect people, I have no intention of bringing back the private sector program as it stood. Certainly, as suggested by my colleague across the way, from Humber Valley, it is very important to look at that program to see where there are strengths in it, and where there are weaknesses. Where there are strengths, you will perhaps see those incorporated in some of the programs that come back for approval for the Budget next year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of questions for the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, as well. I am sure everyone in this House is aware, both as sitting Members and as persons in the gallery, of the tremendous trauma that many Newfoundland fisherpersons are experiencing this fall, and the tremendous insecurity and uncertainty that is going to take place in the deep sea, the inshore and the fish plants around this Province, especially when it is compounded by the fact that the Minister of Fisheries has said on several public occasions that there is too much processing capacity in Newfoundland, in effect too many fish plants, which must mean that there are too many fish plant workers, also meaning that there are too many fisherpeople in this Province. I would ask the Minister responsible for Employment and Labour Relations exactly what programs she has initiated or will initiate to help retrain these vast numbers of people who are going to be displaced from an industry which has been their traditional way of making a living. What retraining programs are being initiated to help all these persons who are about to be displaced in the fishing industry?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this stage, I think the comments of the Minister of Fisheries last week are appropriate. We have not yet, in our department, begun to develop any particular programs related to that.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I cannot believe what I am hearing from a Minister Opposite in this House, when twelve months ago you were on this side of the House, or many of your colleagues were, saying that the Government, which we were at the time, were not planning, were not thinking ahead. Now, all of a sudden, you have the Minister of Fisheries, a senior Minister in the Government, saying that you are going to have thousands of people displaced in the fishing industry and the Minister responsible for retraining has not initiated a single program to assist those people. Would someone please tell the individuals involved in the fish plants and the fishermen themselves where they are going to get jobs next summer? Are they going to be resettled, or are they going to be retrained by the Minister opposite?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any reason for the Member opposite to get so upset. We

certainly are going to have this problem in hand. We are waiting, as the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. W. Carter) said, to have definite word from Ottawa as to the extent of the monies they will put in and where they are planning to go with it. I sit on the Committee with the Minister of Fisheries and the other Cabinet Ministers who are concerned, where my officials and I are able to provide input and my Department will be an active part, Mr. Speaker, of developing the programs we do jointly, Ottawa and this Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary.

Again I cannot believe that the Minister, who has been involved in education for a long time in this Province, is somehow or other going to magically find retraining programs next spring, have them magically pulled out of the air. It takes a tremendous amount of time to develop a new program. It is going to take a lot of consultation with the fishing industry, with the Fishermen's Union, with the community colleges and private colleges in this Province. I cannot believe the Minister is now saying that none of this is going to happen until Ottawa makes money available, until Ottawa takes all the responsibility.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. POWER:

The question, Mr. Speaker, is -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

I want to remind the hon. gentleman that it is Questions and not Ministerial Statements, and the hon. gentleman should proceed to get to his question.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, the question is simply this: Is the Minister, if she has not already done so, going to realize the seriousness of this situation? Is she going to have negotiations with the Fishermen's Union, with the industry in this Province, and the community and private colleges around this Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I am appalled that the hon. the Member for Ferryland (Mr. Power) does not realize that it is the Minister of Education (Dr. Warren) who is responsible for retraining, not my Department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, let us get to something that is relatively current which the Minister probably has dealt with or should have dealt with. I ask the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations has she contacted her counterpart, Ms McDougall in Ottawa, to ask her if she would change the regulations to the Fisheries Response Program? The

program that was announced just last week, the regulations are so stringent many of the fisherpersons in the Province will not qualify to go on those programs. Has she been in contact with her counterpart to ask her to bend or to make those regulations flexible so that people who need to go on those programs will qualify?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Those particular programs still fall under the mandate of the Minister of Fisheries. However, if -

AN HON. MEMBER:

What are you doing in Cabinet?

MS COWAN:

It was not possible last week to get in touch with Barbara McDougall, because she was present at the First Ministers' Meeting. However, that does still fall under the Minister of Fisheries' Department and he will, in consultation with me, have any ongoing -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) you at all.

MR. SIMMS:

You are just the Minister of odd lines, is it?

MR. WARREN:

Shame!

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

This is terrible! We had a program announced over a week ago but the regulations are too stringent; people must have spent six weeks in the fishery this year in order to qualify, or have been involved all of last year, and then they require three weeks. This year, many people got only one stamp or two because of the disastrous season in parts of the Province. Let me ask the Minister of Fisheries, then, has he been in contact with his counterparts in Ottawa to ask them to be flexible in relation to these regulations? If so, are they going to change them so that the people who really need employment will get on those programs?

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

The answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Let me ask the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations then, due to the fact that the Minister of Fisheries has been on to his counterpart unbeknownst to the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, and knowing that up to today these regulations have not been changed, has she put in place, in consultation with her Cabinet Committees she talks about, a supplementary program, as was done by former governments, to make sure that people in the fishing industry, plant workers

and fisherpeople, who do not qualify to get on the Federal programs will be taken care of this year by programs put in by the Provincial Government, as has been done in the past, and as been done by the Minister responsible for Labour in the Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Thank you.

At this stage, no I have not, and it is for one reason, because the Department for which I am responsible, Employment and Labour Relations, has a very specific mandate. Its mandate has not been broadened to address wide employment problems, such as you are referring to. We have been dealing with, and our budget limits us to that at this stage, small identified pockets of unemployment. I would be quite pleased to see, over the next several years, that certainly individuals in my Department are broadened so that we can address some of these wider issues about which you are concerned.

Employment at this moment is focused on by my Department when we are addressing some specific needs groups. However, it still is a problem that is dealt with by a lot of other Departments of Government as well, Fisheries and Development, to name two.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me go to the Premier then,

since neither one of his Ministers are going to look out for the people who really need help right now. We can talk about overfishing, we can talk about long-term plans, we can even talk about eventual plant closures, but today out there there are a number of plant workers and fisherpeople who made no money in the fishery this year, who did not qualify and will not qualify for UIC, and who cannot get on the programs because of the stringent regulations. Will they bring in a program to make sure that these people at least qualify for UIC this winter?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the questions have been answered several times by the Minister of Fisheries and by the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

Fisheries are causing us in this Province a great deal of difficulty at the moment. It is a very difficult problem to deal with. Both the Federal and Provincial Governments are putting tremendous energies into dealing with those problems. I am not prepared to stand in the House and banter back and forth with the future and the lives of the people who are involved. Instead, we are going to work seriously and hard behind the scenes, and work seriously with the Federal Government to find the proper solutions to these problems without making the people who are affected a political football in this Chamber.

The answer to the hon. gentleman's question, and the ones that have been asked several times is, yes, Mr. Speaker, the Government is

working with the Federal Government to find a solution to these problems and we hope that in

MR. PARSONS:

From what we heard, you are doing nothing.

PREMIER WELLS:

They will be announced in due course.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government has announced a particular program to deal with part of the problem. But that is only part of the problem. We are waiting to see the extent to which that does not answer the problem and then we will look after the balance of the problem. In the meantime, with the more major problem that is caused by the reduction in the total allowable catch, we are working diligently with the Federal Government to find a solution that will ensure that the people who are temporarily or on a longer term put out of work due to these changes in the total allowable catch are properly cared for until they can be provided with alternative economic opportunities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. POWER:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland, on a point of order.

MR. POWER:

The hon. the Premier seems to impugn motives to Members on this side of the House.

Other Members and I asked questions today, sincere questions, as members representing fishing Districts in this Province. We are not trying to make a political football out of the fishery in this Province. As Members of the Opposition, both Mr. Speaker and the Premier, I am sure, know that we have a right to ask legitimate questions in this House. If he wants to see someone using politics in the fishery in Newfoundland, ask his Minister of Fisheries, who says there are too many fish plants in the Province and then proceeds to licence one in the District of Ferryland?

MR. BAKER:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, there is obviously no point of order. The Member is obviously reacting to something he did not like. If he cannot stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair would wish to point out again that we want to refrain from points of order during Question Period, because it takes the time of Question Period.

The Chair rules that there was no point of order. Obviously, Ministers should get to the questions as quickly as possible, but I think to suggest that maybe a Minister did not want to do a certain thing is hardly an indication of impugning motives. There is no point of order.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I am standing in trepidation. I am almost afraid to ask a question, Mr. Speaker, because of threats by the Premier. You are not allowed to ask questions anymore. It is absolutely ridiculous!

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the President of Treasury Board, who has not had a chance to get on television at all this Session. We are now going to see if we can get him on television.

In 1988, the previous administration, as he would know, announced a voluntary early retirement program for public servants who worked in Government departments. The purpose of the program, as everyone is aware I guess, was to permit reorganization in the public service, to access some salary savings in some areas, and particularly to rejuvenate the public service by offering opportunities to existing public servants and through public recruitment. Early this year, 1989, Mr. Speaker, the previous administration announced that that program would be extended to others, including health care workers. My question to the President of Treasury Board: Does the present Government intend to follow that commitment of the previous administration and find a way to put this program in place for health care workers in view of its own often stated philosophy of fairness and balance?

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

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The purpose of the program that was introduced was to allow for some movement within the civil service, certainly, but also to trim some of the fat, if I can put it that way. This was offered as an employer initiative for these two purposes. The Departments that could accept this particular program were required to make up savings over three years to pay for the program. The health care sector indicated that they could not meet the conditions of the program, therefore, the program did not exist for them. In short, Mr. Speaker, that is the answer. But I wonder if the hon. member is suggesting that what we should do is give people in the health care sector early retirement and then hire them back on full salary to do the job, because there is no slack in that field? Is that what the hon. member is suggesting we do?

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

MR. SIMMS:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I will tell the hon. the President of the Council, or the President of Treasury Board, what I am suggesting. I am suggesting he follow the advice of senior officials in the Department of Finance and in his own Department, Treasury Board, because those same officials, according to Cabinet papers - 'Treasury Board, Cabinet Secretariat 1, 1989' concluded that it would be feasible to

extend this program to the health care sector and health care workers because of a number of factors outlined in that same Cabinet paper. I suggest he get a copy of the Cabinet paper and read it.

I want to ask the President of Treasury Board this: How can Government justify not treating these health care workers in the same way as all other public sector workers? That is the question. And has the Government advised NAPE that health care workers are going to be responsible for repaying their share of the liability that will be associated with this early retirement program, obviously through their premiums they pay? If so, how can they on the one hand tell them they are not going to be treated the same as others in terms of having the benefit, but at the same time, on the other hand, tell them they are still going to have to pay for it?

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult to determine what the question is, simply because 99 per cent, or most if not all, of what the hon. gentleman said is simply not true.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure if the hon. the President of Treasury Board is calling me a liar or if he is suggesting that I am somehow misleading. Maybe we will deal with it after Question Period; I do not want to get into

that. But I can tell the hon. the President of Treasury Board it is true, that in fact they did tell NAPE that, because I have a copy of the correspondence here. And I have the correspondence where the President of NAPE replied to the Premier, in fact just a few days back. Maybe the Premier has not had a chance to read it yet, I do not know. Anyway, I will not get into that debate now. Maybe I will do it a little later on.

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Because these same workers contribute the same premiums into the Public Service Pension Plan as all others who received the benefit of an early retirement program, and since a decision not to extend that program to health care workers is obviously discriminatory and insensitive, would not the Government, and I ask the Minister this seriously, would not the Government rethink its position on this particular matter, review it and reconsider it in the name of fairness and equity, as the Premier always says and as recommended by officials in his own Department, and extend this program to the health care sector?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Number one, Mr. Speaker, it is not recommended by officials in Treasury Board, it is not recommended by officials in the Department of Finance. There has been correspondence with NAPE regarding this particular issue, and the correspondence is along the lines that if the health care sector can develop an early retirement program that can be

paid for without cost to Government, the way the Health Sciences Complex has in the past three or four years on occasion offered a similar type of program, but entirely within their own Administrative jurisdiction, then that is possible. However, indications are that the health care sector cannot fund such a program. It is not true, as the Member tends to indicate, that the savings I was talking about when I gave my answer were, in fact, monies coming out of the pension plan. The savings I referred to were savings in personnel, that each Department committed to a 5 per cent, for instance, savings in personnel for the next two or three years, that the percentages varied in order to pay for the plan. It was the savings in terms of salary that are paying for the plan. In the health care sector there can be no savings in terms of salary. We cannot get rid of positions, we cannot get rid of jobs, because there is no fat in that particular system. We cannot get rid of people. We need the people to run the health care system. As a matter of fact, we have a shortage of people -

MR. SIMMS:
It is plain discrimination.

MR. BAKER:
- so we cannot reduce positions.

MS VERGE:
Most of the people, I was told (inaudible).

MR. BAKER:
Does the Member want to ask another supplementary question? She can, in a moment.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I can assure Members opposite that we will not make the same horrendous mess with

the pension plan that Members opposite did when they were sitting over here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees

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

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Section 15 of The Fisheries Loan Act, I table herewith the annual report of the Fisheries Loan Board for the fiscal years 1988, 1989.

Notices of Motion

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MR. DICKS:
Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Give Effect To The International Convention On The Law Applicable To Trusts Under Recognition."

I further give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act Respecting The United Nations Convention On Contracts For The International Sale Of Goods."

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MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Leader of the

Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today under the provisions of Standing Order 23. I would like to make the case under Standing Order 23 that the regular order of business of this House today be set aside to debate an issue of urgent public importance. The issue, of course, is the present crisis in the fishery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

There is no opportunity in the legislative agenda of this House for the next several days, in my view, in terms of the legislation on the Order Paper, for there to be an immediate debate on the crisis facing the fishery in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, everybody knows, and I think everybody will admit, that the most important resource industry we have in this Province today is the fishery. It is also academic, Mr. Speaker, that that industry is facing a crisis. Everybody will admit that. What we need to know in this House, and what ought to be debated in this House in an urgent and immediate manner, in my view, are the plans the Government have - and the Government must have a plan - if there is not a plan, Mr. Speaker, then thousands of people in hundreds of communities are going to be facing a pretty dismal future over the next several years.

I think this House has to have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to debate, on an urgent basis, any proposals the Government have put to the Government of Canada to deal with this important matter.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 23, I would like to move that the regular orders of business be set aside today. If Your Honour rules that I can do that, then I am prepared to put a resolution, as I must under the provisions of Standing Order 23, so that this important issue can be debated this day. Because it is important to thousands of people in hundreds of communities all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the people in St. John's do not know if the Southside plant is going to remain open. They should have an opportunity for that to be debated in a meaningful way in this House. The people in Gaultois and Ramea and Grand Bank and hundreds and hundreds of other communities affected, are represented by Members on both sides of the House, who should have an opportunity to debate that most important issue, in my view, this day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is an urgent matter for a lot of people, no question about it. The hon. the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Simms) knows full well that the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador are dealing with this urgent matter on a basis of

urgency. It is not urgent that it be debated at this moment which is what the rule requires. The debate itself is not urgent, which is what the rule requires.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada establish a Committee of the Federal Cabinet headed by the Right Honourable Joe Clark on which are serving, the hon. Mr. Crosbie, the Minister of International Trade; Barbara McDougall, the hon. Tom Siddon, and a number of other senior Cabinet Ministers. The Province put in place a similar committee of the Cabinet, to deal with this issue, and both those committees have been working diligently for the last number of weeks. There was one meeting, the initial one being on August 23, and there have been a number of meetings ever since, and I would say the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter) knows the detail more than I do. But I would say that those two task forces, since they were put in place, have probably been meeting twice a week ever since they were established.

MR. SIMMS:
(Inaudible).

PREMIER WELLS:
No, if the hon. gentleman would just sit tight for a minute I will tell him why it is unnecessary and inappropriate to have a debate at this stage. There are a variety of possible alternatives as to how to deal with this urgent problem. Ultimately both task forces are considering all possibilities, having representations from all sectors, from all people involved in all sectors of the fishing industry, and all aspects of it are being considered. The factors, the financial cost of it, how it can best be dealt with,

whether it can best be dealt with by keeping all plants open for a period of time, whether it can best be dealt with by closing one or more plants for a period of time. All of these factors are being considered by very competent and very able groups involved in the work, Mr. Speaker.

So there is no urgency that it be debated in this House at this time. Agreed the matter is urgent, and it affects a lot of people. But a debate taking place in this House at this time would only impede the proper development, and prejudice the full and proper discussion. When there has been a full and complete assessment of it, and solutions are being proposed then, Mr. Speaker, we will bring the whole matter before this House for full debate and hon. Members of the House can debate it to the fullest possible extent. But a debate at this stage will not serve to help the solution to these problems in even a miniscule degree, and my greatest fear is it is more likely to adversely affect finding the proper solutions to the problem. So there is no basis for a debate under Order 23 at this stage, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:
This is an extremely important matter and a matter of some urgency. I am a bit aghast at what the Premier is saying. Throughout Question Period today he chided us for asking questions; now he is saying that we do not need a debate, which is rather

strange. Mr. Speaker, I submit to you, and hope that you will consider this in making your ruling, this resolution that the Leader of the Opposition has proposed to be debated today is an awful lot more important than anything that is on that Order Paper today - anything that the Government has placed on the Order Paper today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Because, Mr. Speaker, it is clear and I am sure that even Your Honour, in his non-partisan way, would have to admit that what is on this flimsy Order Paper is very flimsy legislation, to change the names of various Government Departments.

So, Mr. Speaker, let us put aside the rhetoric of the Premier. Let us put it aside for one moment, as this is a very important issue. The Premier and the Government need not be afraid or concerned to debate the matter. It is the case on this side of the House that Members want to put forth the opinions of their constituents, because they are getting calls all the time, they have concerns about the fishery.

The Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Speaker, if I may refer you, in 1988, May 31 Hansard, put forth a similar motion for the very same reason, he thought it was important that they have leave back on May 31, 1988, just a little over a year ago to debate a matter of urgent and public importance, and that was the fishing situation.

MR. W. CARTER:

It was then.

MR. SIMMS:

It was then but it is not now. The Minister says, it was then but it is not now.

Mr. Speaker, I have three references that I would like to give Your Honour to consider this matter, because it is important. First of all Beauchesne's 5th Edition, Section 286, and I am pretty sure that the Member for St. John's South, who represented the Government, by the way, in an admirable fashion over the weekend, down at that NAT Sea thing, would love to have a chance to speak in debate on this issue in this Legislature.

Beauchesne's 5th Edition, Section 286, Mr. Speaker, says the matter "...must be so pressing that public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention." Now I think you can clearly argue that public interest will suffer if we do not take the initiative to debate it and discuss it. That is one point.

The second point in Section 287, without elaborating because I have a more telling reference for Your Honour that I would like to get to, is "...the subject to be brought on early enough and public interest demands that discussion take place immediately."

Now, I think that the Premier would even have to admit that this matter is of such importance that the public interest demands discussion take place immediately. That is what Beauchesne says in Section 287. Surely the public interest demands that this House discuss the matter of such importance, a matter like the fishery. Surely the public interest demands that, Mr. Speaker.

I refer those two references to Your Honour.

But let me give you this reference, Your Honour. This is the final reference and the final point that I will make on it. Your Honour is well aware that this is a matter where Your Honour must use his discretion. I refer Your Honour to Hansard, May 29, 1978, and I know that Your Honour would not have it there right offhand, but I would be glad to lend it to him if he wishes to recess for a few minutes.

The Speaker of the day says on tape 3603, he says: "...it is a matter in which the Speaker's judgment has to be used." This is what the Speaker of the day said. "...it is a matter in which the Speaker's judgment has to be used." And he goes on to talk about the practice in the House of Commons, which is better worded than our own Standing Orders, by the way, and he says: "In determining whether a matter should have urgent consideration, Mr. Speaker shall have regard to the extent to which it concerns the administrative responsibilities of the Government, or could come within the scope of ministerial action, and he also shall have regard to the probability of the matter being brought before the House within reasonable time by other means." Because I am sure the Government House Leader is going to jump up and say the Address in Reply is there.

Well in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, the Speaker of the day said, 'the Address in Reply is on the Order Paper, and that under both headings Members are speaking in a context in which they have unlimited time.' That is The

Throne Speech and the Budget Debate in this case. The problem was that they speak under the context of unlimited time. "That is the first criteria; and obviously" the Speaker says, "I think the matter is urgent."... "the Chair has to exercise discretion with respect to whether there is a reasonable expectation within a reasonable period of time that the matter would be debated'. I do not think we could expect that from this Government, because the Premier has just clearly said he does not intend to talk about it for the next several weeks, so the Speaker says, "...we are dealing with time parameters and I have to use my judgment of what hon. Members consider urgent and" it is also said by the Speaker, Mr. Speaker that, that should '...not be insulated from what the public appear to think urgent and important and it would appear to me that at Standing Order 23, the one which the Leader of the Opposition referred to has any meanings "...and I think it does, that this is a matter which falls within that criterion and ,therefore, the Chair's position' was to allow the debate assuming the next step was approved. The next step would require leave by Members to allow the motion to be introduced, all this is, is arguing that the Speaker should say that it is important enough to warrant a debate, and Mr. Speaker do you know what that Resolution was on? Do you know what that Resolution was on, that the Speaker of the day felt it was important enough to debate?

AN HON. MEMBER:
Meech Lake?

MR. SIMMS:
No it was not Meech Lake, it was not even the Fishery, Mr. Speaker,

it was the Province's Forestry Spray Program, that is what the debate was on at the time. As a matter of fact I think my friend, the now present Minister of Forestry is the Member who introduced and asked for that debate, and he is shaking his head, he remembers. Now surely Mr. Speaker in this Province today, of all matters that are of utmost importance the Forestry Spray Program is important, but surely the Fishery is probably the most important issue facing this Province today, and I submit, your Honour, should consider that this matter is of importance enough and urgent enough to allow a debate today in this legislature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have, during the last four years been through this procedure quite a number of times, as I am sure Your Honour knows, from the other side of the House, yes. Standing Order 23 makes allowance for the introduction of the adjournment of the House and the introduction of the matter that is of urgent importance, so that debate can be held in the House on an emergency basis, and it is a very good Standing Order. Very rarely has it ever been accepted in this House, and the reason that it has rarely, Mr. Speaker, been accepted in the House is that in Standing Order 23 itself, which outlines the procedure that has to be gone through, Standing Order 23, Section B says 'the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance, and the Member

states the Matter' and then there are a number of conditions attached to the particular order. Our Standing Orders are not perhaps as specific as they can be and quite often reference is made to Beauchesne, which comes after practice in the House and practice in the House, I might remind the Opposition House Leader, is that the Speaker has not accepted the application understanding Order 23 even in the case that he sighted, he at that time took the opposite position that he is taking now and I believe the Speaker ruled in his favour. Anyway Mr. Speaker, if we refer to Beauchesne to get an interpretation of what is meant by this urgent debate, Beauchesne is a little more specific and refers to a standing order in the House of Commons which is similar to this, that allows for an emergency debate, the wording is quite similar and they point out that 'urgency within the rule,' I am using a newer version than the Opposition House Leader, I am using the sixth edition, Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, sixth edition, not the fifth, and this is paragraph 390 where it defines what is meant by the urgency, and it says specifically there Mr. Speaker 'the urgency within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but, means the "urgency of debate" - that is section 390, sixth edition of Beauchesne. Also, Mr. Speaker I would like to point out to you for your consideration when you examine this, that there are other occasions when this debate can be held. Now, I will say that the Opposition House Leader has thought about this long and hard and he says that I am going to say that the Address in Reply is there. Well, I will say, Mr. Speaker, that the Address in Reply is there, has been there for some

time, and has been debated several times in the last couple of weeks. The Address in Reply is still there to be debated in the next few days. However, I will go a little further than that and I will say that this year there has been a change in the way we have approached Private Member's Days, and we have done this specifically, Mr. Speaker, so that the Opposition can more often bring in matters of importance, that they consider to be of importance. We have also allowed them more time on Wednesdays. We have given them more Wednesdays than the Government side, which has never been done before. We have said that the choice of topic does not have to be in the order that it appears on the Order Paper. That was silly, to stick to that. The choice of topic could be made immediately before the Wednesday so that in any given week the topic could be chosen by the Opposition, when it is their turn, and by us when it is our turn. I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that we have had Opposition days where they could have very easily, last week for instance, brought in a resolution on the topic of the Fishery response and so on. Had they wanted to, they could very easily do that, Mr. Speaker, but they chose not to. I do not know what happened in the last couple of days to make it so extremely pressing. Tomorrow is Private Member's Day and we have had all kinds of co-operation here in this House so far with regard to Private Member's Days. We would be quite willing, if Members opposite agreed, to allow them to introduce, say, a private member's resolution on the Fisheries during Private Member's Day. That is fairly quick and which is when Opposition members have control of

what is actually debated in the House. Mr. Speaker, there are lots of opportunities to have this debate, and I would suggest that this particular request, number one: because there are a multitude of opportunities to have that debate, and number two: because it does not fit the urgency definition contained in Beauchesne, that this request not be complied with at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Obviously, the Government House Leader has had a lapse of memory or something because I presume he understands and realizes that tomorrow was suppose to be your choice for a private Member's motion. Is he now saying that he would be prepared to give us that choice again and if so then we would be quite happy to table this resolution today and debate it tomorrow. That is fine with us. We have no difficulty. If he is going to be so generous and magnanimous, as he says he has been in the past, and would continue to be, I presume, in the future, then that is fine with us. The only reason we decided to put it forth today, Mr. Speaker, is specifically because tomorrow was not suppose to be our turn, but if he wishes to make a trade and give us tomorrow we will give you next Wednesday. That is probably a nice simple way out of it, and the next if you wish. We are quite happy to co-operate. Give us tomorrow and we will give you next Wednesday. We will ask for permission to revert to Notices of Motion, just for a

minutes, to put the resolution on the Order Paper. We will debate it tomorrow. That is absolutely acceptable to us.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the Opposition House Leader is so surprised. The change occurred when the Government changed. That is when the change occurred in the attitude toward Private Member's Day. We have always agreed that the Opposition can have two days in a row, if they want, to our one. This was the practice earlier in the spring and summer. We have always been very willing to co-operate. We want to improve this House of Assembly and the communications in this House of Assembly. That has always been there, the co-operation has always been there, I say to the Opposition House Leader, and I do not know why he is so surprised.

I am saying you had a Private Member's Day last Wednesday. I am surprised that it was not so important last Wednesday but this Wednesday, all of a sudden, things have changed drastically and it is now of importance, then we will certainly allow you to go ahead. There is no problem.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

If that is the case then there is no need for Your Honour having to rule on this particular matter. I guess we can withdraw the motion

moved by the Leader of the Opposition because there is no point in pursuing it. We are quite prepared to accept that as an option, but we would need approval, of course, or agreement to revert to notices of motion so that we can give the notice of the resolution, quite simply, so that it will appear on the order paper tomorrow, if that is acceptable and that is agreeable by the Government House Leader, then I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would withdraw his motion if your Honour wishes it to be withdrawn.

MR. SPEAKER:

I am not certain where we are. The Chair is quite capable of making a ruling, but if hon. Members want to make an agreement to debate tomorrow then that is fine. That obviates the necessity for the Chair to do it, but the Chair would not want the hon. Members to make the agreement so that the Chair does not have to make the decision.

His Honour is baffled about where the status of the decision is now, that simply put. So, I just want direction from the hon. Members to ascertain whether a decision is necessary or whether we have by compromise, an agreement to put-off the decision.

MR. BAKER:

I guess, Mr. Speaker, in essence it is up to you to make a decision or not. The motion was made and it has been debated. You can make the decision. Regardless, Mr. Speaker, of what your decision is, I believe the suggestion was that before we go to Orders of the Day, we revert to Notice of Motion. Is that acceptable to everybody? So, whatever ruling Your Honour makes, we just revert to Notices of Motion before we go to Orders of

the Day.

MR. SIMMS:

But honestly I do not know how Mr. Speaker would rule in this kind of a situation.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It is very simple.

MR. SIMMS:

The question was whether it was urgent to have a debate today.

AN HON. MEMBER:

And he says no.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, obviously he would have to say no now because we have reached an agreement to have the debate tomorrow. So if he says yes, well then we will have to discuss what is on the Private Members Motion tomorrow.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Then we would have to go ahead with it.

MR. SIMMS:

Is that clear now?

MR. SPEAKER:

The ruling is that there is no urgency of debate today because hon. Members decided that they are going to have one tomorrow. But quite apart from that ruling, I would point out to hon. Members the main consideration in this particular ruling is not the urgency of the matter. The matter is obviously a very urgent one. The status of the fisheries, the condition of the fisheries, the state of the fisheries in Newfoundland as would, I suppose, a matter related to unemployment. 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, and whether debate today would do something to help the situation. Obviously, I think hon. Members would agree that by debating today would not make the situation any easier than by debating tomorrow as the decision was.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Good ruling, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

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

WHEREAS the fishery is the Provinces most important industry; and

WHEREAS the fishery is now facing a major long term resource crisis; and

WHEREAS it is vital that any Government response to this crises recognizes the necessity to adopt an all plants open policy;

THEREFORE be it resolved that the Government immediately inform this House of the basic principles of its action plan to address the fishery crisis that it has proposed to the Government of Canada; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this House immediately establish a standing committee on fisheries so that the Government can on a continuing basis have the benefit of the views of the Members of

this House in developing appropriate fisheries policies.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Anybody want to take delivery of this famous document?

Orders of the Day

MR. BAKER:

Motion 1, Mr. Speaker.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act," carried. (Bill No. 12).

On motion, Bill No. 12 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:

Motion 2.

Motion, the hon. the Minister Fisheries to introduce a Bill entitled, "An Act Respecting The Department Of Fisheries", carried. (Bill No. 26).

On motion, Bill No. 26 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

I think for the benefit of hon. Members we have one step in there too many. But it is carried on well.

MR. BAKER:

Order 9, Mr. Speaker.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting The Department of Mines and Energy". (Bill No. 25).

MR. SIMMS:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

I would like to ask the Government House Leader (Mr. Baker) is there any - since we are trying to follow what it is the Government wants to do - is there any particular reason why he did not carry on with the Bill that was adjourned the last day, Bill No. 21, I believe. The Minister of Finance's Bill. Is there any particular reason for that?

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

No, Mr. Speaker, as the Member knows there is no necessity. I could call that at any time. Except that today I simply started with No. 9, I intend to go 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14. So I am just going in order as they appear on the Order Paper today.

DR. GIBBONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

DR. GIBBONS:

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 25, "An Act Respecting The Department Of Mines And Energy" is fairly routine. It would establish the new Department of Mines and Energy within the Public Services of the Province. The Bill would repeal and replace the Mines, Energy and General Administration Provisions that presently exist in the Department of Mines Act and the Department of

Energy Act, and it would make things as they were from 1973 until a couple of years ago. So it re-does what used to be.

Section 6 of this particular Bill talks about the powers and duties and functions of the Minister, and that includes the supervision, control, and direction of all matters relating to mines and minerals, oil and natural gas, and energy including electrical power. That is really the function of this Department and the Act.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:
This is Bill No. 25. Did you want to have a work on it first?

AN HON. MEMBER:
No.

MR. SIMMS:
Well, Mr. Speaker, I will just have a few brief comments on this particular piece of legislation as I understand it. It is simply repealing old legislation and replacing it with this particular bill here. Is that what the Minister was saying in his introductory remarks? When he specifically referred to Section 6 of the bill, the powers of the Minister, is there any particular reason why he chose Clause 6 only to highlight the powers that he has as Minister? Why did he not talk about the sale of maps, and surveys and all the other clauses that are in there? Is there any particular reason why he chose to highlight the powers of the Minister? Is it not a fact that what is there under powers of the

Minister is really just the normal powers, duties and functions of a Minister of any Department? I presume he was doing it to fill up some time. So that he would not just stand, introduce the Bill and speak for thirty seconds, he thought the least he could do was try to stretch it out to a couple of minutes and try to make it sound like it is some kind of an important bill. Is that what the Minister was doing? Perhaps he can address that when he closes the debate.

Essentially the Minister gives us the assurance that there is nothing in this legislation that is basically new, strange, unusual, or different from what was in the old legislation that is now being repealed. Can he give us that kind of an assurance when he closes the debate on the bill? As far as we can see over here, unless my colleague, the member who sits on the Legislative Review Committee, which had a look at this bill going through has something additional to add, there is not much in the bill that we on this side of the House can see worthy of any extended debate or discussion, realizing full-well, of course, that if we chose to, under all the sections that are here we could carry the debate on this bill on for weeks, days, months, years and everything else. But since the Minister is so co-operative and so friendly as opposed to the Minister of Provincial Affairs, who brought in and tried to ram through a bill in this House last week, where we were forced to react, I would suspect that the members on this side are not going to debate it at any great length.

That is all I have to say, Mr. Speaker, but I think my colleague,

the member for Humber Valley, may have an additional word or two, or does he? He does not have an additional word or two. Unless somebody else on this side of the House has anything to add to it, we have no problem with the bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

DR. GIBBONS:

Mr. Speaker, I particularly spoke to Section 6 because that really tells what the mandate of the Department is: minerals, oil and electricity. I did not see any need to go through the details of the other particular sections that are written there. As the other member stated, there is nothing new in this particular piece of legislation. It is bringing together two old pieces that are being repealed. Schedule A of the Act does list all the Acts the new Department is responsible for, and these were in the previous two Departments.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting The Department Of Mines And Energy," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House, on tomorrow. (Bill No. 25)

Order 10.

Motion, second reading of a Bill, "An Act Respecting The Department of Finance." (Bill No. 21)

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

St. Mary's - The Capes.

MR. SPEAKER:

St. Mary's - The Capes. I am sorry.

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You are hitting close to home. I will forgive you for the mistake. The last day we were speaking on this bill - it had to be put aside for the important one introduced by the Minister of Provincial and Municipal Affairs - we were talking about the Minister's position as it relates to the northern allowance. The Minister was then missing for a couple of days and we did not get a report. Then, low and behold!, I saw him up in Ottawa, seriously sitting there, wiping the brow of the Premier when he used to get overheated, keeping him cool, and I understand it was the Minister of Finance who really took the Premier out behind the curtain and beat him into submission on the Meech Lake issue -

MR. DOYLE:

That is right. He will go down in history for that.

MR. HEARN:

- so that he consented to go along with the others and not come back here today and put off the show that was planned. We thank the Minister of Finance for that, because I think he saved the Premier and the Province a great embarrassment. In the meantime, I wondered, watching the Minister there, and he was certainly sizing up the building - I do not know what else was there to size up, we could not get to see it, but the Minister was certainly taking in the view of the building he was sitting in, and I thought perhaps he was looking for the Federal Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, who was there also, to ask him what he was going to do about the northern allowance.

When the Minister gets up, undoubtedly he is going to give us a briefing on his meetings and let us know that he certainly vented his displeasure to the Minister of Finance in relation to the report that has recently been presented, and, I presume, he is going to tell us that he asked the Minister of Finance to make sure that the northern allowance benefits are extended to all of Newfoundland, because certainly the people, especially those in the rural areas of Newfoundland, deserve such benefits.

I also mentioned last day the concerns we had, in relation to the Minister's Department, about some remarks made by the Minister of Fisheries pertaining to Government guarantees to fish plants and other people involved in the fishing industry.

When I look at the bills that are coming forward fast and furiously, I wonder, you know, what is it all about? We have today in the Province a real crisis in the fishery, not only because of the long-term effects of the overfishing, not because of possible plant closures next year, but this very day there are people in the Province who have not had one cent of income since June, and there may be some who have not had income since even before that.

We had a set of programs introduced just recently and we find, if Members have now had the chance to read the paper today, their own colleague up in Ottawa, Mr. Rompkey, is complaining about the regulations, complaints we raised earlier in the sitting, Mr. Speaker. Being closer to the scene than anybody on the other side, he realizes the effect it is having on a number of fishermen in

areas where we had a tremendous disaster this year; they, because of the poor fishery, could not obtain enough stamps to qualify them to get on the make work program, the fisheries response program. This is the only salvation they have to guarantee them any income at all during the year, unless the lady and gentlemen opposite come up with a program to subsidize their wages or at least make up for the deficiencies in the federal program that has been introduced, since we are in such a bad state in the fishery, and since there are threats to take away the resource-short allocation and the middle-distance allocation which will, in effect, wipe out a number of inshore plants.

Many of the plants that did operate this year, that did manage to provide employment around the coast, operated solely on fish obtained through the resource-short program or the middle-distance effort, and if that effort is reduced, then these plants also go down the tube.

People opposite may not seem to think that is important, because they are backing the last in/first out issue, and they will destroy a number of good, solid plants. Many of the operators, by the way, are not the ones on the Government guarantee list, they are good, solid operators who do not come to Government with their hands out. They may be plants that are not unionized, and consequently may not get much support from the union. That is an issue we should be very careful about; many of these plants are not unionized, and consequently the union will not support them. But, Mr. Speaker, they do provide a lot of employment based on fish from the

resource-short effort and the middle-distance effort. The Member for Port de Grave (Mr. Efford) is certainly well aware of that, and the Member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy) realizes how serious an issue it is when we talk about the fishery. He was down on the weekend trying to keep his plant open, and there were grave concerns as to whether his efforts would be successful or not because of the lack of consideration he is getting around the Cabinet table here in the Province.

All of these things are extremely serious, and consequently it is a time when we should be helping those in the fishery in relation to coming up with programs, but we see nothing being done. We should be helping people involved in the fish business in relation to the Loan Guarantee Program, yet we are operating under threats of cutback. However, the Loan Guarantee Programs are headed by the Department of Finance not by Fisheries, so maybe the Minister of Finance will stand up and say that he disagrees with his colleague, the Minister of Fisheries, and that he will keep the Loan Guarantee Program to plant operators going, especially over the next few years when they will need help.

But, in particular, I am interested in what he found out from the federal Minister of Finance on the northern tax benefits. I know he is extremely excited over there, waiting to get up, and we should thank him again for the great job he did in keeping the Premier cool on the weekend.

So we will let the Minister tell us of his consultations up in

Ottawa, so that we can carry the word to the people around rural Newfoundland that the benefits will continue, thanks to the great efforts by the Minister of Finance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (L. Snow):

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

If the hon. Minister speaks now, he will close the debate.

DR. KITCHEN:

This bill is establishing the Department of Finance. There were quite a number of points raised by people opposite, by the Member for Mount Pearl (Mr. Windsor) and by the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn) and other speakers. I will attempt to answer some of them.

On the weekend's activities, I might say, without wishing to tell anything you have not already seen, that I think for the first time since Confederation the people of Canada, the First Ministers, are taking seriously the Premier of Newfoundland. That is what came through firm and clear -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. KITCHEN:

- that we now have in this Province a Premier who, the people in Canada realize, chooses his words carefully, makes his points carefully, and is one who has to be listened to by the whole of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I can say categorically that a new era is dawning as far as Newfoundland is concerned in this Canadian Nation,

and it is high time. After seventeen years of bluster and buffoonery, we now have somebody here who can handle other people in Canada.

MR. SIMMS:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, it is not that I do not want to hear it, but I would be happy to hear it some other time. Obviously we are debating a bill and there is a rule of relevancy that one must follow. Whilst the Minister of Finance wants to get up now and gloat over the Premier's performance and somehow say it is the first time ever, I am sure even the Minister of Finance would have to admit that back in 1982 - I think what we are seeing is the reinvention of the wheel - the very same thing happened with Mr. Peckford and Prime Minister Trudeau. Anyway, that is all irrelevant to this bill.

Now, if the Minister and the Government want to see legislation approved in the House, want to see co-operation so that legislation is approved, then I suggest strongly to the Minister and others that they stick to the legislation. If they intend to make it a very open and wide debate, then we are quite prepared to play that game, as well. But let us get on with the legislation. The Acting House Leader, who just got back from Korea, is ready to jump out of his starting blocks over there. Since the Government House Leader is not

in his seat, he now feels he is the one who can get up and attack me, make some kind of a great speech on a wonderful procedural point, shoot me down and win a point.

The point is let us get on with the debate and the legislation. That is the point I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. FUREY:

The hon. Government House Leader makes great sense.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order!

MR. FUREY:

That is one of the best speeches he has ever given in this House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Development, to the point of order?

MR. FUREY:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible).

MR. FUREY:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader, nearly Leader of the Opposition, makes some very good points, Mr. Speaker. He talks about having respect for relevancy. He should know that in this bill with respect to the Department of Finance, it is a wide-ranging Department; it covers a great broad spectrum of the whole of Government and it has far-reaching financial

implications. But I say this to the hon. Member, while he sits there and smirks and threatens, he is good at threatening but he is not very good at follow-through.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. the Minister of Finance is going to narrow his comments as he usually does, but he likes to start off with a wide-ranging debate and a wide-ranging preamble which is his right, as was the hon. Member's right to rise in his place a minute ago.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, I was responding basically at that time to a comment which had been made by the hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes. In my response, I was about to make the point to lead up to the connection between this and the Department of Finance. One of the problems we have with Confederation and the Constitution as it is presently set up is that we are a have not province, and what we have to do is attempt to rearrange the balance of power in Canada in such a way that we can get out of this union what we should be getting out of it. That is the reason I made the comment that we have long needed a strong Premier. Now we have one, and I believe that money will flow to Newfoundland in an appropriate way as a result of the changes that take place in the Constitution, when we can get our regional disparities changed by means of agreements which address regional disparities, for example, rather than just put Atlantic development

programs in place which are immediately matched and exceeded by programs which are brought in for other provinces. So this question of the power of the Premier and his performance at a first Ministers' Conference is an extremely important one as far as the Department of Finance is concerned and the long run interest of the Province.

Now, coming back to some more specific points, the Member for Mount Pearl was wondering about what happened to the \$5 million surplus. I want to correct the hon. Member, because we had never predicted a \$5 million surplus. That was not in the Budget. What was in the Budget, Mr. Speaker, was a \$5 million surplus on current account. What the hon. Member forgot to mention was that there was a deficit on capital account of \$258 million. So we projected, Mr. Speaker, and I am not proud of it, a deficit of \$253 million this year.

What I am trying to say is that the financial position of this Province is something that we should all take very seriously. It is a serious matter. When we have to pay \$1 in \$6 of our revenues towards the payment of interest to our creditors, that is a lot of money. If our predictions hold out, we will be \$250 million worse off, more in the hole at the end of this year than we were last year. Every year we go in the hole more, and more, and more, which takes a heavier responsibility.

So it is important, I think, extremely important, for Members on both sides of the House to realize the financial position of the Province, and we have to take that question seriously as much as

possible. And anything we can do with respect to Ottawa toward improving the economic situation of this Province will reflect in the finances of the Province.

Now, one of the questions that was raised opposite in the discussion of this bill was the goods and services tax. It is not my intention to get into a long discussion at this point on the goods and services tax - the proposed goods and services tax by the Federal Government - where they are proposing to enter the consumer tax field and to tax at the rate of 9 cents on the dollar, a 9 per cent tax on many, many items. Now that goods and services tax, I might add, is an unpopular tax in Canada. It has been rejected by all Provinces in Canada. But, at the same time, it is an extremely serious point to make, because if that goods and services tax is brought in, the fiscal situation in this Province will deteriorate quite dramatically.

I propose later on this week or next, Mr. Speaker, to table the Province's position on the goods and services tax, and perhaps at that time we can get into it more seriously, in more detail. But I do want to say this, that this tax will have a seriously negative impact on the economy of the Province; it will impede the fiscal ability of the Province to raise money and taxes. We will have to raise, we estimate, an additional \$80 million in taxes to compensate for lost revenues, and that is a lot of money. The administrative problems of that tax are quite horrendous on businesses, and on the Government in collecting taxes. And, moreover, the most serious problem with it, moreso perhaps than any

other, is the fact that the Federal Government will be intruding on what has traditionally been a provincial area of taxation.

There is not much we can tax in this Province except commodities. That is our biggest source of revenue. If the Federal Government intrudes any more than it has now, this will be a very, very serious matter.

A few years ago, 35 per cent of the commodity taxation was Federal Government, 65 was Provincial. Last year it was 45 per cent Federal. If this goods and services tax comes in it will be in excess of 50 per cent Federal taken of the commodity taxation, and that is our largest provincial tax field; that is where we get most of our taxes.

There is no where else to raise it. We can raise corporate taxes. But if we raise corporate taxes on the multi-nationals, what they normally do is transfer their profits to other agencies the companies operate; they change their sales rates, and so on, so that they do not pay many taxes in the provinces with the high tax rates; they can manipulate their balance sheets so that their profits come out in provinces and countries where the tax rates are lower. So we have very great difficulty in this Province getting a handle on corporate income taxes. Where we can hit the large corporations is through the sales tax. We get them through the sales tax.

Also, we could get large corporations on the property tax but, as you know, in this Province property taxes are relatively light compared to other provinces.

What I am trying to say as far as the goods and services tax is concerned is that we have to be very careful, we have to continue to fight this tax. I will say more about that in more detail at a later date, and perhaps we can get into a wider debate on that point.

Another question raised had to do with pension reform. It is not my intention to say anything about pension reform or the whole question of the changes that may take place in pensions in this Province at this time. We have a commission established which is meeting with all the interested bodies and hearing their views, and so on. At the end of December they will be reporting to Government, and at that time we will be making our position clear, we will come to grips with some of these problems we have with unfunded liability. But this is not the time to make statements about pensions. We will give the commission an appropriate opportunity to make all their inquiries, to meet with all the various groups involved, to do their studies, and to come back with their recommendations. We will then look at their recommendations and decide what we are going to do about them.

The Member for St. Mary's - The Capes mentioned northern allowances. I have received the report that was submitted to the Federal Department of Finance. As you know, this has been a contentious item for many years, where you have one community getting tax benefits and perhaps an adjacent community not getting tax benefits. It has been contentious, but, at the same time, the report that came out was submitted to the Federal

Government. There was a Newfoundlander on that one, by the way, a Newfoundlander from Corner Brook, by the name of Ed Poole. He was one of three people who made these recommendations, and one of the recommendations is that only Labrador - only Labrador - would be receiving northern allowances; the whole island of Newfoundland would not get northern allowances, and that seems to be easy to administer. It is very easy for the tax people to administer that. You either live in Labrador or you do not as far as Newfoundland is concerned, and so it makes it conveniently easy to administer. But it also deprives a great many people on the island part of the Province of this particular allowance that was going there before. We like the simplicity of it, but we do not like the impact of it.

I might add that we have not made any reaction to this yet, the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes, we are studying it and we will be making a reaction. I might add that there will be a meeting of Finance Ministers in Ottawa on the December 7, I think it is, and at that point, for sure, we will be making specific recommendations to him on that point. I am glad he raised consciousness at this time about that particular matter.

Loan guarantees: That was a matter raised to try to see if the Minister of Fisheries and I stood in the same position with respect to loan guarantees. Our positions are the same. You do not want to give out loan guarantees where they are not necessary. I believe there has been a reliance on loan guarantees. The banks have been reluctant to give loans to certain businesses who then approach Government and ask, Well, will

Government guarantee the loan? Of course, if Government guarantees the loan the bank usually does not have any objection to that. But we have been much more careful about our loan guarantees than the previous Government. We are very careful about it. In the Department of Finance every loan guarantee now is carefully examined; I personally go over every loan guarantee application before it goes to Cabinet, and I discuss it in great detail with officials so that no loan guarantee gets in place unless the officials approve, I approve, and whatever Department is affected other than Finance also approves. So we are very careful. But, at the same time, I want to make this point, that it is better for the banks to loan with a loan guarantee than for NLDC, say, to give them the money. We do not want to give out money if we can get by with a guarantee. It is better to give a guarantee which you may not lose, than to give out the money with a grant and lose it all.

You see, you have to look at the various ways Government helps business. One way is through a grant, and a grant may be justified in certain circumstances, but a loan guarantee is cheaper than a grant. It may come down to a grant if the business cannot pay the guarantee, but most of the time it does not. And the experience has been over the years, even with the previous Government and their sloppy Administration, even there most of the loan guarantees that were made were relieved, the Government did not have to pay out. There are some notable exceptions, such as the Sprung Enterprise and a few others, but, basically speaking,

most of the loan guarantees that were put in place were eliminated after a while, when the company became profitable. And some very good companies got their start through loan guarantees. So I am not against loan guarantees; we are not against loan guarantees per se, we are against dishing out money or dishing out loan guarantees without being careful. We have to be prudent with respect to the people's money, in grants, in loan guarantees or any other manner that we spend. Prudence, I believe, has to be the watchword. Certainly, as I indicated before, we are not against loan guarantees but we are against loan guarantees that are dished out indiscriminately. Hopefully, companies should be established where they can get working capital other than relying on loans from banks. We hope that most of the companies established in this Province will have a better capital structure than that, that they will have equity capital invested by the owners or whoever, and that there be long-term loans by appropriate institutions, where that is possible, and that working capital is not necessarily, except in emergencies, provided in the form of bank loans guaranteed by Government.

I think that is about all. There was one more point made, I believe by the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes when he mentioned about the fisheries this year. All I want to say about that is we have to be fairly careful here, because I am sure the crisis in the fishery will cost the Province money. It is going to cost the Province money as well as the Federal Government. Again, that means, as far as I am concerned, that we in every branch of Government, including the Opposition, will

have to be extremely careful in how we spend money so that we will be able to handle this crisis in an appropriate way. We are a poor Province. We do not have a lot of cash; what we have to spend has to be spent wisely and prudently, and when there is an emergency, we have to respond appropriately to it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting The Department Of Finance", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House, on tomorrow. (Bill No. 21)

MR. FUREY:

Order 12, Bill No. 20.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting The Department Of Justice". (Bill No. 20)

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MR. DICKS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Act before the House is merely a general housekeeping matter which arises from the changes in departmental responsibilities as a result of the changes made after the provincial election on April 20th of this year.

In the Department of Justice, the only substantial changes are that the Department now has assumed the responsibility for Consumer and Corporate Affairs, while the former Department of Consumer Affairs and Communications has been dissolved, with the Communications responsibility being transferred to my learned friend in the Department of

Municipal Affairs.

There is not much to say about the Act. It, of course, will necessarily repeal The Department of Justice Act, The Department Of Consumer Affairs And Communications Act, and is subject to The Public Service Rearrangements And Transfers Of Duties Act. The other provision is that there are some consequential amendments in a large number of Acts set forth in Schedule A, which total approximately 158. In essence, those define that the Minister responsible for the various duties set forward in those enactments will be, in future, the Minister of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Bill No. 20, "An Act Respecting The Department of Justice: Our critic, the Member for Humber East, is around somewhere, and I am sure she will have a word to say on it. I am no legal expert. I have the Bill here.

MS VERGE:

That is just reshuffling the Public Service.

MR. SIMMS:

As the Minister says, this bill simply revises the Department of Justice Act, RSN 1970 - C85, to reflect the recent reorganization of the public service of the Province. Basically, that is all this bill does. In particular, though, it does provide the Minister, in addition to his or

her duties as Minister and Attorney General, be responsible also for Consumer Affairs, Insurance and Corporate Affairs of the Province. That is all it does basically, nothing much more than that. Mr. Speaker, we have no real big objection to it, but I am sure my colleague, the member for Humber East, would want to have a few words as the Justice critic.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, very much.

What a wonderful Opposition House Leader we have, who can fill in at a moment's notice on every subject before us.

Mr. Speaker, not only do I not have much reservation about this bill, I have no reservation about it. It simply reflects the reshuffling of the public service carried out by the new Government. In this instance, actually it was a reshuffling that the Rideout Government had begun and it reflects an organization that had been in place for the first few years of the Peckford administration. There is no substantive change involved in the bill, it is simply a matter of reflecting the move of the Consumer Affairs Division from a separate Department to the Department of Justice. That was a combination that worked effectively and harmoniously in the past, and I am sure it will in the future. On behalf of the Opposition, I certainly concur with this bill. I should add that as Vice-Chair of the Social Legislative Committee, very ably Chaired by my friend for Carbonear (Mr. Reid) -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

- I had a chance to screen this bill along with several other housekeeping measures put forward by the Government, and the Committee dispensed with this Bill in very short order.

Before I sit down, I would like to appeal to the Minister of Justice to get on with presenting to us some substantive Justice bills. When I left the Department at the beginning of May, I had a long list of Justice legislative measures for the 1989 session of the House of Assembly. These are measures that had been undertaken, or initiated the previous year. Among them are bills to incorporate recommendations of the Provincial Law Reform Commission on enduring powers of attorney, an important and simple matter to deal with in legislation, and a report on limitations of action, which is more complex and major but, nevertheless, has been before the Department of Justice for about a year and a half now. I would appeal to the Minister of Justice to give us more than these simple housekeeping measures, give us something with meat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

If the Minister speaks now, he closes the debate.

MR. DICKS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Opposition House Leader and my learned friend

for Humber East for their co-operation in dealing with the bill. I think it is indicative of its very - I would not say mundane nature, but certainly there is not a lot of controversy in the measure that is being proposed here, and I thank them for their support for it.

In closing, it does, I think, reflect an effective organization that was there in the past. As the member knows, the responsibility that was there with the Fire Department has also been transferred out, although that is not adequately reflected nor necessarily to be reflected in this bill. As regards the other legislative measures, I would certainly like to take the opportunity to assure my learned friend that we will, in fact, be bringing forward substantial legislation. It is often, as the member knows, essential to get your House in order before you furnish it and put things in it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Does my learned friend (inaudible)?

MR. DICKS:

Well, I assume at this point. To not have him prove me wrong, I will give him the honour of being called a learned friend at this point. I take it that includes not only the member for Humber East to whom my comment was directed, but also the Opposition House Leader. Certainly, as the hon. member points out, there have been some necessary legislation that has been before the Government for about a year and a half or two years, originally from the Law Reform Commission, and I am sure the member would agree that it was not, I do not know for what reason, brought forward by the previous Government, but we

certainly are in the process of reviewing it. I can add to the list that she mentioned, several other things besides The Limitation Securities Act.

Just as a matter of closing this debate I would like to assure the House that there will be some substantial measures being brought forward by the Department of Justice, the Act she has mentioned, the Public Utilities Board Act, and so forth.

MS VERGE:

Before Christmas?

MR. DICKS:

We are hoping before Christmas, but certainly if not, then early in the new year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On that basis, I would like to close the debate on this bill.

On motion, a Bill, "An Act Respecting The Department of Justice," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House, on tomorrow. (Bill No. 20)

MR. BAKER:

Order 11, Bill No. 23.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting the Department of Environment and Lands". (Bill No. 23).

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, in the absence of my hon. colleague who is away on Her Majesty's business, I just want to say that this Bill is basically a housekeeping piece of legislation. It would repeal and

replace the Department of Environment and Lands Act, reflecting the most recent reorganization of the public service of the Province, and the Bill would provide that in addition to the Minister's responsibility for the Environment and Lands of the Province the Minister would also be responsible for Provincial Parks and Wildlife.

Mr. Speaker, this is going along with the Government's decision taken on May 5, when the Premier reorganized the Cabinet and streamlined it back from, I think, the previous high of twenty-three under Premier Peckford, then down to nineteen under Premier Rideout, and down to fifteen under Premier Wells. Basically what we are seeing is an amalgamation of the various Divisions which are being pulled in under the umbrella of various departments. What we are seeing here is a more streamlined, more athletic, more directed Cabinet that has taken various Divisions and pulled them in under various Ministers. What we are seeing under Environment and Lands is the additional responsibility of Wildlife and Provincial Parks. So the Minister is just stating in this legislation that he will take full responsibility, not only for Environment and Lands, but to direct all policy direction for Provincial Parks and all matters that arise with respect to Provincial Parks and Wildlife matters.

We apologize on this side, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands had to be away on Her Majesty's business. We tender that this is merely housekeeping legislation to reorganize that Department, and we look forward to him taking on the challenges that are brought from

these additional Divisions.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on this significant piece of legislation that has been brought in by this Government.

I suppose I should not let the opportunity go by now without pointing out that this is the fourth Bill, I believe, we have debated today in the last half hour. That will indicate just how significant the legislation is that the Government is bringing in. That is no reflection on the Minister who did an admirable job, in the absence of his colleague, of introducing this very heavy piece of legislation, but I am taking the opportunity to point out to the Government House Leader, that for a Government that campaigned on change, and a Government that now has been elected for seven months I guess, or whatever the time frame is, the only legislation they could muster through the summer months, when they had all kinds of time and the Premier had Cabinet meetings out in Eastport for two days, one of the best meetings he ever had - I think that was the quote, since he has been in politics, one of the best meetings he ever had, two days of meetings with his Cabinet colleagues, obviously drafting legislation, talking about legislation -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

No? Just a good meeting.

Well, obviously they were not

drafting legislation. That has become very, very clear now. For a Government and a Party that kicked up an awful big fuss -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:
The Premier says, "Just wait." Well, we are waiting with bated breath. During the election campaign and before, for a year or a year and a half before, they were calling on the Government to have a fall Session of the Legislature; we should have a fall sitting of the Legislature. We have now been here for three weeks and the most significant piece of legislation, I suppose - it is hard to determine which is the most significant. I would say it is a tie basically, except for the one the Minister of Provincial Affairs brought in and tried to ram through the House in the last minute. Other than one, which had some significance to it, I suppose, everything else there is an Act to change the name of a Government Department. Basically that is all that is here, and I am getting a bit nervous. I do not know about the Government House Leader, but I am getting a bit nervous because there does not appear to be much else left. I do not know where he is going to go at 4:30 today, unless he is going to ask for leave, get down on bended knee once again and ask for leave to move into Committee, so he could start getting through some of the Bills in Committee.

MR. FUREY:
Why would that be?

MR. SIMMS:
Pardon me?

MR. FUREY:

Why would that be?

MR. SIMMS:
There is nothing on the Order Paper other than things in Committee of the Whole, which you cannot go to today.

MR. BAKER:
Why not?

MR. SIMMS:
Because you need - Oh, you are talking about the other stuff. Okay. All right. Good!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:
I am glad the Government House Leader pointed that out and reminded me. Of course, there are somethings there. But they, too, since he has pointed it out and brought it to my attention, are pretty heavy pieces of legislation: "An Act To Amend The Liquor Corporation Act". If I recall that one, we had a sensational debate on that here in the House. It must have gone on for weeks, did it not? It seems to have passed my mind somewhat. "An Act To Amend The Economic Council Act". If I remember correctly, that is a bill to let the Economic Council change its date for bringing in its budget to the Government. That is pretty heavy stuff, too. I believe, the Minister was absent and the Minister threw a fit behind closed doors, I understand, with the Government House Leader for proceeding with this bill when the Minister was not here and he did not have a chance to get up on his feet and give an eloquent speech. I mean, he was just chomping at the bit over there.

MR. TOBIN:

No, that is not what happened. The Minister of Fisheries brought it in and gave the wrong reading of it.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes. In his absence the Minister of Fisheries introduced the bill, I tell the Minister of Development, brought it in and read the wrong Bill. As a matter of fact, he read the wrong Bill.

MR. TOBIN:

He brought in his briefing notes and read all the wrong ones.

MR. SIMMS:

It is good to see that the Government has its act together and is bringing in all kinds of heavy legislation. This particular bill, The Department of Environment and Lands Act, I do not even have it in front of me, but, if my memory serves me correct, it gives the Department of Environment and Lands the authority and responsibility for Provincial Parks and Wildlife. I think that is what the bill does. It obviously repeals the old bill and replaces it with this one.

Aside from taking the opportunity if we desired to talk about the environment, to talk about Hydro in its handling of PCBs out in Bishop's Falls, and things like that, which I am sure the Member for Exploits (Mr. Grimes) has a lot of concerns about, and taking advantage of the opportunity to talk about their parks policy and all that kind of stuff, which we could do quite legitimately, it has absolutely nothing to do with this particular piece of legislation. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to sort of follow the trend set by the Minister who introduced it and said very little. I have done

exactly the same thing, and there is very good reason for it: There is not much one can say.

MR. SPEAKER (L. Snow):

The Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have to take this opportunity to respond to some comments made by my hon. friend opposite. When this Government took over the Government of the Province on May 5, we had a number of things that had to be done. First of all, we had to open the House for Interim Supply, a situation we need never have been in if the previous Administration had done their job. Then we had to put a Budget together, and a Budget was put together in record time and presented to the House of Assembly, and all the necessary legislation with regard to that Budget was dealt with; a very great task, Mr. Speaker, in a very short time.

While this was going on, and during the summer, we had to attend to the reorganization of the Government Departments. The reason for that again is simple, Mr. Speaker. We had to reduce the number of Government Departments by combining departments and eliminating a number of departments. We had to do that and that was a big job; that was a very important job, to reduce the unnecessary extra expense on the Province of having twenty-two or twenty-three different Cabinet positions, and twenty-two or twenty-three different departments. Mr. Speaker, that was a tremendous job for us to reorganize the Government Departments. So naturally, Mr. Speaker, if after the Budget and

after Interim Supply and after the legislation that dealt with the Budget was through the House our next big job was to reorganize Government, then, obviously, it was important that the legislation relating to these reorganizations and changes be brought into the House, and that is precisely what we have done.

And these, rather than being nonexistent legislation, flimsy legislation, legislation of no importance as the Opposition House Leader would suggest, are very important pieces of legislation. It gives the Opposition a chance to discuss matters of importance about every single Department in Government, every single Department. Gives them an opportunity when we come up to the Fishery, to talk about Fisheries, it gives them an opportunity when we get later on today to talk about the Bill relating to Employment and Labour Relations, to talk about that aspect of the economy of the Province, it gives them an opportunity with these Bills, that are, I will stress again important Bills, because they relate to the re-organization of a whole Government structure in this Province. It gives the opposition an opportunity to debate issues important to every single Department in Government. Now Mr. Speaker I had to intercede in the debate to point that out, because it is not, it is not a flimsy piece of legislation we are debating, these pieces of legislation are very important and it gives Members opposite an opportunity to express their views on matters of extreme importance in the Province today. So Mr. Speaker I would say to the opposition Members, that, if their attitude that the reorganization

of the Government and the re-organisation of the Government Departments is not important, if that is their attitude, then fine, I will report to them that there are many, many more pieces of legislation close to being ready, there are two pieces, notice given today and there will be more in the next few days; there are many, many more pieces of legislation that will be given notice in the House in the very near future, and I would also like to point out Mr. Speaker that there is a real change this time, a real change in terms of dealing with legislation, and that is the formation of the Committees. The Committees will get a chance, ordinary Members of the House will get a chance, to examine in detail the important pieces of legislation that are coming before the House. Private Members will get a chance to examine all these pieces of legislation that are coming before the House and be thoroughly conversant with it, and as a result, perhaps, there may not be as much discussion in the House, because maybe discussion will take place in the Committees. I say to the Opposition House Leader that what is happening here now is important and I would like them to take part in the debate in that spirit.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Stephenville.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

My very short few words to this debate, Mr. Speaker, is that this Bill is one that talks about the re-organizing of the Department of Environment and Lands and adds to the Department, and if real changes is to occur Mr. Speaker, we must organize our Governments in the proper form and manner, to

clean up what was done previous and some good things were done, some good things were done previous Mr. Speaker. But you know we are setting about on a different path and therefore we have to undertake that path, we have to reorganize and therefore these are the measures that must be taken. They are necessary measures so that the Government can function, and can function well, and it will function well, Mr. Speaker, no doubt about that. The Bill also talks about Environment, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to say that that is probably one of the biggest issues not only in this Province, but across Canada and across the world today, and I think that we as a Government have to be conscious of that, and as Members of the House of Assembly, and I am hoping and looking forward to seeing improved legislation coming forward which will see improvements to the Environment in this Province and protection of the Environment. I think it is extremely important, as we undertake the new economic reforms that we will be bringing in, bringing prosperity to this Province which it has never seen the likes of before, I look forward to seeing those things start to occur as we get more and more into improved legislation that we will bring forward, and improved programs that we will bring forward. I think even though it is rather of a housekeeping nature in one sense, I think the pieces of legislation that are coming forward re-organizing Departments are necessary. As we get through this process, the major pieces of legislation which will be bringing in the major programs and the major changes which we have been talking about for quite sometime, those things will start to happen.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, one thing the Opposition should be aware of is that once those things start to happen the real changes that we will be bringing forward and we are now bringing forward, they are going to have to be ready because they are going to be coming very swiftly and I think they are going to be very good changes to try to undertake the reforms that we need. You know, the Government of this Province now is very serious about its business, and the hard work that is being put in by the Legislative Review Committees is now going to start bearing fruit, and we will soon see some substantive major pieces of legislation very shortly.

But, Mr. Speaker, of course, I am standing in the House of Assembly in the Fall, and I have not done that for the last four years, so I think that is a pretty good measure myself.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:
As a matter of fact, usually when I was here it used to be the summer and the day used to be very long and the sun would be shining. So I not so sure, I am not used to this at all, as a matter of fact. But now that is pretty good. So I think that is an improved measure and that is healthy for the environment of the House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I think as we get more and more into that we will see a healthier environment throughout the Province.

So I think that the Opposition should just hang in there a bit longer and as the legislation comes forward they will have their opportunities to bring forward

whatever suggestions they might make. And I want to commend the hon. Government House Leader and the Government for bringing forward reforms of allowing the Legislative Review Committees to be set up. I think it is an excellent measure which again shows how democratic this new Government is in allowing everybody to debate legislation and so on.

I just want to add these very few comments to this debate, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for your pleasure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Development.

If the Minister speaks now he closes the debate.

MR. FUREY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank hon. Members for their comments with respect to this Bill. And again we apologize that the hon. Minister of Environment and Lands (Mr. Kelland) had to be away on Her Majesty's business. We re-iterate, Mr. Speaker, that this is part of the streamlining and reorganization under the new Government to make this Government more fit, more lean, more (Inaudible), and put it on a new course and give it new direction, that is what these bills do and that is what this reorganization process is all about, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

On Motion, a Bill "An Act Respecting The Department of Environment and Lands", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow.

MR. FUREY:

Order No. 13, Bill No. 28, Mr. Speaker.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting The Department of Employment and Labour Relations." (Bill No. 28).

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

MS COWAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This Bill creates the Department of Employment and Labour Relations. A substantial number of its provisions are standard in legislation establishing a Government Department. These are mostly administrative type sections that provide for the appointment of staff, the seal of the Department, the authority to enter into agreements and other sections of a similar nature needed for the running of the Department.

All of these provisions were included in the Department of Labour Act, 1984. The Act that is proposed to be repealed by Clause 27 of this Bill. A few sections of the Department of Labour Act, 1984 that are not included in this Bill were omitted only because they are presently included in other legislation and their presence here is unnecessary. For example, sections 16 to 19 of the previous Department Act refers to powers of inspectors. These powers are already incorporated into the relevant acts that appoint the inspectors such as the

boiler, pressure vessel and compressed gas act.

The significant difference between the Department of Labour Act 1984, and the proposed Department of Employment and Labour Relations Act is found in Clause 6. Clause 6 sets out the powers, functions and duties of the Minister. Many of these powers, functions and duties are similar to those found in other Departmental Acts and here I refer to paragraph b to j, paragraph (a) of Section 6 is unique to this Departmental Act. It includes the various matters that come within the scope of the Department of Employment and Labour Relations. Subparagraphs (i) to (xxviii) refer to matters that were previously included in the Department of Labour Act, 1984. Subparagraphs (xxvii) to (xxxiii) are matters that were previously included in the Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies Act.

It should be noted that Section 6 (a) xxxiii provides for four matters that are to be dealt with jointly by the Minister of Education.

A review of the enumerated matters in clause 6 highlight the mandate of the Department of Employment and Labour Relations as it relates to Employment and Labour Relations.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Minister indicated in her opening remarks, this is really only a housekeeping piece of legislation which will combine the present Department of Labour and

the Careers Branch of the former Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies, and make it one Department.

Maybe this is the Bill that the Minister has been waiting for so that she can have the mandate to start creating some employment in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Because that is a very startling statement she made to us today, Mr. Speaker, in Question Period when she said that her Department really did not have a mandate to look after some of the unemployment problems that we are presently experiencing.

Well, maybe with this Bill and the passage of the Bill, the Minister will now have the mandate to start creating some employment and some employment opportunities for the people in Newfoundland and Labrador. I do not know why she would need the Employment Branch to go with her Department. When you consider the fact that one of the first moves that the Minister made after becoming the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations was to cancel out one of the most meaningful employment programs that we have had in the Province for quite some time, which was the Private Sector Employment Program.

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister is closing debate on this Bill maybe she can answer the question that we asked her today in Question Period that she did not answer, and that was with respect to the unemployment, the analysis of the economic impacts of the proposed amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act.

The Minister has gone to her colleagues in Ottawa and indicated to them that approximately 20,000 people in the Province will need

varying degrees of employment in order to qualify for unemployment insurance, three weeks, two weeks, and one week of employment. I was asking her today how she could approach her colleagues at the Federal level with any degree of credibility when she has cancelled out one of the most important employment programs that we have had in the Province for quite some time?

I indicated to the Minister today as well, that approximately 61 per cent of the people who were employed on the Private Sector Employment Program continued to be employed even after the program itself had terminated. Which should indicated to the Minister that a number of people who were being employed on those programs, the employers were keeping them on because they had something to offer and now the Minister has axed that Program. It is very, very important that the people of the Province be given some indication as to whether or not they are going to be able to avail of the same employment opportunities this year as they did last year.

Mr. Speaker, I was given information as well, and I would like for the Minister to confirm or deny when she is finishing up debate on the Bill, by officials in the Minister's own Department that the Minister and the Government were going to re-instate that Program approximately a month ago but because the Board of Trade called upon the Government in very strong terms to bring the Program back that they decided to shelve it for a later date. I would like for the Minister to make a comment on that because I was given that information by people within the

Minister's own Department.

Mr. Speaker, it is really too bad that we do not see any more substantive Bills coming before the House from the Department of Labour than we have already seen, because the Labour movement in Newfoundland and Labrador was expecting very, very big things from the Government when they were given the reins of power in April, and rightly so, Mr. Speaker, because they raised the expectations, if you will, of the Labour movement, and created the illusion in the Province that there would be sweeping reforms, a lot of changes and new Bills coming before the House which would ensure that labour unrest in the Province was going to come to an end. Mr. Speaker, we have not seen that. They are still waiting, as a matter of fact, watching the Government and hoping that it will begin all these sweeping changes in the not-too-distant future.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, the Government, from where I stand, has yet to do anything to improve the labour climate in our Province. And, judging by recent statements from the Minister of Labour, it looks as if they might be waiting for a long time to come. Also, Mr. Speaker, I would ask her now, when she closes the debate on this Bill, to set out her plans as to what she intends to do for the construction industry in the Province, who are waiting for legislation to be brought forward on double-breasting. She indicated just a few weeks ago that that long-awaited Bill may not come before the House this session, and she had given the Labour movement in the Province some indication that that would be forthcoming.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said a moment ago, the Bill is not a very substantive one, it is only for a name change within the Department, but I use the opportunity to ask the Minister a few questions again.

MR. HOGAN:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HOGAN:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am delighted, Mr. Speaker, to have an opportunity to address the merits of this Bill. I would like to raise something that is of particular interest to me, and that is in the field of Occupational Health and Safety, Workers' Compensation.

Bill No. 28, "An Act Respecting The Department Of Employment And Labour Relations: The difference, Mr. Speaker, in this Bill, is what we are talking about today, and that is going to be the administration of the Bill and the administration of the Department, including Occupational Health and Safety, which was not administered to the liking of most of us over the last seventeen years. Now, it is going to receive that attention, especially in the areas in which I have a particular interest.

I might add, also, Mr. Speaker, that never before has this House had such great expertise available in the House on these subjects. I refer particularly to my good friend from St. John's South, (Mr. Murphy) who is much older than I am and has been in the business probably ten or fifteen years longer - not quite as good at it as I am but, nevertheless, very

well informed, a former President of the Canadian Society of Safety Engineers, and I could go on and on about his credentials in that area, and I probably could espouse some of my own.

In that regard, Mr. Speaker, both of us look forward to contributing to this administration in those fields of Occupational Health and Safety and other matters that relate to this particular Bill. It is a long time overdue and the subject of Occupational Health and Safety and the crisis - not a crisis, I would not say, but the lack of attention that has been paid to Occupational Health and Safety, bringing it into this day and age as it is in other Provinces, we are only too delighted to support that Bill, and we will be addressing it as time goes by.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

If the hon. Minister speaks now she will close the debate.

MS COWAN:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My goodness, they do go on, Mr. Speaker, about that private sector program. It would seem that it was the only thing they valued in their Government in seventeen years, and we certainly did not look at it with the admiration that they have. I am also very amused by this attempt, when it is very, very difficult to discredit what it going on, to try to question the loyalty of the people

in my Department. In fact I find it rather amusing that the loyalty of the people in my Department is questioned. I must say that if I ever was naive enough to fall for that trick, I certainly am no longer. I do not think it is even worth commenting on that remark he made about the Board of Trade, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly would never be guilty of being so vindictive as to punish the people of Newfoundland, if there was a good program coming on, because the Board of Trade made comments. In fact I have a good deal of respect for the Board of Trade, was very interested in what they had to say, and will be exploring it more frequently with them.

The hon. gentleman who is my critic also wanted to make reference to the labour movement. I must say when the labour situation has been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent in this Province that it is not an easy thing to come to grips with, I do not intend to bring in legislation that is not going to have a long-term impact at making the labour climate more positive in this Province.

Occupational health and safety. I never hear a question about occupational health and safety. The other Government never thought about it for seventeen years, which I suppose is the reason why we have 10,000 work places in this Province, and somewhere between the area of five to eight inspectors who go around to check out the safety of workers. In fact it would appear to me that in many cases the workers of Newfoundland were looked upon by the last Government as third world workers who you could put into any kind of condition and exploit in any way in order to get a job

done. Well, I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, that that certainly is not the attitude of my Government. We look forward to highlighting occupational health and safety and I look forward to the day in Question Period when I will be asked some questions on occupational health and safety, a very, very important and often overlooked area.

That is all I have to say at this stage, Mr. Speaker. I will sit down now and close the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

On motion, a Bill, "An Act Respecting The Department of Employment And Labour Relations," read a second time, ordered to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 28)

Order 14 Bill No. 29.

Motion, second reading of a Bill, "An Act Respecting The Department Of Municipal And Provincial Affairs." (Bill No. 29)

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is introduced to amend the legislation to provide for a new Department restructured of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, replacing the current Department of Municipal Affairs and replacing that particular Act. Under the new legislation we would be incorporating the previous responsibilities of Culture, Recreation and Youth, Communications and the Registrar General's Office within the new Departmental Act.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Government's intent with my Ministry was to incorporate all Departments that had dealings with the communities throughout the Province. In fact I can say that the Ministry is functioning very well. The Departments interrelate with one another very well, and I think it is safe to say that those of us who deal with the various municipalities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and have had discussions with the Mayors and Councillors in particular, I am sure they will all attest to the fact that it is very convenient and certainly much more beneficial to be able to deal with one Minister and one Department who is able to co-ordinate the various Departments of this Ministry as they relate to the various communities throughout the Province. I think in particular our initiative to try to regionalize and focus attention on particular parts of the Province so that they can better access the various programs of Government is worthy of comment. In particular, we have tried to have the communities work together so that they can access services, whether it be water and sewer or roads or recreation facilities, and the list goes on. The services that can be provided on a regional basis. Through the process of amalgamation, of course, which was an initiative undertaken to have communities work more closely together, on a formalized basis, we, of course, will see more close co-operation because ultimately as these communities come together, they will be working together as new communities in the future.

But in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, not only are we encouraging communities that have common boundaries or on close

proximity to come together on a formalized basis as a new community or a new town or city, we are also encouraging the sharing of services in all parts of the Province and Labrador. Whether we are talking about sharing services between small municipalities that can perhaps share out common water supply, an incinerator, a recreation facility, and so on. We are also talking about it on a larger scale where many, many communities are getting together forming recreational committees and applying to the Government for cost-sharing and funding to fund regional recreational facilities throughout the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. GULLAGE:

And, Mr. Speaker, I will re-introduce into the House the program on Regional Recreation Facilities shortly. And hopefully many of the applications that we had held until we put a better program, in our opinion, in place, better able to speak to the needs of the Province, hopefully all of these communities now will want to be part of the new program and will want to, along with the Government, participate in funding regional recreation facilities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

The other part of the ministry, Mr. Speaker, which is very important is the culture affairs and historic properties - museums throughout the Province. And being the Minister for Municipal as well as Provincial Affairs, of course, means that I am able to focus on all parts of the community, not just one part as in the past, where the Minister of

Municipal Affairs had responsibility only for the municipal side of Government, and was not able to coordinate and speak to the many activities that take place in a community, such as the cultural affairs of a community, historic properties and museums. In addition, of course, to the sports recreation and fitness side of the ministry, which also ties in very well with Municipal Government.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the co-ordination of all of these activities under one ministry makes a lot of sense. And I think that those of us who relate to the various municipal councils throughout the Island, and certainly the regional committees and the regional offices within the Department, will attest to the fact that it is working very well and it is being very well coordinated by the staff throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. And I think the reorganization makes a lot of sense. And I would hope that this Bill will pass.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of

Municipal and Provincial Affairs (Mr. Gullage) got up that time to make a few brief comments on his it is with the Federal Government and then the decision will be made.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Tobin.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I am not satisfied with that answer at all - now he is going away. Will there be changes submitted to the Federal Government on this list? Will he be submitting this list? The Department of Transportation of which you are responsible for, you wanted to make a few brief comments on his Department.

Let me say to the Minister that there are none of us on this side of the House going to be fooled, nor are the people of Newfoundland and Labrador going to be fooled as it relates to the onerous responsibility that the Premier has placed on the shoulders of the Minister. Mr. Speaker, all you have to do if you read the sports section of The Evening Telegram over the past few weeks you have seen suggestions being made day-in and day-out about the way the Premier of this Province has decided to down play and to basically scuttle the opportunities for the youth, for the aged and for everybody else to participate in recreational activities in this Province.

There is nothing, Mr. Speaker, there is no emphasis whatsoever left for recreation in this Province. There is absolutely nothing left in this Province in terms of a priority being given by this Government for recreation, absolutely nothing. The

recreational aspect of the Minister's Department has been downplayed. It has been scuttled. It has been underfunded. It has no priority. I have difficulty, Mr. Speaker, in seeing how some of the people over on the other side of the House can sit back and see how their Government, the Government that they are a part of, can see how they have decided to downplay and to basically outrage the athletic community in this Province.

I am not surprised, Mr. Speaker, that the Member for LaPoile does not say anything. I would suspect that after what he said last week in the House about moving the people, moving people from the islands down in Green Bay because it was difficult for them to be amalgamated, I am not at all surprised that he is not supporting the recreational aspect of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:
Now, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Placentia says the twister. Now, Mr. Speaker, there is not a better twister in this Province than the Member for Placentia. As a matter of fact, the Member for Placentia is not at all happy as it relates to the way Government is treating recreation. And let me say, Mr. Speaker, not only is the Member for Placentia not happy the way Government is treating recreational facilities, but the Member for Carbonear is totally unequivocally disgusted with the way that the Department of Municipal Affairs has been getting on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. John's South comes in and says

that he is not happy with recreation. The Member for St. John's South is happy with nothing unless the Premier puts him in the Cabinet. And I would suspect that he is going to have to do an awful lot of talking about occupational health before he gets into the Cabinet of this Province. The Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island, he is going to have to write the Premier a lot more notes before he gets into Cabinet. I would suspect, Mr. Speaker, the Member is going to have to write out an awful lot more letters. The reports cards will have to be a lot more thorough. The Premier is not satisfied with the report cards.

Remember first when the Premier became the leader of the Party, how he kept the report cards. The word is now, Mr. Speaker, that that responsibility now has been assigned to the Chairman of Caucus. The Premier has to be left the House because the Member for -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. TOBIN:
Since when did you become Premier?

MR. SPEAKER:
I would like to suggest that we have come to the end of the fifteen minutes for the response by the Opposition. Now we will move into normal questions.

I think Mr. Walsh has indicated a question.

MR. TOBIN:
(Inaudible) left the House because the Member for Windsor - Buchans

has spoken. The Premier has not got to be around. No Mr. Speaker, I am not, I am not, I am telling the Member that the word is that he is keeping the report cards, he is not doing a good job and he has upset his colleagues. Now Mr. Speaker that is the word, that is the word, Mr. Speaker, but we have to get to this Bill that was brought in here today. The Minister of Municipal Affairs, how many councils are there and communities councils are there in this Province? Three hundred and something? Organizations, Councils, there you go Mr. Speaker. Every one of them out there, we all have constituents, we all have councils and they all want to meet with the Minister, there is no one any different, I have them, the Member for Placentia has them, or he used to have them Mr. Speaker, and all the rest of them have councils that want to meet with the Minister. With just the Department of Municipal Affairs, with just the Department of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Speaker, it is virtually impossible for any person, for any man or woman to be given the responsibilities to be Minister of Municipal Affairs, it is difficult enough for him to try to meet with all of his councils, and the councils in this Province are becoming more and more frustrated with the Minister of Municipal Affairs because he cannot meet them. Mr. Speaker it is not possible, it is not possible, there are not enough hours in the day for the Minister of Municipal Affairs to be able to meet them, and I do defend the Minister with my councils, he is a very busy man, the time is not there, if he worked twenty four hours a day, he still would not be able to meet all of the councils that are there with all of the burdens, the onus

of responsibility that the Premier has placed on him. Now Mr. Speaker, what have we got? Now Mr. Speaker, look at the housing prices in this Province and the people who are looking for housing, and God knows we have enough Mr. Speaker, God knows we have enough people out there, yes indeed they are out there a long time, but you will not solve them, you will not solve them by resettling the people, you will not solve them by moving people from the Islands Mr. Speaker, that is what the Member for LaPoile advocates, there he goes again Mr. Speaker, they have been there all the time, yes resettle them again, scut out the islands, move them all away Mr. Speaker. I can tell the Member for LaPoile, Mr. Speaker, part of the problems in the housing crisis in this Province today goes back to the resettlement program in the sixties when your Premier was there. I am serious Mr. Speaker, you will look at what happens in this Province, you look at what happened in this Province when people were resettled. They all came in and they moved into one major subdivision. They lost their homes, they lost their homes Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Government of the day stole their homes on them, yes Mr. Speaker destroyed their gardens, took their fishing community, burnt their stages and left them with absolutely nothing Mr. Speaker. Then they put them into a house, they put them into a subdivision, and how often have I heard, Mr. Speaker, my friend and colleague the Minister of Fisheries, talk about resettlement over the years. As a matter of fact, most of my lines on resettlement I have learnt from the Minister of Fisheries, who attacked it Mr. Speaker, viciously attacked the

Government of the day. I wonder how the present Minister of Fisheries can sit in the Cabinet with his leader, who was part of the team that scuttled and resettled the people of this Province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, probably the Premier should do for the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter) what he did for the Minister of Development (Mr. Furey), and that is set up somebody else to run his Department and send him into the House to answer the questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, where is the fairness in this Government? How can the Premier treat his Ministers fairly, Mr. Speaker, when he puts the burden on the shoulders of the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (Mr. Gullage) -

AN HON. MEMBER:

And housing.

MR. TOBIN:

- and housing and culture affairs and recreation and everything else? And, Mr. Speaker, makes him responsible for it. Takes the Minister of Development, Mr. Speaker, turns around and appoints Doug House to look after it for him. Now, Mr. Speaker, where is there fairness and balance in the Cabinet today?

AN HON. MEMBER:

In there leader.

MR. TOBIN:

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Forestry, Resources and Lands (Mr. Flight) go back to the back benches where he has been since he came into the

House. Where is there fairness and balance in the Cabinet. Where is it? When one minister, Mr. Speaker, got Doug House to run the economic conditions of the Province -

AN HON. MEMBER:

He runs the Government.

MR. TOBIN:

Who gave the economic statement to the Province, the economy?

MR. SIMMS:

The hon. Doug House.

MR. TOBIN:

The hon. Doug House.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What?

MR. TOBIN:

Yes.

What about NLDC who do they report to now? Who does Doug House report to?

AN HON. MEMBER:

The Premier.

MR. SIMMS:

He does not report to anybody, maybe the Premier. The Minister of Development (Mr. Furey) reports to the hon. the Premier.

MR. TOBIN:

Well what about rural Development? I talked to some people over the weekend on the -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Shame!

MR. TOBIN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am getting carried away, we are dealing with municipal affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, so long as they do not send the same white coat that they did the Member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy), Mr. Speaker, then they can carry me away.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. TOBIN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I for one on this side of the House, and by the way I can tell you right now there are Bills gone through this House in a matter of minutes, but this one here is not going through in a matter of hours, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

Because there are a lot of things that we are going to discuss including amalgamation, Mr. Speaker. And I say we have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, as Members of this House of Assembly we have a responsibility to ensure that this Department, this onerous Department, the Minister, Mr. Speaker, can be a workaholic and he probably is, Mr. Speaker, but he is not doing service to the people of Newfoundland, nor has the Premier done the service to him in putting that responsibility on his shoulders.

MR. SIMMS:

A super Minister.

MR. TOBIN:

How can the Minister do it? You bring in councils and they cannot meet them. Some people, I understand, have been told that the Minister has been so busy that you may not get to see him during his term as Minister of Municipal

Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I will give no names, but I tell the Minister, that it was not necessarily a councillor, I wanted to meet him. We have to get into the meat of this Bill. What is going to happen to the Regional Recreational Program that was introduced for a five year period by my colleague the former Minister for Grand Bank. Where is that, Mr. Speaker? Did they tear that up, Mr. Speaker, the same as they stole the cheques, Mr. Speaker, for the recreational facilities in Fogo, the Connaigre Peninsula and the other place? Bonavista North that is where the other place was, Mr. Speaker. They kept the money from them, destroyed the cheques, and denied the people of those communities recreational facilities. That is what the Minister and his cohorts done in Cabinet. That is what they did and that is wrong. That is basically wrong and they should not be allowed to do it. We have an opportunity again to bring that out and we will do it at every opportunity we get.

Now, what about some other programs that were initiated by the previous administration in terms of industrial parks that come under the jurisdiction of the Minister, as I understand it? Or, is that under the team of Doug House, industrial parks?

MR. R. AYLWARD:

It is not under Dougs.

MR. TOBIN:

So, the Minister still has industrial parks. What about the industrial park aspect of it, Mr.

Speaker? There are areas in this Province, particularly in my own District, that are crying out for industrial parks.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

No, Mr. Speaker, we did not give them one. They have not got one but the Minister is aware that Burin is now in the process of doing one and doing it on their own, as the Minister can tell you. They went out and they borrowed the money and came in and developed their own industrial park. There is a crying need, Mr. Speaker, for industrial parks.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Are you finished for the day?

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, we have two minutes and then I will do the rest tomorrow. There is a crying need in this Province, Mr. Speaker, for industrial parks. I do not want to lose my trend of thought. There is a crying need, Mr. Speaker, for industrial parks in this Province. On the Burin Peninsula is one place. And there is also a need, Mr. Speaker, for infrastructure to be put in the Argentia area, in case the Member from Placentia is not aware of it. And, Mr. Speaker, I have assured the people of Argentia and the Placentia area and I reaffirm it today, that I will do everything in my power, Mr. Speaker, I will do everything in my power to insure that that area gets the industrial benefit that it deserves. Now, Mr. Speaker, the people of Placentia are aware of my commitment, and I hope that the Member from Placentia will join with me in insuring that that type of development takes place in

the Argentia area.

MR. SIMMS:

Could the Member before - I know he is still into his preliminary remarks - he gets into full thrust, seeing it is nearly 5:00, would you like to adjourn the debating until next we sit?

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was about to say that I will now adjourn the debate and I look forward to the next few days.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, I think some Ex-Lax could probably fix all of that.

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

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