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Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):
Order, please!

The agreement was that we would recess for fifteen minutes but the lights came on just as we left, so if it is agreeable to both sides the House will now convene. I take it we are in agreement?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

I am going to suggest that because of the difficulties we have had, that our time this afternoon be adjusted. We deem it now to be 2 o'clock and everything would then proceed according to normal procedures and Private Member's Day beyond that point.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, we have no difficulty with that. In other words, so that we are clear, we start now at, let us say 2.25, and the House will then sit until 5.25. That is the clear understanding so that nobody is compromised and nobody misses their rights or anything like that. We agree just to proceed as usual.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MR. DICKS:

I trust that after the interlude my remarks will prove to be enlightening to the Opposition.

I take this opportunity to advise

the hon. Members of the House of the circumstances surrounding the engagement of Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited to conduct a sale of property seized from Lantern Wholesale Limited to satisfy a debt owed to the Department of Finance.

The Office of the High Sheriff of Newfoundland is responsible for the enforcement of Execution Orders issued from the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. In an Execution Order, the court orders the Sheriff to seize, accept as a receiver, hold and sell the property of the judgement debtor to satisfy in whole or in part the amount of the claim of the judgement creditor and, among other things, it directs the Sheriff to forthwith make a true inventory and an appraisal of the seized property.

The Sheriff's duty under the Rules of the Supreme Court is, upon receipt of the Execution Order, to forthwith comply with the provisions of that Order.

In the case of Lantern Wholesale Ltd., the Sheriff's office received an Execution Order directing the Sheriff to seize and sell by public auction or public tender, assets of Lantern Wholesale Ltd., sufficient in amount to satisfy the judgement creditor's claim in the amount of \$940,080.28. The seizure was carried out by the Sheriff's Officers on Monday, October 3, 1989.

The seized assets included a large quantity of tobacco products, health foods, food stuffs (cookies, crackers, candies, chocolate bars) and other confectionary items. This type of product had to be sold as soon as

possible to prevent spoilage and before the expiry date of the goods. I have been informed by the Sheriff's office that in spite of having proceeded at once, some of the food products did actually spoil and could not be sold. Immediately upon seizure of the goods, Appraisal Associates Limited was contacted by the Sheriff's office and requested to do an inventory and appraisal. The Sheriff was advised that because of other commitments, it would not be able to commence an inventory and appraisal before a week or ten days. Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited was then contacted and requested to do an inventory and appraisal and the Sheriff's office was advised that the inventory and appraisal could be started immediately. Upon completion of the inventory and appraisal, it became apparent to the Sheriff's office that the magnitude of the sale dictated the engagement of a professional auctioneer to conduct the sale under the direction of the Sheriff's office. It was estimated that it would require six or seven people, seven to ten days to prepare for the sale, and three to four days to conduct the sale. The Sheriff's office did not have the necessary resources to conduct such a large sale. Since the inventory and appraisal had been done by Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited, discussions were then held with the company with respect to conducting the sale as agent for the Sheriff. The company agreed to conduct the sale for a commission of fifteen per cent all inclusive. This included twenty-four hour security, extensive advertising and all necessary staff to prepare and conduct the sale. The Sheriff was unaware of the existence at that

time of Terra Nova Auctioneers. The Department of Finance, Judgment Creditor, was contacted and advised of the terms upon which Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited would conduct the sale and, subsequently, an agreement was entered into. The Sheriff's costs involved in any Sheriff's sale is always deducted from the proceeds of the sale. The debt is reduced accordingly. It is, therefore, the judgment debtor who is ultimately responsible for the costs related to the Sheriff's sale. The question has arisen as to whether or not the contracting of Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited should have been tendered under The Public Tender Act. The Office of the High Sheriff in its traditional role is an independent office which responds directly to an order of the court. In most cases, the Office of the High Sheriff is acting on behalf of third party judgment creditor and takes its instructions directly from these third parties and acts as agents for them. It is clear in these circumstances that The Public Tender Act would not apply. In this particular case, the judgment creditor was the Department of Finance. The question therefore arises as to whether or not The Public Tender Act applies to the Office of the High Sheriff in carrying out its duties pursuant to the court order. The situation which has arisen is unique, because in most cases the Sheriff's office itself conducts the sale. The fact that neither the judgment creditor nor the Sheriff's office will expend any funds for this service raises additional issues regarding the applicability of The Public Tender Act. Also given the nature of the material seized, (food stuffs and

other usage dated products) it would not be possible to go through the full public tendering process. The question then arises as to whether or not Government should have cancelled the contract with Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited once a question was raised as to the appropriateness of awarding the contract. Contracts entered into, other than those in accordance with The Public Tender Act (if indeed the Act does apply), are not necessarily invalid. Case law would suggest that a contract awarded under these circumstances is enforceable. Various Canadian courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada, have upheld contracts that were contrary to statutes. The following cases are instructive in this matter and include: Meyers v. Freeholders Oil Company (1960) F.D.R. 761 (F.D.C.); and two other cases which are cited and which I cannot pronounce, quite frankly, (Maschimenfabrik Seydelman K-G v. Presswood Brothers Limited (1966), 1 O.R. 316 (C.A.); Ames v. Investo Plans Limited (1973) 5 W.W.R. 451 (B.C.C.A.), but which are cases of superior courts of jurisdiction in this country, including the Court of Appeal and the British Columbia Court of Appeal.

It is entirely clear that Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited would be entitled to recovery of their fee either as a result of performing the contract or court-ordered damages. Substantial work had already been undertaken and it was concluded that it was not in the public interest or the taxpayers' interest to breach our contractual obligations with Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited.

It has been suggested that Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited has a Standing Offer with Government for 2.9 per cent, while the value of this contract was 15 per cent. The Standing Offer with Fitzpatrick's relates to disposal of Government assets. It is not applicable to this situation in that Government was not disposing of any of its assets, rather the assets of a private company were being disposed of by court order.

The service provided under the Standing Offer is an entirely different type of service. It involves merely auctions and sales. As previously mentioned, the services undertaken by Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services Limited in this case involved 24 hour security, providing staff to do inventory, appraise and separate the merchandise into appropriate lot sizes, advertising costs and costs of the sale. A completely different level of service.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that The Public Tender Act does not apply to the Office of the High Sheriff of Newfoundland in its traditional role in enforcing court-ordered executions by third party creditors. I have requested, however, the Sheriff to meet with the Government Purchasing Agency to develop guidelines which could be made applicable to the Sheriff's office to cover transportation, storage and sale of seized goods when the Office of the High Sheriff is acting for Government as a judgment creditor.

There may well be circumstances where it is impossible for the Office of the High Sheriff to comply with any guidelines

developed, as emergency situations may arise where the Sheriff must act immediately.

I thank the hon. Members of the House of Assembly for allowing me this opportunity to provide an explanation with respect to the role of the Office of the High Sheriff and the circumstances surrounding this most unique situation.

I would add that it was prepared by my staff with the usual brevity and clarity which so marks legal writings in this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

It sounds like one of Clyde's statements.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if there is a moral in all of this legalese it is that perhaps the sheriff should not get too trigger happy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, what a blatant attempt by the Minister to cover up bungling and incompetence by his Department in this particular matter. To attempt to justify the fact that this was done so quickly in the statement, by saying that

the seized assets had to be disposed of quickly, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame!

MR. RIDEOUT:

The seized assets which consisted of a large quantity of tobacco. I expect that spoils rather quickly, Mr. Speaker.

Health foods, is something else that spoils quickly, Mr. Speaker. Food stuffs. And the Minister tries to give the impression that there were food stuffs that could spoil here, but then he makes the mistake, Mr. Speaker, in his statement, of going on to list them, cookies, crackers, candies, chocolate bars, Krispie Crunch, Captain Crunch, Mr. Speaker. All of this kind of stuff could spoil rather quickly. Mr. Speaker, the bottom line in this particular matter is that this was bungled by the Minister's Department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

There was a procedure in place where in the normal scheme of things, auction services are provided to the Government and to industry in this Province on a fee for service basis, ranging from 2.7 per cent to 2.9 per cent. In this particular case the sheriff's office acted very, very quickly. The Minister says, Mr. Speaker, that they were not aware of any other services. Well all one has to do, Mr. Speaker, is turn to the yellow pages in the telephone book, and besides this particular firm you will see, as I understand it, two other firms listed, one of which is mentioned in this particular document and yet another one referred to a

Liquidation Sales, I believe, it is. So with any kind of ingenuity and insight, Mr. Speaker, a couple of quick telephone calls could have been made saying here is the service that we would like to have provided. We have to have security. It has to be provided quickly, but could you give us a quick quote on what you could provide that service for. But no, Mr. Speaker, the first person called quoted 15 per cent. That person was engaged, and other people in this Province, other legitimate business in this Province, which is the bottom line, did not have an opportunity to bid or quote on this particular work. That is wrong. That is not fairness and balance, Mr. Speaker. And if that is the way this Government is going to operate, it will take more than legal statements from the Minister to cover up the incompetence and the bungling of his Department, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. the Premier. In view of the fact that the Newfoundland fishery is facing a crisis which, in terms of agriculture, I suppose, could be referred to as a drought or a crop failure as a

result of mismanagement over the last decade, and in view of the fact that fish is a renewable resource and if there are proper conservation and management practices put in place the resource will grow and hopefully thereby sustain itself and sustain thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; and in the past, Mr. Speaker, in this country, when there has been a recognizable drought and crop failure, Governments have responded with programs to keep people in the industry, the farmer on the farm and, in this case, it should be the fisherman in the boat and the plant worker in the plant, and so on, I want to ask the Premier if he would tell the House - or maybe he has - whether or not, in fact, his Government have taken this approach to addressing the present fisheries crisis, in other words, asking the Federal Government to participate with the Province in a program to keep the fisherman in the boat, the plant worker in the plant and the communities alive, so that when this drought is over, when this crop failure is over, those skilled workers will be there to participate again in the fishery.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what we have done, as a matter of fact. We tabled in the House, I guess it was last week, the proposal. I think there have been further revisions of that since, or adjustments, or additions to it, certainly. But, clearly, we drew to the attention of the Federal Cabinet Committee at the time, just that comparison, what the Federal Government does and the manner in which they

respond to crop failures and drought problems in western Canada. We also drew to their attention that we can understand their responding to those problems in that way. They are usually acts of God, drought or floods, no human being is usually responsible for. So we can understand their responding. And we pointed out that the burden on the Federal Government to respond to this situation was even greater because they, in their mismanagement of the fishery stocks, caused this particular problem. So they cannot even call it an act of God, it is an act of the Federal Government that caused this particular problem. So we emphasized that that was their responsibility. This was done on August 23rd. I know, when I have spoken to them on a number of occasions since that time, I have emphasized this, as well, and I would expect the Task Force has done so, as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the second part of the question. The Government's position keeps getting misrepresented on this, so let me make it clear.

We are faced with a problem of the loss of work opportunity for about 6,000 people in this coming year as a result of what is happening in the fisheries. So what we said to Government is, We think it is your responsibility, Federal Government, to provide for the financial consequences of this loss, so that you have to provide for an appropriate response to ensure that the people involved are adequately provided for until they have an alternative economic opportunity to which to turn. Then, in the meantime, work with us and we will build up and help you provide that alternative

economic opportunity within the Province, and hopefully all 6,000 and even more will get an opportunity to choose an economic alternative. Then, when the fish stocks get built up again, in the future, anybody who was in the fisheries before, who want to get back into the fisheries again, should have an opportunity to get back into the fisheries.

Nobody should be barred from it. Nobody is talking about taking 6,000 people out of the fisheries and barring them forever - not this government, and to the best of my knowledge, I do not believe the Federal Government is either. I have not had that specific discussion with them, maybe the task force has.

The licencing is a federal matter, but we can have some significant impact on it. From our point of view, the approach is to provide economic alternative in the meantime, then, when the fisheries recover, to provide for an opportunity for anybody who wants to, to go back into the fisheries again, where they were before.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I guess where the real problem comes in is the difference between providing an economic alternative now and people having the opportunity to get back into the fisheries when the fish stocks rebuild, as they will if they are properly managed.

Let me ask the Premier this, Mr. Speaker. Has the Premier told the Government of Canada that the Provincial Government is prepared to dig in its heels and fight

tooth and nail to ensure that the Government of Canada will discharge its responsibilities to the fishery of this Province just as they have in the past discharged their responsibility to the agricultural industry of Canada? In other words, fishermen stay in the fishing industry, fish plant workers stay in the plants, and communities survive, as farmers stay on the farms, so that there is not class B and class C citizens in this Country in constitutional terms, but they are all treated equally. Is the Government prepared to dig in and fight to the last straw on that particular principle with the Government of Canada?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the Government dug in its heels a long time ago, on August 23, and told the Federal Government just where we stand on it. It is spelled out in the document that was tabled. We said, Federal Government, it is your responsibility. You caused this problem, and you identify the amount of dollars it takes to correct the problem. That is your responsibility, not the taxpayers of the Province.

In the meantime, we also said to the Federal Government, Look at the overall economic situation in the Province, and if you are prepared to use the resources that are available to provide reasonable alternative economic opportunities for those who will be displaced in the meantime, while the fish stocks build up in the fisheries, give them another choice to be productive, not say to people, Here, sit down in your homes and do not work for five

years and we will pay you.

We think that is wrong and we said so. We say provide for alternative economic opportunities now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

PREMIER WELLS:

That is what we are working on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

PREMIER WELLS:

If hon. Members want an answer, I am prepared to give it. I am not prepared to cackle with them. If they want to keep cackling, I will sit down. If they want an answer, I will give it to them.

Mr. Speaker, the position we took is that if the Federal Government is prepared to put the resources in, we will put whatever provincial resources along with it to help improve the overall economy of the Province, as well as providing for the fishermen who are displaced, so that in the meantime, four, five, six, seven or eight years from now, as the fish stocks regrow, there is an opportunity, people can go back to the fisheries or stay with the alternative employment if they want to.

Now we think that is a sensible approach. If the hon. gentlemen think some other approach is sensible, I can only say that I think the Province is fortunate that it has had a change of government.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, let me say to the Premier that it is our responsibility to ask how the Government is approaching this particular problem, and it is his responsibility to respond to the House.

Let me ask the Premier this, Mr. Speaker. In view of the approach the Premier has just outlined, how can the Premier square that approach with the approach taken publicly on several occasions now by the Minister of Fisheries in this Province, that there are too many fishermen in the fishery, that the fishery must be downsized, there must be fewer fishermen, fewer plant workers, and that, in essence, means fewer communities? How can the Premier square that approach with the rhetoric of his Minister of Fisheries?

MR. SIMMS:

Because he wants it on both sides, that is how.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

The difference between that side and this, Mr. Speaker, is we are not afraid to face reality. The reality is there are so few other economic opportunities after seventeen years of Tory rule, that our people have no choice.

MR. RIDEOUT:

And twenty-three years of Liberal rule. That is forty altogether.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

That is right.

PREMIER WELLS:

At the end of the last Liberal rule, the last five years, the

average unemployment rate was 2.3 per cent higher than the national average. After seventeen years of Tory rule, in the last five years it has been 10 percentage points higher than the national average.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame! Shame!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, if they want the answer I will give it. If they want to cackle like this, I will stand and try to get a few words out.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are not in a courtroom, boy.

MR. WARREN:

What has happened in the last seven months?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The Leader of the Opposition, to my knowledge, asked his questions without any interference from this side. I would expect the same courtesy to be extended as the Premier is answering the question, please! The Chair does not mind the odd interruption, but when it becomes quite obvious that the responses over here are drowning out the Premier, then the Chair must intervene. So, please extend the courtesy to the Premier of an answer.

The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. TOBIN:

The truth should be important in this Assembly, too.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The Chair is not to be toyed with. I have asked for order. Every Member is entitled to be heard in silence, and if the Premier insists on being heard in silence, that is what the Premier should get. That is the courtesy he should be extended, as all hon. Members should be.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, we take this approach because we believe it would be wrong to say to the Federal Government what you have to do is spend \$400 or \$500 million to pay people not to work for the next five, six, seven or eight years that it will take for the fish stocks to regrow. We said to the Federal Government, Yes, you have to provide the money to ensure that the people affected will have alternative income. If you can do it in such a way that you could also provide it through productive employment, then that is the course which you ought to be following. Then, after five or six or seven years, when the stocks regrow, anybody who is involved in the fishery should have a right to go back to it and should be provided with the opportunity to go back to it.

But, in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we have so little employment in this Province that we have to provide alternative economic opportunity, and that is the course to which this Government is dedicated and we are asking the Federal Government to participate and respond to this particular situation in the same way.

MR. RIDEOUT:

They will never be allowed back in the fishery again, and you know it.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MATTHEWS:
Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Fisheries, and I think it is very timely in light of the Premier's admission that he is going to displace 6,000 to 10,000 people from the fishery of the Province. We have seen the unemployment rate in his Province is 2 per cent higher than a year ago, last year - a plus 2 per cent unemployment rate. I would like to ask the Minister of Fisheries, is he considering any additional shrimp processing licences for the northern Peninsula?

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, that matter is under consideration, but there has been no decision made yet. We are waiting on certain actions that we have asked Ottawa to take with respect to the shrimp fishery, and until we get some word back from Ottawa as to exactly what they intend to do in terms of enterprise allocation and establishing certain quotas, then there will be no decision made.

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

MR. MATTHEWS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen the Minister waiting to see what was going to happen from Ottawa with special response and other fishery related matters. This is a matter which he can deal with. Because of the little jurisdiction we have in the fishery, processing licences fall under the Minister's jurisdiction. If we had more jurisdiction, our fishery might be in a more healthy state, I say to the Premier.

MR. MATTHEWS:

We should not give more control to Central Canada and Ottawa, we should have more for the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MATTHEWS:

I am sure we will hear a bit more about that later on today, as well, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister. If he does not soon make a decision on additional shrimp processing licences for the northern Peninsula, for the next season the fishermen will not be able to sell as much shrimp as they would like. They have been trying to meet with the Minister since early summer. They feel neglected and avoided. And I ask the Minister would he do two things: Will he grant two additional shrimp processing licences for the fishermen and the people of the northern Peninsula so that shrimp does not have to be trucked out of there? And will he make a commitment to the House, and through the House to the fishermen, that he will meet with them as soon as possible?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I have met with the fishermen in that area. In fact, I visited the area. I have talked on a number of occasions to various groups of fishermen from that area. Now, if the hon. Member is suggesting that we open up the floodgates and start issuing licences for shrimp processing on the St. Barbe Coast, then that is all right with him. But, Mr. Speaker, we want to take a more rational and more responsible approach. At the present time, Mr. Speaker, we have two large processing plants on the northwest Coast, one in Port au Choix, of course, and one in Anchor Point, both established at considerable cost. Both of these plants combined are capable of processing 175,000 pounds of shrimp per day, when, in fact, the harvest is about 200,000 pounds.

I understand that one of the large companies are now talking about expanding their operation. But certainly we do not want to go ahead and start issuing licences for shrimp processing on the Coast if it is going to be at the expense of one of the existing plants. That would not make sense, and we are not about to embark on that kind of program.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

No, Mr. Speaker, that is not what we are requesting. What we are requesting is, because of the difficulties experienced in the fishery in the last five or six years, and fishermen need to be able to sell every pound of fish they catch, whether it be groundfish or shellfish or whatever, there is a definite need on the northern Peninsula for

additional shrimp processing capacity. Now, that is what 150 or so fishermen from the northern Peninsula tell me, who know it a little bit better than I do. And I am sure the Member should know, as well as they do, that that is needed.

So the question to the Minister is, first of all, will he meet and consult with the fishermen at his earliest opportunity? And will he very seriously consider the granting of additional shrimp processing licences for the northern Peninsula so that these fishermen can make a decent living, rather than being displaced with the other 6,000 people who are going to be displaced over the next few months?

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

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, if the member is suggesting that we try to solve the economic problems of that part of Newfoundland on the back of the shrimp fishery, he is wrong. And that is exactly what he is suggesting. In order to accommodate the 6,000 or 7,000 Newfoundlanders who might be displaced - I say might be displaced - he is suggesting that we start opening up the floodgates and building new shrimp plants on the Great Northern Peninsula.

MR. MATTHEWS:
I did not say that.

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, he is asking me to give serious consideration to issuing two more licences. If that were to happen, it might well be that the two existing plants would then be in very serious trouble, and we are not about to

do that. We are not about to rob Peter to pay Paul.

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

MR. A. SNOW:
Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

AN HON. MEMBER:
He is not here.

MR. A. SNOW:
I direct it to the Acting Minister of Works, Services and Transportation. As he or she is undoubtedly aware of the importance of a good reliable road system to all parts of this Province, I wonder if they could tell me and tell this House what their intentions are with continuing to have the portion of the Trans-Labrador Highway cleared and maintained this winter?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, I do not know personally what the precise plans are, but I will take the matter under advisement and either I, or the Minister, if he is in the House tomorrow, will answer the question for the hon. gentleman.

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

MR. A. SNOW:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

In light of the fact that this Government has several times, and the Premier himself has several times, enunciated the stance that the role of Government is to provide a climate, an atmosphere, and an infrastructure to create

employment and not necessarily create jobs, in light of that and keeping that in mind, I wonder if the Premier could tell this House why the Department has not made a decision, and if they will make a decision, on maintaining this road year-round in order to enable the sawmill to continue operating this winter and create more employment in western Labrador?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

I accept the hon. gentleman's premise. He has stated our position correctly, but I have to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I cannot say that the Government has made a decision not to keep it open. I told the hon. gentleman that what I would do is take his question under advisement and either I or the Minister will provide the response tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Environment and Lands. Preservation of life and dignity of people are two of the goals that any Government could and should strive to attain. In view of the fact that many of our people are being killed and maimed on the highways because of moose accidents, and we have an atrociously high number of people unable to gain meaningful employment, can the Minister tell the House if he and his colleagues will consider the proposition to cut brush a distance of sixty feet from the road shoulder on every highway, where feasible and practical, so that lives can be saved and a chronically unemployed

people attain meaningful employment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. KELLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I share the hon. Member's concern. In fact, we discussed that very matter outside the House a few days ago, and I answered some questions earlier on the same subject. There are a number of different options on how to lessen the dangers to life and property. That would be one of the options, but we have not made a final decision. That in itself is not an absolute solution, but part of a possible solution.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

Everybody but everybody, as the Minister said, recognizes the seriousness of people losing lives and being maimed by the alarming increase in moose-related accidents in the Province. Before the House closes, would the Minister inform the House in a Ministerial Statement, or otherwise, over the next few weeks, what he intends to do to address this serious problem?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. KELLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will make every attempt to do so

MR. LANGDON:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

The Minister has acknowledged, then, that there has been a large number of accidents fatal and otherwise. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there was also \$1.5 million in personal property damage in 1987, and \$1.4 million in 1988. Would the Minister also include in his policy a comprehensive package for victims and families of victims who have suffered because of these tragic accidents?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. KELLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There is compensation. There is an insurance package, I believe, as I already answered in the House earlier. Comprehensive insurance which is optional, does cover some of the cases. I do not know that we would, as a Department, get into a compensation package for people who have suffered losses, but there are insurance coverages now of an optional nature, Mr. Speaker. I suppose we could review the possibility of backing that up in some manner. There is no decision at this stage of the game, but it certainly can be reviewed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

In fact, some people who do have insurance policies on their car do

not carry comprehensive and do not carry collision, in many instances. In that light, would these people who suffer and do not have the recourse and the health packages and so on to fall back on in the case of tragic accidents, would you consider these in a proposal?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. KELLAND:

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have already answered that. But anything that would be of benefit to the people of our Province, I would certainly take under consideration.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Works, Services, and Transportation, but in his absence I would ask the Premier if he remembers, at the transfer of power, I guess, or when the Government's changed in June of last year, that there was a contract ready to be signed to construct two ferries for the Bell Island service. When the new Government took over, they cancelled one of these ferries and they put out a contract for one. I want to ask the Premier, when was this contract signed? How long will it take for this contract to be finished? When will that ferry be in service on

the Bell Island run?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I do not have all the details at my fingertips, that is something the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation has under his control. I will pass on what information I feel reasonably confident of. I feel reasonably confident that the comment the Member made about a contract on the desk signed for two ferries -

MR. R. AYLWARD:

No, ready to be signed.

PREMIER WELLS:

Ready to be signed for two ferries. There was a proposal. Whether there was a contract -

MR. TOBIN:

There was a contract ready to be signed, on the desk, almost finished. I read it (inaudible).

PREMIER WELLS:

Maybe the hon. Member would prefer to answer the question. If he has his view of it, let him answer it. He can give his answer, but, for the time being, I am giving my answer.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation has full information on it. To the best of my knowledge, the first vessel will be ready in mid or late summer next year. About August, I think, of 1990 is its due time. I will get the Minister to confirm that date tomorrow.

What will be done with the second vessel? Whether or not the second vessel that was at one time proposed to be built will again be built or what the alternative will

be, I will leave for the Minister to advise the House of when he has his assessment complete on the matter.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at the time the decision was made to construct only one ferry, the Government also commissioned a study to see if there was the necessity for a second ferry. I understand this study has been completed and has been discussed at Cabinet. Would the Premier be able to tell the Province and the people of Bell Island if a decision has been made to construct a second ferry for the Bell Island service, or has the decision been made to transfer the Beaumont Hamel from the Fogo service to Bell Island, and to construct another ferry for the Fogo service?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

When the study is complete, and if, as and when Cabinet has a discussion of it and make a decision on a certain point, I have no doubt the Minister will make an announcement in the House. Assuming the House is in Session at the time, I have no doubt he will do the House the courtesy of announcing it here first. But, at the moment, I will leave it for the Minister to advise the House as to the present state of that matter.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, if I could just follow through on that for a second, let me say to the Premier that right now the Marystown Shipyard is at the lowest ebb it has been in terms of a work force in the past eighteen years, due mostly to the fact the Premier interfered in the collective bargaining process and created two hundred jobs in Norway as opposed to Marystown, the result being, Mr. Speaker, that he will be sending \$5 million back to the Federal Government that was negotiated for the construction of trawlers for FPI. Will the Premier give the House assurance today, Mr. Speaker, that if there is a ferry to be constructed, whether it be for Bell Island or whether it be for Fogo, that that ferry will be constructed at the Marystown Shipyard?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I must correct the false premises in the lead-up to the question. The suggestion that we interfered in the collective bargaining process and sent two hundred jobs to Norway is totally false.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

You did. You did.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The Chair again notes that the Member asked a question and, in the preamble, the Member made certain statements. I heard no cries over on this side; the Member was allowed to proceed with

the question. The Premier is responding to the question and he ought to be extended the same courtesy and the same quiet so that he can answer the question. I assume the question is a serious one and the Member wants an answer.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The truth of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that there was a proposal to build the vessel in Marystown, and this Government was prepared to put up \$4.5 million of taxpayer's money, together with the Federal Government. We talked to the Federal Government and asked them to do another \$4.5 million. Some people in Marystown, I do not know whether the hon. gentleman promoted it that way or supported it, but for whatever reason, they chose to reject that fine offer of the two Governments to assist in having the vessel built in Marystown.

MR. TOBIN:

That is not true. That is not true.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the offer was there, this Government would have put up the money, and so would the Federal Government. We, in protecting the taxpayers' interest, set the standards, the conditions under which we would put it up. They were rejected. The people who rejected it had a right to reject it, and the hon. Member has no right to falsely represent what, in fact, took place at the time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Government will do everything it can to promote the building and

cause to be built in Marystown, whatever ferries or other boats we need built, provided it can be done in Marystown on reasonable terms and conditions. But, Mr. Speaker, we will not abandon our obligation to the taxpayers of this Province to protect their interest and allow ourselves to be held up for whatever the workers of Marystown insist must be the case. We will do what is right in the circumstances.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, the work force at the Marystown Shipyard was held for ransom by the Provincial Government. The Federal Government said here is \$4.5 million without condition. It was the Premier who set the conditions: you work for what you are getting without increase, no more benefits than you already have to build the ferry, and, Mr. Premier, for the sake of the \$100,000 the employees would have gotten, the trawler is now being built in Norway, not here.

Let me say to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, that the Marystown Shipyard is owned and operated by the Newfoundland Government - owned and operated by the Newfoundland Government - and if there are losses, the losses are absorbed by the taxpayers. The Premier agrees. And if there is something to help or prevent losses from taking place, such as the construction of a vessel, would the Premier not take that into consideration? And will the Premier not come clean - not come

clean - with this House and admit that they are looking at other opportunities, other than Marystown, to build a second ferry. Have any other negotiations taken place or were other prices looked at in other countries as opposed to the Government owned and operated Marystown Shipyard?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member did not know it but he provided the answer to the question without understanding that he was giving the answer to the first part of his commentary. They rejected totally what he said. It is true that it was the Provincial Government that set the conditions for precisely the reason that the hon. gentleman gave without knowing he was giving the reason. That displays his lack of understanding of it. It is the Government and taxpayers of this Province who own the Marystown shipyard, and if there is an overrun of \$5 million or \$10 million due to a strike at the shipyard -

MR. TOBIN:

There has never been a strike at the shipyard.

PREMIER WELLS:

If there is an overrun of \$5 million or \$10 million due to a strike at the shipyard, or vast increases in cost at the shipyard due to labour cost increase, it is the taxpayers of this Province who have to bear the burden. In protecting the taxpayers we said, '\$9 million is enough; we will commit the taxpayers of Newfoundland to \$4.5 million, the Federal Government will commit

\$4.5 million. That is \$9 million assured support. Now, you the workers of Marystown, you have to do your part for the taxpayers of this Province. They are prepared to put up their money, you agree there will not be a strike or a labour difficulty that will cause an overrun, and we will put up the money.' Now, that is the real explanation, Mr. Speaker. They do not like it when we protect the interests of the taxpayers, and we demonstrate that we were doing it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, and I must qualify it by saying I do not know everything that the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation is doing; we have independent Ministers here who are quite capable of working on their own, and do work on their own.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

As soon as the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation returns, either he or I will advise the House as to whether or not there are any discussions with any other group to build a ferry for Bell Island. I would be quite surprised to find that there were, but I cannot say it with certainty.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question Period has expired.

Before moving on to the next item, I want to, on behalf of hon. Members, welcome to the public galleries today sixty Level 2 and 3 students from St. Stephen's School in Stephenville, accompanied by two teachers, Joe Bonvie and Bob Byrnes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

We would like to welcome to the galleries, as well, thirty-nine Grade IX students from the Coley's Point Elementary School in Bay Roberts. They are accompanied by two teachers, Mr. Ross Bussey and Mr. Aiden Drover, along with their bus driver, Mr. Sullivan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

o o o

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point of order, if I may. It is dealing with interruptions and matters of that nature on which, Your Honour, on several occasions recently, you have had to exercise your authority in the House. I, for one, am a bit uncomfortable with it, because I have never agreed totally with the Premier's position in this matter, implying that the Legislature or a legislature should be absolutely quiet. That is what the Premier consistently has asked for, and that is what he argued in the past. He can shake his head and say he is being misrepresented, which he will do, but the fact of the matter is, this is what he has said, or if not said, certainly what he has implied.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my argument is this, that in a Legislature you have people who have highly thought of partisan views. It is not like a Lion's Club meeting, or

a Kinsmen Club meeting or anything of that nature, and particularly it is not a courtroom, Mr. Speaker. In a partisan venue - I know some Members opposite with any common sense at all, agree with what I am saying - in a partisan venue, there has to be an acceptance of interruptions from time to time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our legislative process is built on the British parliamentary process and if anybody, but anybody, has ever gone to the Mother of Parliament in London and seen the way Members in London carry on, it is an accepted parliamentary practice. But certainly, Mr. Speaker, we do not have to go as far away as London, all we have to do is look at the television coverage of the House of Commons. Now whether you want to then say that the people do not like that or anything else, the fact of the matter is the forum is of a partisan nature, highly partisan views are held by people, and from time to time, Mr. Speaker, there are going to be occasions when Members will make interruptions.

But I am not only referring to interruptions, Mr. Speaker, there is no rule anywhere that says a Legislature has to be quiet. And, Mr. Speaker, if I am talking to a colleague down there, or a colleague up there, there is nothing in the rules that says we cannot speak in the Legislature when somebody else is speaking. And that has happened on occasion, and that is what irritates me from time to time.

But, Mr. Speaker, I raise the point because it is important for people to understand that a parliament is not expected to be operated like a courtroom, as the

Premier would like us have. It is not a courtroom. It is a forum where people have, as I said, highly partisan views, and are entitled to express those views, and because of those views being highly partisan there will be lots of occasions when Members, perhaps, lose their temper, that is quite acceptable and quite understandable. And all you have to do is look at any other parliament in the British parliamentary system and you will see it occurring.

I would submit, Mr. Speaker, and you have been to some, I guess, since you became Speaker, but I had the occasion to visit every one in Canada. And I would submit to you that our Parliament and our Legislature is probably one of the tamest ones in the Country. So with a thirty minute Question Period there is going to be heat. But, Mr. Speaker, that thirty minutes should not be taken because some Member insists on absolute quiet or because -

AN HON. MEMBER:

You should go to Ottawa.

MR. RIDEOUT:

You should have been in Ottawa yesterday.

MR. SIMMS:

- somebody gets irritated or is testy because some comment is passed across the House. But I think it is absolutely unfair to provide the opportunity then for all of those interruptions to take away from that thirty minute time during Question Period.

So I wanted to raise it, not for any particular ruling or anything, because I know Your Honour will give the right ruling as he always does. But I wanted to bring it t

Your Honour's attention, to the House's attention, and particularly to the attention of the public and the press. So that they are not under any kind of misguided view of how a parliament should operate. A parliament should never be quiet as far as I am concerned. Never.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker, what we have just heard is very disturbing to me for a couple of reasons. First of all, the implication is made by the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Simms) that the Premier of this Province has said that there must be absolute quiet in the Legislature. Now that is patently false. That is a gross distortion of what has happened in this House. As a matter of fact, hon. Members know that the Premier himself, from time to time, inadvertently or otherwise makes comments in this House that are in addition to the normal give and take of debate.

Mr. Speaker, the impression that the Opposition House Leader is giving that somehow the Premier of this Province wants to have absolute quiet in the House of Assembly is absolutely irresponsible. It is not in accordance with the facts. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition House Leader is using this opportunity to try to suggest to Your Honour that decisions made during Question Period today were not to his liking. And that is the second thing, Your Honour, that bothers

me about it. That decisions, rulings made quite correctly by the Speaker during Question Period, are unquestionable, and that is a principle of parliamentary democracy that the Opposition House Leader should be familiar with and should recognize.

I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that far from the House being quiet, it should be a place where there is sensible debate back and forth, sensible is the operative word.

The debate in this House should be in accordance with the rules of the Legislature, and if in fact the Opposition House Leader is suggesting that we change our rules to allow shouting and screaming for three hours - half a dozen people at the same time trying to make a point - if he should suggest that is how we should change our rules then I would say to him, Mr. Speaker, that it would be a disgrace. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we should avoid unnecessary and persistent interruption. I think we should allow hon. Members in this House to state their opinions, when it is proper for them to state their opinions, and not try to interfere with them, not try to shout them down. I believe that is proper, and I believe Your Honour is attempting to enforce these rules, over perhaps, the attitude of Members opposite who seem to think that Question Period should become a shouting match and nothing but a shouting match.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:
Your Honour, may I comment before Your Honour speaks?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

As I seem to be the target of these comments, or being blamed for the situation, I think I ought to just have a couple of words. First, I endorse what the Government House Leader said. The representation made is a totally false explanation of the position that I have taken. It is not the comment that I make. The occasional comment during the course of debate enlivens debate, and not only that, it is advantageous to the speaker because it tells the speaker a concern or a position on the other side and allows that person speaking to react to it and elaborate on his point. It is beneficial. The endless cacophony that comes from a gaggle of geese totally out of control is what bothers me and this is what Your Honour rose to address. There is one Member in particular that just cannot stop. It just goes like this all the time. It is just a steady belt where no person speaking, whether on his own side or this side, can get a chance to be heard. It is such a claptrap of noise. It is not only the volume of it at the time but the total consistency of it. It never stops. It is going constantly, no matter what. It is a mouth totally out of control of a brain and we cannot have a House that operates on that basis, Mr. Speaker. What we need is reasonable debate, the kind of repartee that the Opposition House Leader spoke about. That is reasonable. That is to be expected. We should try and keep it in balance so as not to disrupt the debate and prevent an intelligent understanding of what is going on, by people who come to

listen to the great fount of all intelligence in this Province. They come here to hear what we have to say and hear what we are saying to one another. They come here to hear the Opposition view-point as well as the Government view-point. Well, they should have a reasonable opportunity to hear it, and a little liveliness in the debate is good, but when there is such a God awful noise that you cannot hear anything other than just a loud roaring noise that, Mr. Speaker, is utterly unreasonable. That is what Your Honour rose to address today and I thank Your Honour for it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the biggest problem that we have in this House is the Premier doing this (clapping) in a little monotone way trying to turn this House into a downtown court room, Mr. Speaker. That is the biggest problem we have, Mr. Speaker. The Premier can try all he wishes but he is not going to gag Members of the Opposition because he wants to gag them. We will ask our questions, make our speeches, and make our presentations in our own way. If the Premier has a longing to be back in the court room let him go back downtown, or if he has a longing to be lulled to sleep by the monotone of those who are, in many respects, not with it anymore, then perhaps when we get an opportunity, we will put his name on the list for an nominee to the Senate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the point of order, it is not a point of order. It is giving hon. Members an opportunity to expound upon and articulate upon the way that the Speaker is enforcing the rules of the House, and I welcome this opportunity myself. I want to tell hon. Members, first of all, that the Speaker is under the wing of nobody. It does not matter what certain individuals want in this House. The Speaker will call it as the Speaker thinks it ought to be called, by his experience in the House, and by the rules, and will tolerate no suggestion that it is otherwise.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The Speaker has been sitting in the House a long time and I think I understand parliamentary rules, parliamentary procedure. But again the Speaker's job is to maintain order and decorum. The Speaker's job is to ensure that there is sufficient order, that Members are heard and that the House is carried on in an orderly fashion, and that becomes very difficult at time.

The other duty of the Speaker is to accommodate the styles of different Members. There are Members who invoke and who invite bantering. And I think hon. Members will agree that when I see an hon. Member enjoys that, the Speaker tries to sit back and enjoy it as well. We do have hon. Members who want quiet. As I have said so many times, a Member who wants quiet, and many Speakers have made the ruling that every Member is entitled to be heard, and heard in silence, and when a Member wants that then the Speaker obviously, particularly when the

Member asks for it, is obligated to see that that is done. But what the Speaker is trying to do is to ensure that the House is conducive to intelligent debate, that all Member's styles are allowed to develop to a maximum within the laws and within the procedures that we have. That is how the Speaker sees it and that is how I will continue to enforce the rules as I perceive them by our Standing Orders and by Beauchesne.

Many times, hon. Members might not like the rules, but the Speaker tries to be as flexible as possible, keeping in mind two things, one: that order and decorum must be maintained in a general sense, but two: it is the job of the Speaker, and the job of hon. Members, to accommodate the style of all fifty-one Members.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Orders of the Day

MR. BAKER:

It is Private Member's Day, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

It is Private Member's Day, and I call on the Member for Pleasantville to introduce the resolution.

MR. NOEL:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to move this resolution today and I would like to commence by going through it. It begins: "WHEREAS the Meech Lake Accord is unacceptable in its present form and it is in the best interests of the Province

that changes be made;"

Now, Sir, I do not think anybody can argue that Meech Lake is acceptable in its present form. Except perhaps for a few politicians across the Country and a few other people. But according to recent opinion polls, only 19 per cent of all Canadians favor The Accord, and only 33 per cent of Quebecers favor The Accord. On the day that the First Minister's Conference commenced in Ottawa the week before last, The **Ottawa Sun** did an on-the-street interview. They interviewed five people and the question was: Should the Meech Lake Accord be changed?

AN HON. MEMBER:

When was that?

MR. NOEL:

This was November 9.

And five of them said "Yes." Five out of five people said yes. So I do not think there is any doubt that the Meech Lake Accord is unacceptable. It is in the best interests that it be changed, and it is certainly in the best interest of Newfoundland that it be changed. But we will get into the reasons for that a little later on.

The second recital says: "WHEREAS The Government of Canada, as presently constituted, has failed to devise means of significantly reducing levels of economic disparity between Provinces;" Who could deny that, Sir?

For the record, I would like to review a few statistics that most of us here are familiar with, but I think that they should be stated in this debate.

Our unemployment rate is double

the national average, and our earned income per capita is half the national average. Ninety-five percent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians live in deep disparity and 94 percent of Ontario residents have incomes above the national average; 95 percent of new jobs created in Canada in 1986 were in Ontario. Atlantic Canada's share of regional development funds dropped from 56 percent to 36 percent in 1987, when Ontario's rose more than 100 percent.

Our share of Canadian economic growth has fallen from 2 percent to 1.4 percent over the past decade. Unemployment here is four or five times the rate in Toronto.

'WHEREAS Senate reform is essential if the economic disparity under which Newfoundland and Labrador has been suffering is ever to be corrected;'

AN HON. MEMBER:

Go way, boy.

MR. NOEL:

If not Senate reform, if you want to say, go 'way, what else? What do you suggest to improve the way in which this country is governed? Our political structure has to be changed. Senate reform is one possibility, and we should not accept anything less.

'AND WHEREAS at the recent First Ministers' Conference the Honourable the Premier expressed this Province's position on these matters, and in order to facilitate future discussion undertook not to seek rescission of this House's approval of the Meech Lake Accord at this time, provided no steps are taken to implement the Accord in the meantime.'

Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear to everybody who has been listening to the news media that Premier Wells clearly represented the sentiments of Newfoundlanders, in Ottawa the week before last.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

I think he made all Newfoundlanders proud, and I think even some people on the other side have indicated as much recently. I think he was co-operative and conciliatory in agreeing not to have our approval of the Accord rescinded at this time. We cannot be accused of not being prepared to compromise.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, all Members of this House should seriously consider supporting this resolution, even our friends on the opposite side, because the case the Premier made in Ottawa at the First Ministers' Conference, was not that much different from the case that has been made by representatives of that party at various meetings in Ottawa, over the seventeen years in which they had the responsibility for representing our people.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) more power for Ottawa.

MR. NOEL:

We want more power for the people, my friend, not the Province. People is what we are talking about, not jurisdictions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

What is there to disagree with in this resolution? What were the Premier's positions we are being

asked to affirm? I would just like to review them briefly, Mr. Speaker.

First, the Premier spoke about the fisheries. He reviewed the crisis that we all agree we are beset with. He talked about possible ways of dealing with that crisis and he complimented the opposite Members' friends who run the Government in Ottawa for the seriousness with which they are treating the fisheries crisis.

He talked about national economic policies. He criticized the Federal Government for the tremendous tax increases we have had through the Mulroney years in this country, tremendous tax increases and tremendous reductions in Federal Government expenditures. He indicated that our people do not support the goods and services tax that is being proposed, and he indicated that the proposed Bill C-21 governing changes in the UI system would have devastating effects on many of our people.

He condemned the Federal Government policy of high interest rates, which is designed to meet the problems of the economy in Central Canada, Ontario in particular, but which is inimical to the economic interests of Newfoundland and Labrador.

He talked about the environment, Mr. Speaker, particularly in relation to the rape of our fisheries resources off the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Premier analyzed the Meech Lake Accord and he presented some alternatives. And he indicated some of the problems we have with the Accord, as proposed. The problems that we have with a

distinct society provision, we cannot accept that one Province should have legislative jurisdiction that is superior to another Province. And we cannot accept that it has the power to pass legislation which can undermine the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is not acceptable to us and we have to say so. You do not expect the Premier to go up to Ottawa and represent this House and this Province and not say what he believes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

And what so many of us in this House believe and so many people across this Province believe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

He indicated the problems we have with the proposed amending formula. We believe that the requirement for unanimity is too restrictive and we believe, in particular, that requirement will prevent us from having the kind of structural change we need in the way our Country is governed, and particularly in relationship to developing an effective Senate, or some other means of ensuring that the less populated Provinces of this Country have more say in how we are governed.

He talked about the proposed restrictions on Federal spending and demonstrated how that can have such harmful effects on our Province if the richer Provinces in this Country decide to withdraw from national social programs.

He indicated that we do not

support the proposal that the supreme court judges be nominated by the Provinces. We believe that they should be chosen and appointed by the Federal Parliament, but subject to the approval of the Senate, and hopefully a new and effective Senate.

He indicated that we do not accept the immigration provisions of the Meech Lake Accord. They are unworkable and meaningless in many ways, and non-enforceable, and they just do not serve the needs that they are set to serve. He indicated our problems with the constitutionalization of the First Ministers' Conference both in regard to the economy and the Constitution. If conferences like that are necessary, they can be arranged when it is perceived that they are necessary. Hopefully, if we get the kind of political reform that we hope to get in this Country, they will cease to be necessary or held as frequently as we have known them in the past, and certainly as frequently as one a year.

And he indicated that we have problems with agreeing to have the Senate continue as it presently is, simply providing for the Provinces to nominate the senators. What difference would that make? The Leader of the Opposition himself indicated a few minutes ago what he thinks of the present Senate when he suggested the Premier might develop an interest in it. Well I think our Premier is much too vigorous a man to develop an interest in the present Senate. But that is indicative of how the Senate is perceived in this Country. It is not an effective Senate and it will not be any more effective just because the senators are

nominated by a Province. And, in fact, in the past they have often been nominated by the Provincial Governments or Provincial politicians.

So we are not expecting our friends opposite to agree in detail with everything the Premier had to say in Ottawa. They can still support this resolution.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is right.

MR. NOEL:

In this matter we do not insist on unanimity. If you support this resolution today we will not forever after say you agreed with every detail the Premier uttered in Ottawa. But we will say that you agreed with the thrust of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

And I think it would be useful for you to do that at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

I understand our friends opposite, Mr. Speaker, have problems with the Meech Lake Accord. But I think that they should realize that times have changed since the Accord was originally written in 1987, two and a half or so years ago. Since it was approved by this House of Assembly about a year and a half ago times have changed, even some of the signatories to that Accord have indicated that they believe that times have changed - some of the Western Premiers and some other people. I think we have to realize times have changed, and one thing that has really changed

is that we now have a much better chance than was probably thought by the people involved at the time the Accord was put together, and the people who agreed to its approval in this House in 1988. We now have a much better chance of getting a truly effective Senate in this Country. And that means a terrible lot for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and for the smaller Provinces, the less populace Provinces of Canada. If we can get an effective Senate we can have a much better Country or at least a Country that operates far more in our interest. So that is a real consideration for our friends opposite.

We have a chance for an effective Senate and we need your support to help get it, and the support of the many thousands and millions of people across the Country who are indicating support for this. It is funny, Mr. Speaker, so many people across the Country and even in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec are indicating that they support the case that the Premier made in Ottawa two weeks ago, but we cannot bring the Opposition Party in this Province on side, or we have not to date. I hope today they will prove us wrong in that regard. Now what was the Premier's basic position, what are we essentially affirming in this resolution, we are saying something has to change in the way Canada is governed, if we are to improve the standard of living of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The Leader of the Opposition has been quoted as saying there is no cod in Meech Lake and he is right, there is no cod in Meech Lake for Newfoundland, but there is cod in a Triple "E" Senate and jobs and hospital beds, roads, houses and so much else that we need in this

Province, so I think he should reconsider his opposition to the Accord. So why does he support the Accord? The promise of Confederation has not been fulfilled and that has been one of my motivations in all the time that I have been interested in being elected to this Chamber, my primary motivation has been to try to do something to improve Newfoundland's position within this Country, economically, and I realize we have to do it politically. The first time I ran for office, I called for the appointment of a Royal Commission to review the economic consequences of Confederation for this Province, that was before many of the people here today even ran themselves for the first time. In 1978 I put together a proposal calling for a restructuring of the House of Commons so that it would be elected in a manner that enabled the regions to be represented equitably. Today we are dealing with a real possibility of getting some movement in that direction and that is the possibility of a Triple "E" Senate. The smaller Provinces have to have more say in how we are governed, if we are to share equitably in the benefits of Confederation, and if we are to develop an economic system conducive to our development. I think we have a chance now, because Ontario wants to have the Accord passed, Quebec wants to have the Accord passed, and the smaller Provinces see that there is an opportunity to use their negotiating position to insist that we have some things that we want in this Accord. What we have to do is demonstrate that there is support for this across the country, and for Newfoundland's sake we need to demonstrate that there is movement in this

Province, and the greatest demonstration of that would be if the people on the opposite side would agree to support this resolution today. This might be our last real chance as Canadians, Mr. Speaker. If the Meech Lake Accord were passed as is, I do not believe that we will see any real change in the political structure of this Country in our time. We get promises of change now that they want to get their Accord in central Canada, but we have been living on promises ever since we became Canadians in 1949, and the time to accept promises is passing and the time to exercise whatever real leverage we have is at hand. I believe Meech Lake is dead, if we cannot persuade central Canada to make the kind of changes that are necessary if they want some of the things in that Accord to pass at this time, I believe Meech Lake is dead. I believe there are other Provinces across the Country which will not support it, and I know there is a Government in this Province which will not support it if it is not changed in the kind of way that makes sense for this Province.

The Prime Minister of this Country and the Premiers of Ontario and Quebec have suggested that our Premier look at his own logic in refusing to agree to pass this Accord; they say that one province should not hold up constitutional change in this Country. But what they are really asking us to do is to refuse to use a veto in passing a piece of legislation designed to give every province in this Country a veto. What kind of logic is that? They agree with veto power. They want to extend the veto power of provinces in the proposed Accord. They want Ontario to have veto power over future constitutional change, and

they want Quebec to have veto power. So they accept the principle of veto power, so they have to accept our right not to go along if we do not see it in Newfoundland's interest to go along.

Mr. Speaker, Confederation would not have occurred if the less populous provinces and Quebec, which depended on an effective Senate to keep its distinctive interest from being swamped by English Canada, had not been convinced that an effective Senate would exercise real power in this Country. We must have an effective Senate if we are going to see the economic situation of the less populous provinces improved.

MR. SPEAKER (Mr. L. Snow):
Order, please!

I want to tell the hon. Member his time has elapsed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By leave! By leave!

MR. NOEL:
If I could just have one minute to conclude with that part I was speaking about, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
By leave.

MR. NOEL:
In the Confederation debates in 1865, George Brown, and I quote him said 'The very essence of our compact is that the union shall be Federal and not Legislative. Our lower Canada friends have agreed to give us representation by population in the Lower House on the expressed condition that they shall have equality in the Upper House. On no other condition could we have advanced a step.'

So, Mr. Speaker, what we are asking for in wishing to have an effective Senate is not something new or something that was not intended by the Fathers of Confederation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker, the Premier's performance at the recent First Ministers' Conference in Ottawa showed once again the power of style over substance, or of form over content.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:
They say in politics perception is reality. But, Mr. Speaker, it is a challenge for each of us in politics, on a matter as vital as the Constitution of the Country, to make reality reality.

We in Opposition are going to expose the substance and the content of the Premier's presentation at the First Ministers' Conference. In the twenty minutes available to me, Mr. Speaker, I am going to make three main points: Number one, the Premier's constitutional initiative has been taken in the same way as his other initiatives, and there only have been two; the Economic Recovery Team and Municipal Amalgamation. His constitutional initiative has been

taken in a way that is arbitrary,
that is fundamentally
anti-democratic -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Right on!

MS VERGE:
- and that is riddled with
inconsistencies, even hypocrisy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:
Number two, Mr. Speaker, the
Premier's positions advanced at
the first Ministers' conference
and elsewhere, reflect a profound
sense of hopelessness and despair
about the future of Newfoundland
and Labrador. At the core of the
Premier's positions seems to be a
lack of confidence in the ability
of our own people to manage
ourselves. Instead, he is
advocating a shift of power away
from the Provincial Government,
away from this Chamber, to the
Federal Government in Ottawa so
that our entitlement to Federal
transfer payments or handouts can
be shored up. The Premier seems
to have abandoned any hope of
self-sufficiency for our own
people with our own resources.

Number three, and, Mr. Speaker, I
believe this point is most
important to all those people
writing letters to the Premier,
some of which we are seeing in the
Letters to the Editor columns of
the newspapers. Number three,
while the Premier is purporting to
denounce extra powers for Quebec
and that message which has gotten
across has acted as a lightning
rod for all kinds of people in the
country, while the Premier is
claiming to denounce extra powers
for Quebec, in reality his own
Meech Lake alternative calls for

more power for Quebec, not through
the Provincial Quebec City
Legislature, but, instead, through
the French language division of
the Senate, which is part of the
Federal Parliament or the Federal
Government in Ottawa; more power
for Quebec, special power for
Quebec, extra power for Quebec,
special status for Quebec, not
exercised by the Quebec people
through their own Provincial
Legislature in Quebec City, but,
instead, through their veto in the
French language division of the
Senate, part of the Federal
Government in Ottawa.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will go back
to the Premier's process and
tactics. Other commentators have
likened his approach to a one man
crusade, and I find that apt. Mr.
Speaker, the Premier's whole
approach has shown that he does
not practice what he preaches; his
motto might be 'Do as I say, not
as I do.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker, the Premier said in
this House of Assembly on the eve
of the First Ministers' Conference
- I hope the Premier keeps
listening. Perhaps my words are
cutting close to the quick. Mr.
Speaker, the Premier said to the
House and I quote 'I believe the
worst flaw in the Meech Lake
Accord is the process that
resulted in the eleven first
Ministers telling the twenty-six
million people of Canada how they
will be governed in the future,
instead of the twenty-six million
people of Canada telling the
eleven first Ministers how they
will govern.' And in Ottawa, at
the Conference, Mr. Speaker, the
Premier used all the words of

democracy, he used the language of a populace, yet in reality what did he do? Did he have a mandate from the people he is serving as Premier of our Province? Did he even ask for a mandate? No, Mr. Speaker. When the Premier campaigned for election last winter and spring, he published a brochure setting out his position on a host of important subjects; I kept it for future reference. Not one word, not one reference, not one allusion to the Canadian Constitution, the words Meech Lake Accord do not appear. After the election, Mr. Speaker, did our Premier follow the lead of the Premiers of New Brunswick and Manitoba in striking Committees of the Legislature to travel throughout the Province and ask the people we represent how they feel about the Canadian Constitution? No, Mr. Speaker. The Premier did not even bring up the subject of the Meech Lake Accord in this democratic quorum until the day before he left for the First Ministers' Conference. It was quite obvious from remarks made in this Chamber by a couple of Members of the Premier's own caucus that they do not know what the Meech Lake Accord is all about, that the Premier is operating a one-man show.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said on national television, before the First Ministers' Conference started, that his provincial Legislature disagreed with the Meech Lake Accord. Yet, he had never asked for our views, and the House of Assembly position of record is support of the Meech Lake Accord through a resolution passed in 1987.

Mr. Speaker, there was a public opinion poll done in our Province showing that more people do not know anything about Meech Lake and did not venture an opinion than those who indicated support or opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's criticism of the Meech Lake process can equally, and even more, be levelled at the process by which he arrived at his alternatives.

Then, Mr. Speaker, what of the Premier's tactics? He claimed that he was going to the First Ministers' Conference armed with alternatives, hoping to change the minds of the other First Ministers and get agreement on a new version of constitutional amendment, yet, he did not put forward his alternatives until the eve of the Conference. Now one would think, if the Premier was genuine in wanting to influence and persuade the other First Ministers, he would have sent them, as well as giving us, his position paper weeks before the Conference started, so they would have had a chance to review it and familiarize themselves with it, and discuss it with him. Instead, Mr. Speaker, he tabled his proposal for radical amendments the eve of the Conference.

Premier McKenna of New Brunswick, a Liberal Premier, who has asked for changes to the Meech Lake Accord but has done that in a constructive way, on getting our Premier's proposal, likened it to something from Mars.

Premier Ghiz of Prince Edward Island shook his head and said, 'It is a radically different proposal. There is no chance it is going to fly.'

But the Premier succeeded in arriving at the First Ministers' Conference as a new player and grabbing national media attention. His tactics did have that effect; he captured the national media spotlight. But, Mr. Speaker, the tactics had the effect of showing a lack of consideration for others in the process. It had the effect of setting back the genuine reconciliation efforts of others, including Premier McKenna of New Brunswick, and his whole approach has unnecessarily alienated the Federal Government, the other provincial Governments, all these Governments with whom we are trying to work out co-operative arrangements for overcoming regional economic disparity, for developing our offshore oil and for developing Lower Churchill hydro power.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I turn to form versus substance. The Premier, as I said, succeeded in attracting the national media spotlight and, with that light on him, he stood up to the Prime Minister and took on Quebec. And for that, people across our Province applauded him. It is ironic, Mr. Speaker, that most of the people who were applauding this Premier, watching him on television during the First Ministers' Conference, similarly applauded Premier Brian Peckford in taking on Prime Minister Trudeau a few short years ago. The irony comes in, Mr. Speaker, because the positions of the two Premiers are diametrically opposite. What was in common was a Premier of a poor Province, representing people who are generally hard done by and feel that we have gotten a raw deal in Confederation, watching their Premier take on the Federal Government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

Now, Mr. Speaker, if this Premier's alternative to the Meech Lake Accord in substance, in reality, offered any solution to the problem of economic disparity, then we would support it. We would be among the first to support it. Actually, his documenting of our case for being hard done by, the statistics that he cites with fluency now, are statistics that the Peckford administration worked up through our research.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

There are lots of records of that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the essence of this Premier's and this Government's proposal on the Canadian Constitution is to shift power away from the provinces to the Federal Government in Ottawa, to the House of Commons and to a reconstituted Triple-E Senate with three linguistic divisions. The Premier is calling for this reformed Senate, saying that it should be the forum for future constitutional change, not conferences of Premiers with the Prime Minister, that the Constitution, among other things, deals with the division of powers between the Federal Parliament and the provincial Legislatures. Yet, this Premier is saying that future discussion about constitutional evolution should be centered in the Federal Parliament in Ottawa and not dealt with by provinces through their Premiers at First Ministers' Conferences, a major shift in power away from the

provinces.

The Premier is calling for the provinces to lose any say in future Supreme Court of Canada and Senate appointments. The Supreme Court of Canada is the final arbiter of the Constitution and the application of Constitution to laws and the division of powers between Ottawa and the provinces, yet the Premier is willing to dismiss the Meech Lake Accord provision for provinces to have some say in Supreme Court of Canada appointments.

Our Province has never had a native person, son or daughter, on the Supreme Court of Canada, and the Meech Lake Accord would give us a chance to have input into future appointments, and to advance the names of our excellent lawyers.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is similarly dismissing the Meech Lake Accord provision for our Province to gain influence and control over the fishery. The Meech Lake Accord provided for a two-item agenda for future First Ministers' Conferences, ensuring that the fishery, as well as Senate reform, would be dealt with at mandated First Ministers' Conferences, which would provide a real opportunity for us to have more control over our fishery. Right now, the Constitution of Canada gives total, 100 per cent power over our most important natural resource to the Federal Parliament. The only say our Province has over the fish comes into play after the fish is landed; we have zero influence over the harvesting of fish.

Mr. Speaker, there is a common myth in the Country that the Meech Lake Accord somehow contributed to

the upholding of the Quebec sign language law, which many people find offensive. It is a myth. Of course, in reality, that sign language law, which runs afoul of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada, was saved and upheld by the Quebec Legislature exercising its right through the notwithstanding clause in the 1982 Constitution, a provision put in place by Prime Minister Trudeau and the other First Ministers of the day, and which is available to every jurisdiction of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier did not address the notwithstanding clause in his proposal. According to his proposal, the notwithstanding clause would remain as is, and future Quebec sign language laws, even though they are deemed by the courts to run afoul of the Charter, can be reinstated by the exercise of the applicable Parliament or Legislature under the notwithstanding clause.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's positions on the Meech Lake Accord have been widely interpreted as a), either putting Quebec on the same footing as other provinces, or b), promoting the kind of Trudeau bilingual English-French Canada that has been developed over the last couple of decades.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's Meech Lake alternative does neither. When that is examined in the cold, harsh light of day, it will be found that the proposal addresses the concerns of neither group. So neither the bigots and rednecks who do not like Quebec and do not want Quebec to have any more power or influence are, in fact, going to be satisfied by the reality of the

Premier's position, nor are the genuine Trudeauites going to be satisfied by the actual content of the Premier's proposal. For, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier's proposal calls for is a shift of power away from the Provinces to the Federal Parliament through a Triple-E Senate, a Senate which has three linguistic divisions, and I quote from his document: 'One division in which English is the Provincial official language; number two, provinces in which French is the provincial official language' - well, Mr. Speaker, there is only one, Quebec - 'and number three, Provinces where English and French are provincial official languages.' It goes on to say, 'Each of those Divisions should have a veto over constitutional change or amendment affecting linguistic or cultural rights.'

So what the Premier's proposal is doing, in essence and in reality, is giving Quebec more special status and special power through its French linguistic division in the Senate than the Meech Lake Accord would provide for through the Quebec Legislature in Quebec City.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, with this Premier, what you see is not what you get. The substance of the Premier's position is quite unacceptable to the Opposition and, therefore, we certainly cannot support the motion of the Member for Pleasantville.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Stephenville.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker, it is with extreme pleasure and pride that I rise to support the resolution so ably put by the Member for Pleasantville, on the Government side. After hearing the number of arguments put forward by the Member for Humber East, I was wondering whether or not I would be able to get up and support the thing, because they were so devastating to our arguments. But then, at the end of it, Mr. Speaker, I decided that I had better try anyway, and during the next twenty minutes, the short period of time I have, I hope to convince some people, and maybe Members opposite, that the position they should take today is one of support for this Government and for this Premier.

Because, Mr. Speaker, not many times in this Confederation have we seen happen what has happened in the last few weeks. We have seen a galvanizing of opinion on a major issue, on the potential breakup of this Country. We have seen a gentleman come along who has galvanized the opinion. I think Members opposite should really be concerned about the position they take today. Because what we are seeing is history in Canada today, and the comments that are coming to the Premier's Office from all over Canada are that we have a Premier that this Province can be proud of, and that Canada can be proud of.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

We have been committed to trying to make changes to the Meech Lake Accord for a number of very good reasons. The Premier and this Government have put forward proposals to try to change the

Meech Lake Accord for the benefit of not just Newfoundland, but of Canada. I think that is a very huge task to take on, but we have done that and we have done it very well.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I was disappointed with the Prime Minister in his comments to our Premier in talking about how lucky we were to be in Canada.

Now, I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Nation Builder up there, who talks about bringing these provinces together and bringing Quebec into the family, while saying that on the one hand is alienating another one on the other. I have major problems with what he said, and the way it was carried out. That gang-up did not work and it is not going to work in the future. I think now everybody in Canada knows that and they should be very aware of that. This Government is going to stay put with its position. We will sit down and try to address the concerns as should have been done in the first place. Now, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about having public hearings on proposals and so on, if the Opposition are going to criticize us they should do it and be creditable by doing it. When the Meech Lake Accord was brought into this House of Assembly there was no such thing as public hearings beforehand. There was none of that whatsoever. They came in, they brought it in, and they rammed it through. It is as simple as that. A number of us were there in Opposition at the time and we debated it. I have to bring up something. We brought in an amendment to the Meech Lake Accord ably put by the Member for St. Barbe, now the Minister of Development. We put an amendment

forward, Mr. Speaker. I have to bring this forward because it will really summarize what we are talking about. The amendment we brought forward was to make Newfoundland a distinct society within Confederation, comparable to Quebec, and also that all other Provinces become distinct societies equal to each other.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

I did not see what was wrong with that. As a matter of fact a lot of people supported that. When we were in that debate we quoted the Throne Speeches of the former Government. I have one here and I am going to read just a couple of lines. 'July 12, 1979, 38th General Assembly, Hon. Brian Peckford, Premier. My Government feels that we must go through a final but necessary stage of our process of reconstruction. Our people here are, I am sure, ready, yes, even anxious to complete the task of securing for themselves the means by which they as a people can assure their future as a distinct society.' That was in 1979 put forward by this Government.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Who said that?

MR. K. AYLWARD:

The hon. former Premier.

I support that and I am sure all hon. Members do. Now, when we argued this when we were in Opposition, we said, why did you not, Mr. Premier, when you were around the table in 1987, why did you not make sure that we would be at least equal? Because, what you are doing is giving Quebec - it is not in the preamble, that is what

we have to understand here now, let us get this straight, it is not in the preamble, it is in the Constitution, Mr. Speaker, that Quebec is a distinct society. It is not in the preamble. It is going to be interpreted by the courts and we do not know where that is going to end yet they are over there saying, we have to be good to Quebec. Nobody is saying we do not want to be good to them, but we want to make sure everybody else has an equal status, and that we can at least, as a Canada, grow together, instead of one Province dominating the rest of the Provinces. I think that has to be straightened out, Mr. Speaker. Going back to the resolution when it was originally voted on, the previous Government voted against Newfoundland as a distinct society equal to all the other Provinces in this Confederation. I think that should be noted in the debate, Mr. Speaker, and I will be very interested today in seeing how they vote on this resolution, because there was no doubt about it in anybody's mind that Premier Wells has the support of not only all of Newfoundland, very much so all of Newfoundland, but all of Canada basically, pretty well, with a few exceptions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:
When we are talking about support and positions and where we are going to be going from here, Mr. Speaker, I am very confident that this Government will be showing the way, as it is now, for everybody in Canada and showing the other Provinces the way they should go. It is going to be very interesting to see what happens down the road.

One of the interesting observations I have to make in this debate, Mr. Speaker, was in my research for this. I went back and I was looking through the proposals that were put forward by the PQ Government of the early 1980s, the hon. Rene Levesque who passed away a short time ago. The Levesque Government at the time proposed sovereignty association with Canada, separating and so on, some kind of a sovereignty association, and what is absolutely amazing when you go back over that and you go back to the proposals that Levesque put forward, which everybody in Canada did not want to see happen, which Trudeau fought, when you go back and look at them and take them side by side with Meech Lake, the conditions that he wanted and the conditions that Meech Lake have now, Mr. Speaker, about 75 per cent to 80 per cent of that is the same thing. So, what Levesque could not get done through the front door, Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Mulroney are going to do through the back door. That is exactly what is happening in this country today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:
You can go down through it, Mr. Speaker, and see it. Mr. Bourassa went to Mr. Mulroney with a number of conditions, hoping to get two or three. He ended up getting them all. And the people around that table signed it away. And now, we have to live with, Mr. Speaker, or we thought we might have to live with, what they signed. But, thank God, Mr. Speaker, the former Government called an election. Because now, we, as a Government can try to deal with what they signed and se

if we can put it back on the right track. That needs to be done. And, when I hear this rhetoric about our being against Quebec, we do not like Quebec, or you are this or that, that is not the case at all, Mr. Speaker. That is not the case at all.

Obviously, the proposals put forward by the Premier take into account what Quebec's needs are. There is no doubt, we want to see them have their status and their society, as they say, their rights in Canada, protected. There is no doubt about it that we want to see that happen. But you do not do it at the expense of everybody else. I mean, it just does not make any sense. And the community of communities that was talked about by the former Prime Minister, Joe Clark, is exactly what we are going to have if Meech Lake goes through. Simply put, distinct society within the Constitution is going to allow a separate society to exist within Canada. That is exactly the way it is going to be. And the courts are going to have to interpret that. It gives them all kinds of power to promote their distinct society. If you look at Webster's Dictionary - we took it out the other day, and 'distinct society', looking at the definition of both words, it tells you it is a separate entity. That is not a special Province within Confederation. It is not that at all. It is a separate sovereign state within Canada. Sovereignty association through the back door is what we have here with Meech Lake, and it is about time, and it is a pleasure to be speaking here in this debate, so that we can encourage our Premier and this Government in their dealings over the next few months to see if we can resolve the matter.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, of course, is that in the Meech Lake Accord there is room for rescission. Anybody can rescind if he decides to change his mind. You know, some Premiers right now across Canada are thinking about that. They are probably looking very hard, as a matter of fact, at the position they took. That is very obvious. The reason is very obvious, Mr. Speaker, it is because our Premier so ably put the arguments that everybody else in Canada wished their own Premiers would have done and they did not do it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

They would not do it, Mr. Speaker, but ours chose to do so, and for that we are happy and we are proud.

I want to just read a few quotes, Mr. Speaker, of what has been coming from across Canada, so that I can prove my statements of the galvanizing of opinion.

From Ontario: 'Please keep up your wise and just decisions regarding Meech Lake. In short, many thousands of people in Ontario fully agree with you, and disagree with the Premier of Ontario. 'The Silent Majority.'

'As an Albertan, I cannot vote for you; however, I still congratulate you on your strong stand and your refusal to be intimidated over Meech Lake at the recent Premiers' Conference.'

From Saskatchewan: 'So many people are depending on you, the people of the North, native people, the non-white immigrant population of Montreal, and all the rest of us who believe in

democracy, fairness, human rights and bilingualism.'

From Saskatchewan: 'Simply put, congratulations on your outstanding performance at the First Ministers Conference this past week. If you ever get tired of looking at that beautiful country, we could sure use your refreshing and wise ways here in Saskatchewan.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Sir, your convictions are all the best. They are all the best, every one of them, not one that is negative. As a matter of fact, if we could clone the hon. the Premier, I think the other Provinces would probably take him, Mr. Speaker. We would have no problem, no problem at all!

These quotes go on. Newfoundland is here also, Mr. Speaker. We can distribute them afterwards, no problem. I will not let the Opposition deter the excellent arguments I am making, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to let them bother me whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, we know what the public opinion is. We know what the people of Canada want. We know that there are now some very serious misgivings about the Meech Lake Accord, and now that they have been fully put out in front, people want to see some changes.

Now, if the group of Premiers who were trying to gang up, want to keep doing that - I do not think they do, I think they are going to try to work out a compromise of

some type - but if they keep going, it is just not going to work, Mr. Speaker, because we are very serious about what we want to do. When we talk about Newfoundland having a bigger role in Confederation, it has been put by the Opposition that Meech Lake gives us this role. Meech Lake gives us a bigger role in Confederation in that we will get for example, fisheries jurisdiction over our fisheries, because it is set out in Meech Lake that you can have a meeting on fisheries.

Mr. Speaker, when we were in Opposition we called the Federal Minister of Fisheries, we called the Prime Minister's office and we said: "Does that mean that we will get a chance to negotiate our jurisdictional power for the fisheries?" "Oh, no! no!" from the Prime Minister's office. "Oh, no!, no!" from Mr. Siddon's office. 'That does not mean that at all. We are going to talk over what we can do with the fishery and so on and so forth. But, no, that does not mean that at all, who ever would say that it means that?' So the Opposition has put forward those arguments and that is not the case and they know it, Mr. Speaker. It was a former Premier, the hon. Premier Brian Peckford who said this is what he brought back out of Meech Lake, 'Give us some fish, they are going to us, our jurisdiction.' Mr. Speaker, 'We are going to have a chance to get some jurisdiction', and they know that Ottawa was not talking about that. They know that, yet they are coming down and telling us this, telling the people of Newfoundland this. I mean it is absolute foolishness and craziness. But at least we can expose those arguments.

What we are going to try to do, and what the Premier is trying to do and the Government is trying to do, is correct the situation, so that in the future we will have a chance, Mr. Speaker, to attain some measure of prosperity within this Confederation and to have the proper role, because we have not had and have not been listened to by Ottawa. So how they can argue that Meech Lake makes us part of the family and we are going to get more power, I am not a lawyer, Mr. Speaker, but I am well educated so I will not profess to have the full clearance on that, but I must say that their arguments are not convincing and, that I think ours are. And I think that the people of Canada and Newfoundland feel the same way.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you are going to see that very in evidence as we get more and more into the meetings that the Premier and this Government are going to be involved in over the next few months.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Humber East talked about form versus substance. I would like to say to her and to the Members opposite that we have both on this side of the House, form and substance. Not only do we have the ability, Mr. Speaker, we have the people here and the representatives that have that substance and that form that is needed to put Newfoundland's position in Confederation right where it should be. For the first time in a long time, I think, Newfoundland is being viewed from a different perspective in Canada by people outside of Newfoundland. There are people actually in some of these wonderful telexes that we are getting who are saying: 'I am not

from Newfoundland, but I wish I was.' Those are the kind of statements that we are getting. I have never heard that before, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you. I have never heard that before, Mr. Speaker, in my short life span, I have never heard it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Usually we are Newfie jokes.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Yes, that is right.

So I think it is something, Mr. Speaker, that we should be proud of. I think also that we should be very concerned about where Meech Lake is going to go and, as a Province, we have to see it is all about our role and our ability to attain what we deserve. Now if we are going to do that for one Province, and give it special provisions, and everybody wants to see Quebec into the constitution, we want to see them there, but you do not sell away the shop, Mr. Speaker, to get the Province in there and then not be able to do what the other Provinces want it to. So basically, that is what we have in Meech Lake, very basically that is what we have. I think as we get more and more into it that will become plainly evident.

It is unfortunate though that the Opposition have, over that time span, they have had a chance to reflect since the election. I thought that maybe they might change their minds. I am sure that a few are thinking about supporting the Premier's position. I am very sure that they are because they know that he is dead on and right. They know that this Province has got to go places and the only way that it is going to go is, if we can get on an equal footing with the rest of

the Provinces.

For the first time at a Premier's Conference, I believe, not only were we equal around the table, we were more than equal around the table, Mr. Speaker. I think the future looks good for this Province in the hands of this Government. We are down to some serious business. We are down to negotiating the constitution of Canada and we are going to do it right. We are not going to go and barter this away and barter that away so we can get a bit of short term gain and have a lot of long term pain. That is not the way it is going to be done. It is going to be done the right way. And the right way will see a long term gain for this Province, and this Confederation.

I think it is time, Mr. Speaker, that we as a people decided that, you know, we are going to support a serious initiative to resolve the matters that have held up in Meech Lake. And I think that support is there. There is no doubt about it. And I am looking forward, Mr. Speaker, to seeing a resolution of this hopefully, very positive for this Province and for Canada. You know, it has been, Mr. Speaker, a pleasure to serve in this House with this new Government. But on this initiative here, if there is anything that we do, I think, for the long term good of Newfoundland, I think that this initiative that is now being undertaken is probably the most important, because it will give us a chance to improve our fishery. It will give us a chance to deal with the offshore. It will give us a chance to deal with all of the other matters pertaining to this distinct society that we have here in this Province, because we

are a distinct society, Mr. Speaker. And at the very least it should be in the Constitution of Canada on an equal footing with everybody else. And we can agree to have special provisions here and there, but we have to be able to be on an equal footing with everybody else. And if that is not attained then we have a problem.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I think that Meech Lake is equivalent to the sovereignty association proposals that were put forward by Rene Levesque a number of years ago, and I commend this Government and the initiative taken by this Government to resolve the matter. And I look forward to seeing what the Opposition will do today when they stand up.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HODDER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Port au Port.

MR. HODDER:

Mr. Speaker, I just want to speak on one aspect of this debate and one part that concerns me. But I should say first that having listened to the hon. the Member opposite in reading his letters, that I did not hear him read any letters from Newfoundland and I did not hear any of those letters which had any particular issues of substance. But I would say, Mr. Speaker, that there are thousands and thousands of people in this Country who would support the Premier because he has become

lightning rod, as I think the mainland press called him, for the anti-French feeling in the Country, and I have no doubt that he can get 2,500 or 3,000 letters on an issue such as that.

Mr. Speaker, the other point that I would just quickly like to make before I get into my own comments is that this is a resolution to affirm its support for the position enunciated by the Premier at the recent First Ministers' Conference. Well, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the constitution is an evolutionary document. And that the Premier when he put this proposal forward at the eleventh hour before the Constitutional Conference, that certainly he did not do it as his final, I would hope he did not do it as his final stance. And as full of inaccuracies and fuzzy thinking as it is I would hope that we are not being asked to say that the Premier is right and there is no other right, because I understand, in the give and take, I would hope that the Premier will be able to modify his stand somewhat in light of the negotiations, and that he is not going there as someone who is right and everybody else is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I note in yesterday's paper and in today's paper that the Premier said that the Province must become bilingual. And he spoke about the French teachers. And in today's paper we saw that the Francophone Association in Newfoundland has some problems with the stand, and I take with a meeting which they had with the Premier a few days ago. Well I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Francophone minority which I represent, and that is really what I wanted to talk about for the few minutes in which I

intend to speak. That the Francophone minority which I represent are very much in the same situation as the people of Quebec are in Canada. They want to preserve their language and their culture within a Province with an English majority, and preserve French. I see nothing, Mr. Speaker, nothing at all in the Premier's proposal that would guarantee the rights of the Francophones to the extent that the rights of the Quebecers are in Canada. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have been following the debate as far as Premier McKenna of New Brunswick is concerned, and Premier McKenna's stand has been and the Acadians have told Premier McKenna, that he must protect their rights, and this means that he must protect the minority language rights in the Province. Now I see nothing in this particular document which the Premier put forward a few weeks ago, which specifically addresses that issue. As a matter of fact, the Premier seems to be talking about bilingualism and this is my understanding of what is the problem with the French minority. He seems to be talking about bilingualism to solve the problems of the minority francophone groups for whom I speak at the present time, and, Mr. Speaker we must treat at least the francophone groups in this Province as well as the English are treated in Quebec, well, Mr. Speaker the English minority in Quebec are treated far better. It was this Government that went a long way towards providing a French School for that area, but I would say, Mr. Speaker that the Premier's comments on bilingualism, you see, bilingualism to a French minority means amalgamation. It must be French first, and if the Premier's comments that I have seen on

bilingualism, that he wants the Province to be bilingual that is no protection for the French minority in this Province and, Mr. Speaker, bilingualism may be impossible to achieve in this Province because you can spend twelve years in high school, you can go to university, unless you learn and live with the French culture, unless you use it on a daily basis, and unless there is a necessity to speak French, then it is very doubtful that we can become a bilingual Province, but, Mr. Speaker speaking on behalf of the francophone minorities, I would just like to say that they are looking for more protection as minorities for their language and culture rights in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to address this Resolution today brought forward by my colleague from Pleasantville. I missed part of the discussion so far but I did hear the opening speech by the Member for Pleasantville and it indeed did justice to the Resolution. What we are about here is very simply to bring to the House of Assembly the position that was taken by the Premier at the recent First Ministers' Conference. That position, we believe, was an honest position, a straight forward position, and the correct position, not only from the point of view of Newfoundland, but from the point of view of Canada. I believe it is important that this be brought before the House to make the point that this House of

Assembly also supports this position, so, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to get into a lot of detail, I think that is the crux of the matter and I am very happy to support that position taken by the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a few brief points along the same lines as the Government House Leader (Mr. Baker). As a matter of fact, I had not intended to participate, I had hoped to participate but time did not permit it, but I am sure there will be another opportunity. But I was provoked by the actions of the Government House Leader who merely got up to speak for a minute or two, because what is happening, for those who are trying to figure out how come the last couple of speakers only spoke for a couple of minutes is, of course, a clock game, as the Premier says. And that is fair ball, and that is quite acceptable. But I heard what the Government House Leader had to say and I am not quite sure if he spoke strongly or strenuously in support of the Government's position or the Premier's position as per the resolution. Because if he did he certainly did not make his points very well, at least I did not think he made his points very well.

Now if indeed the intent of the Government House Leader was simply to have an intervention so that there can be some kind of a clock game played here then that is fair

ball, and that is accepted.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Right on!

MR. SIMMS:

May I say while I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I was not at all impressed by the resolution as it was introduced by the Member for Pleasantville (Mr. Noel). At the very best it was a half-hearted attempt to try to impress the Premier. That was at the very best to try to get into Cabinet and all of that. That is what he is up to, there is no question about it. But I have to say that what the Member for Pleasantville did in his presentation would not have convinced, I say to him he should not expect to receive one letter from anybody across Canada or from across Newfoundland. Do not expect to receive one letter unless it comes from a Liberal president or a Member of the Liberal Association from somewhere around the Province.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few brief remarks I just indicate that we will have difficulty on this side obviously in supporting the resolution as it is put forward. It is unfortunate they did not put it forward in a better light and a way that would be more acceptable. But to expect us to support the Premier's stand was not a reasonable position and the private Member opposite who put it forward should have probably done something else I say to him. On the other hand, of course, there are people in the galleries who are interested in knowing or having something substantial to chew on, to think about in terms of this argument and this debate. And there have been substantial arguments put forth by Members on this side of the House as there

have been by Members on that side of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

I am trying to get my thoughts clear. Unlike hon. Members opposite, we think before we speak.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

Especially Members down there in the peanut gallery.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have had some strong views, as a matter of fact, on this issue. In fact I sincerely say to the Premier, look, when I saw him perform in Ottawa I said to myself, I sat back and said, my God have I been part of some dastardly deed? Have I done something wrong? Should I resign my seat?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Yes, yes.

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

That is what I said to myself. Because I mean what the Premier was saying was almost so convincing: But then I went back and looked at all of the information that was available from the debates in the Legislature in 1987 or whenever it was we passed this Accord, and I could not see anything there that could convince me otherwise. He has not said anything new to my way of thinking. But I wondered if I had done something wrong? Was I part of a Government that had, you know, inflicted something dastardly upon the people of Newfoundland and Labrador? And I

say to the Premier that my feeling and my view with respect to what I stood for, you know, well I do not think that I did anything wrong. Did Joe Ghiz do something wrong? He is a lawyer. He is of the same stripe and philosophy. How come all of those people across Canada, all of those ten leaders and that Prime Minister, how come all of them were wrong, but all of a sudden the Premier here is right? I mean, how come?

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:
Well now the Premier quotes 26 million Canadians. He does not know if 26 million Canadians support him or not. I suspect very much that they do not.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a story this morning and it is a joke. There was a story this morning that there was a poll done in the Province by some source. They called around and they asked 100 people what they think of the Meech Lake Accord and 75 per cent of them much preferred Honda Accord. Mr. Speaker, I say to the Premier that there are an awful lot of people in Canada today who feel exactly that way even thought that is a joke. I admit it was a joke but the point is there are an awful lot of people who do not have the same interest in the Meech Lake Accord, or in Constitutional matters, as the Premier does. There is no question about that and he knows it. There are a lot of Newfoundlanders who do think that the Meech Lake Accord is the top thing on the agenda. They feel, as does the Editor of The Clarendville Packet that the Premier and the Government should get on with doing more things.

Forget about Meech Lake and let it carry its course but get on with the important things that matter in this Province.

AN HON. MEMBER:
They are afraid to let him speak.

MR. SIMMS:
Afraid to let who speak? Afraid to let the Minister of Development speak, who has just returned from an overseas trip to Hong Kong. I am sure he will have a lot to tell us about Meech Lake after being over in Hong Kong.

AN HON. MEMBER:
It only took him seven days to get back.

MR. SIMMS:
Well, that does not surprise me one bit. I am surprised the hon. Member came back at all, he had such a good time.

So, I say to the Premier that there are people out there who think there are many more important matters. He knows that as well as I do and as well as the people of the Province do.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) up the Northern Peninsula -

MR. SIMMS:
There are many more important things. When the Member for Pleasantville (Mr. Noel) said there are no cod in Meech Lake but there are cod in a Triple "E" Senate I have to say to the Premier that I have difficulty understanding his logic. Of course the Premier understands his logic as you would expect him to. You would expect him to understand the logic of the Member for Pleasantville simply because the logic for the Member for

Pleasantville is cloned as the Member for Stephenville (Mr. Aylward) said. He is a clone. The Member for Pleasantville is a clone of the Premier. He speaks everything that the Premier says. Well, in some ways and not in every way. I would not go so far as to suggest in every way.

The Premier has a position on Meech Lake. We all have our positions on Meech Lake and we will get an opportunity, I suspect, sometime in the next session, to debate it at length. I presume, if the Premier follows with his threat.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It was not a threat.

MR. SIMMS:

Of course it is a threat. How about the logic in this then? The Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs have been saying that they will not bring in, as a Government, forced amalgamation. They will not force amalgamation on any community. The Cabinet will not exercise its authority in that respect. Is that not what he said? But, he did say that he would bring it to the Legislature. That is what he says, he would bring it to the Legislature. Well, what is the difference in that kind of logic and in the logic that is now prevailing with respect to the Meech Lake Accord. The Legislature of this Province has approved the Meech Lake Accord Resolution. It has approved it so if the Legislature has any authority and any meaning then surely using the same kind of tactics then to take away from the Government's authority and to somehow cloud the fact that the Government does not want to be the one responsible for forcing

amalgamation but we will get the Legislature to do it, therefore he accepts the fact that the Legislature is the be-all and end-all, well if that is the case -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

Oh, it is stupid and silly. Not everybody is quite as intelligent as the Premier, I say to him, not everybody. It is sad to say that, I suppose, from the Premier's perspective. He thinks everybody should be as intelligent as he is and understand everything he says. Well, that is not the case but we would like to see how the Premier would respond to that. If he has trouble understanding what I am asking surely he understands what I am saying. It is not that difficult. I have tried to put it in baby talk so he could understand it. Maybe he can address it. I would appreciate hearing it. I presume he is going to speak in the debate but maybe he is not. Oh, he is not intending to speak in the debate. Well, maybe when we debate it later. In that case, Mr. Speaker, I will sit down and take my seat and let the Minister of Development speak because I am sure he will have something very interesting to say.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to take a few minutes to explain the basis for the

Province's approach. But I also want to take a few minutes to refute some of the comments made by the hon. Member for Humber East (Ms. Verge) that were totally lacking in any real substance. I just made a couple of quick notes.

She says that the position we have taken represents an abandonment of hope for our people, we are saying our people have no hope for the future. I am saying look at what has happened since 1949. In 40 years our earned income is no better now in relation to the rest of Canada than it was in 1949 under the present system, we have to change it. Meech Lake represents not only continuing the present system but making it worse for Newfoundland. It is unfortunate that the people on the other side do not understand it. They think that to have power is everything. I heard one hon. Member say, "We need more power. We want more power. We in the Province should have more power." What good is power if you do not have the ability to exercise it. If you took it to its logical conclusion, you could strip the Federal Government of all power, give it all to the Provinces and leave the Federal Government with power in defense only. Then, what are we going to do? Who is going to pay the equalization payment? Who is going to pay the unemployment insurance? Who is going to provide the family allowances and the old age pension?

AN HON. MEMBER:

They will do what they are doing now.

PREMIER WELLS:

Indeed, they will not. They are stripped of everything except defense and with it goes taxing power too. That is all they have,

defense.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Wake up.

PREMIER WELLS:

That is right.

That gives the lie to the position. It is not more power we need. It is more say in the exercise of Federal power and that comes with a reformed Senate. If the people Opposite do not understand, it is just too bad. More power only helps the more powerful Provinces, it hurts the less powerful Provinces.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

PREMIER WELLS:

That is the problem with the former Government's approach to Meech Lake.

Then the other comment she made was, this Government has no mandate to take the position that it has.

That is simply not true. We raised the issue during the election campaign. We said what we would do during the election campaign. It was the cowards on the other side who would not take up the challenge.

MR. SIMMS:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

I do not want to interrupt him in full flight but I am sure on hindsight and on reflection he will realize that using the term cowards to address other Member

of the Legislature is quite unparliamentary and I think it would be appropriate for him to withdraw it and get on with his speech.

PREMIER WELLS:

I withdraw the term and I say the Members and their Party on the other side were frightened to death to respond to the challenge because they knew the way the people of Newfoundland felt about it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

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

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me tell the House, Mr. Speaker, what a writer has written, from Newfoundland, to the hon. the Leader of the Opposition about just that point. Now here is the way the people of Newfoundland feel about it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

PREMIER WELLS:

I will.

This is directed, 'Dear Mr. Rideout: Recently in the news you were quoted as having said that Mr. Wells was operating alone in his activities on Meech Lake and that he has received no authority from the Newfoundland people to do what he is doing. Mr. Rideout, you are wrong. The Premier's stand on Meech Lake was well known before this year's election. He promised Newfoundlanders that if

he was elected the Meech Lake Accord would be amended or this Province's approval would be withdrawn.' That is accurate. He has been elected and he is following through on his promise, I am more than approving, I am grateful. Meech Lake has always felt wrong to me. Its process went beyond the undemocratic, it was anti-democratic. If someone told you about a place where a small group of high powered men went behind closed doors and fiddled with his country's Constitution, making fundamental changes without public consultation, then emerged spouting self-congratulatory rhetoric while presenting the country with a rigid unchangeable fait accompli, you would understandably assume that could only happen in some totalitarian state. You would at least, for public consumption, decry such a thing, saying it was abusive of that country's people and that democratic principles should be adhered to by all, yet you support such an abuse of Canadians in Canada. All indicators today suggest that a Canada-wide referendum would reject Meech as it stands, but that it would be widely accepted if modified. The Amendments proposed by Mr. Wells offer Quebec protection in other areas of language, culture and civil law. They give Quebec a veto power in those areas. Mr. Wells offers a truly rational and sensitive solution to the Meech Lake dead-lock. His activities on Meech Lake are a fulfillment of the promise he made to the people of this Province when he asked for our votes. He received my vote because of his stand on that proposal. He does have support in his Province. As requested, Mr. Speaker, I would table the letter I have read from. It is signed by

Mary Hall of 11 Burin Street, St. John's, Newfoundland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Now, Mr. Speaker that is indicative of the thousands of letters that we have been receiving. Now I would be the first one to admit that maybe three or four per cent of those letters represent people who are prejudiced and bigoted, there is some of that, there are good and bad people everywhere, three or four per cent. Ninety per cent of it are Canadians whose hearts are bleeding over what they see happening. They are not at all anti Quebec, that is a cop out for somebody not prepared to deal with the issue on it's merit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

They are the kind of people who write and say we must make room and accommodate Quebec within Canada, but we must do it on a fair and reasonable basis that recognize the principle that all Canadians in this country are equal, and no one Province is preferable to any other or has any special status over and above any other, that is what those letters say, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker there is a simple reason and a simple basis for the proposal that we put forward, because you see, it recognizes the Federal Principle and I have spoken on this issue before in the House when I sat on the other side and opposed the Resolution to approve the Meech Lake Accord when it was first introduced. The Federal Principle is fairly simple. It acknowledges the

existence of two essential equalities. Every citizen in his or her position as a citizen, is equal to all others, so any Province that has fifty per cent of the population should have fifty per cent of the voting power in one of the Houses. The second equality is the equality of every Province in its status and rights of the Province, each Province is equal to all other. Now in a Federal state where you divide up the legislative jurisdiction and you provide for the Federal Parliament to exercise the Federal jurisdiction, you must give a voice to both those equalities, you must, if you are going to exercise the power, satisfy the two majorities, and you measure the acceptability to the majority of the people by taking a vote in the House of Commons. You measure the support whether or not it has the support of the majority of the Provinces or you should be able to, by taking a vote in the Senate. Our flaw is we have not had it, but what the hon. Member for Humber East has failed to recognize or acknowledge, is the real problem with Canada is there is a third equality that has not been given voice, and that is or at least is perceived to be in existence by perhaps the vast majority of the people, the equality of the two founding linguistic groups, and what has been wrong with it is that one group is, in population terms twice the size of the other and has outweighed the other, so they have never been operating on equal terms even though they are perceived to be equal. Where we have failed is we have not provided a means of giving voice to that third equality. And in many respects, in the exercise of power that third equality that the two linguistic groups are equal

should have a say in matters that affects that equality. What kind of matters are they? Linguistic and cultural matters affected. So any time we are amending the Constitution dealing with linguistic or cultural matters, we should provide a means for that third equality to have a say, to have a voice in whether or not it approves of it.

Now the mistake that I believe that Meech Lake reflects, and what was rejected in 1982 and rejected in 1975 and rejected in 1968, was the concept of special status. Quebec has said because we represent 90 per cent of one of the two equalities, the French division of the equality, we should have a special status so that we can have a say. Now you can see an argument for that. You can see some merit for that. Except if you agree with that and give the Quebec Legislature a special status you destroy the second equality, namely that all Provinces are equal in their status and rights as provinces. So you have to find a way to give voice to the third equality without destroying the second.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Now that is what we came up with. That is called looking at the real problem and designing a solution that meets the real problem not some airy-fairy proposal that would destroy the Country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to have quiet so that I can express my views.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

PREMIER WELLS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, how do we do that? How can we provide for giving a voice to that third equality without destroying the second? We designed a method of doing that. We said in all constitutional amendments affecting language, culture, or the civil law system in Quebec you should take a separate vote in the Senate. So that in effect Quebec the only province where French is the only official language, Quebec would have a veto. No question about it. Quebec would have a veto. And so she should in that circumstance. Then all Provinces where English is the only official language would be lumped together and vote together. It is not complex. It is simple and straightforward. It is just a matter of the speakers taking a separate vote. It does not add any complexity to it. It would probably add two minutes to the voting procedure on that particular issue.

It is very simple and very straightforward and it would respond to Quebec's need to the extent that it needs to be responded to. And more than anything else, Mr. Speaker, it would provide for a special position for Quebec on a basis that is acceptable to the rest of the country, and does not demean the rest of the country. Because you see, Mr. Speaker, when you put somebody else up there you say to all others you are down there. And that is offensive. That is what has offended Alberta and Manitoba and Saskatchewan. And that is what offends Newfoundland and New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. That is what offends the

people of Canada. What they want is a fair Canada where people are treated fairly, where the Provinces are equal. But yet be understanding of Quebec. We have a problem that we must deal with and we must address that problem in Quebec, but do it in the right way. Be fair to all Canadians, those in Quebec, those in Saskatchewan, those in B.C. and those in every other Province. That is the approach that we took, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, here is what is wrong with the Prime Minister's proposal, and he finally spelled it out. He explained to me, he told me the reason why Meech Lake was accepted, and I was anxious to hear it because I had difficulty understanding how anybody could agree with the Meech Lake Accord. But here is his proposition, here is the underlying premise that the Prime Minister used for Meech Lake. He said that all of the rest of the Country in 1982 did a dastardly deed and treated Quebec in a terrible way and in a way that they would have never treated Ontario. He would have us believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Federal Government led by a strong French-Canadian at the time in 1982, Pierre Trudeau, dominated by strong French-Canadian Ministers in 1982, and nobody in this country has any doubts about the French-Canadian nature of the Government of Canada in 1982: that Government, with that kind of dominance from Quebec, and nine other Governments in Canada, got together and conspired to do a dastardly deed to hurt Quebec that they would not have done, and therefore, they should feel guilty now, we should all feel collectively guilty now and sign something like the Meech Lake Accord to redeem ourselves for

doing such a terrible thing to Quebec. That is his basic proposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is fundamentally a fraud. That is fundamentally wrong, because what happened in 1982 was the Province of Quebec had a Government that was dedicated to separating Quebec from the rest of the country. That was its plan, its objective, to create a sovereignty association and take it out of being a Canadian Province like the others. So that Government would never approve of anything that promoted good government in Canada or promoted fairness in Canada. So they were going to object to it, no matter what. The rest of the country simply proceeded on a basis that was fair and reasonable, and I say to you, Mr. Speaker, as I said to the Prime Minister, without hesitation, if the roles had been reversed and Quebec was supporting the other eight provinces, and Ontario had been the Government that was headed by a Separatist Government, determined to take Ontario out of the country, Quebec and the other eight provinces and the Federal Government would have done exactly the same thing and proceeded with the constitutional amendments, as they should have done in 1982.

So, for the Prime Minister to found his Meech Lake proposal, as he has done, on the premise of laying a massive guilt trip on Canadians - which they do not deserve - the Canadian people do not deserve the guilt trip the Prime Minister is trying to lay on them.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Joe Ghiz was (inaudible)?

PREMIER WELLS:

No, Joe Ghiz was under that pressure at the time and without reasonable time to think about it, as all others were, and that is how they were sold, 'You are guilty, terrible guilty people and you have to do this now to redeem Canada and be fair to Quebec.' That was their approach. That was the Prime Minister's approach. That is demonstrably a false basis for the Meech Lake Accord. So it is no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that he had it determined in secret so the people of Canada could not give it any consideration.

The wrong premise, then, resulted in the wrong process. A constitution, as everybody knows, in its simplest terms -

Mr. Speaker, if the Member would stop babbling, I would get finished earlier and other Members could speak.

A constitution, in its simplest terms, is the written direction of the collection of people in the country to those who govern. It is the written orders to those who govern, whereby the people say, 'We are entrusting you with the immense power of government, but here are the rules by which you will govern, and you are constrained to operate within these rules.' Meech Lake does just the opposite. It is the eleven who govern getting together and saying to the twenty-six million people, 'We are going to change the rules by which you are governed and you are not going to have any say in it. We are going to use the immense power of our control of the majority in the Legislatures to force these

changes through without changing one word or one comma, no matter what.' Now, that is what the individual who sat in this seat before me agreed to, and I say that is wrong. That is undemocratic. That is unacceptable to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that if you have a wrong premise, a wrong process, you are likely to get the wrong results, and that is exactly what we got, the wrong results in the Meech Lake Accord.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Your time is up.

PREMIER WELLS:

I have five minutes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order!

You have two minutes.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the immense number of letters I have gotten in the last few days plead for Canada, plead for an understanding Canada that accommodates Quebec and protects the interests of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is what 95 per cent of them say. Three or four per cent represent prejudice and bigotry. You will get that anywhere, and you get it in both directions. But, in the middle of the 90 per cent of reasonable people - when some lady writes you and says to you, 'I am eighty-six years old, I do not have much time left, but I am really worried about what they are doing to our country. I am worried about the

place they are going to leave for our children and our grandchildren. Stay with what you are doing, Mr. Wells. God bless you for staying the course and standing up for Canada!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:
I do not think a Premier even stood in this Chair before and had letters from all across the Country saying, I am not a Newfoundlander, but I wish I were one to feel the pride that the Newfoundland people do feel.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, we have a major problem in this country. We have failed to give a voice to the third equality -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

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

MR. SPEAKER:
Order!

The hon. the Premier's time has elapsed.

PREMIER WELLS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me just say we are all bound to do our best to find a solution -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

PREMIER WELLS:
- to this very difficult problem and I solicit the support of all hon. Members for the position the Government has taken. It is recognized across the Country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes that is left before this debate winds down, let me say to the hon. the Premier, Mr. Speaker, that the answer to his last question is found very simply, in very few words, in the answer that was given to him by another lawyer, another Liberal Premier in Atlantic Canada, I am talking about the Liberal Premier of New Brunswick, Mr. Speaker, when he referred to the Premier's alternate plan as a plan that came from Mars. That is the Premier's attitude.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier quotes letters. Let me also say to the hon. the Premier that there are people who are sending us copies of letters that they are sending to the Government of Canada. One from Clarke's Beach, for example -

MR. WARREN:
What?

MR. RIDEOUT:

- advising you and the Prime Minister that many thoughtful Newfoundlanders are appalled and embarrassed by the performance of Mr. Wells.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

I wish to assure you of our firm opposition to his attempts to circumvent the Accord, Mr. Speaker. So letters are letters, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, letters are letters.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, unlike the Premier, we have no problem with tabling anything. We will just check with the person who sent it to us.

MR. SIMMS:

We will check with the person who sent the letter.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Letters are letters. People will say what they want to say. But, Mr. Speaker, I think, by and large, we went through this debate without too much shouting and interrupting. I do not have much time, just a few minutes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the thing that is operative here and must be

pointed out in this particular debate, Mr. Speaker, is simply this, in June of 1987, when the Meech Lake Accord was brought to this Legislature in a Ministerial Statement the Liberal Party of the day, through their leader of the day, welcomed the Accord, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:

That is right.

MR. RIDEOUT:

The Liberal Party of the day including the gentleman for Gander (Mr. Baker) including the gentleman for St. Barbe (Mr. Furey), including the gentleman for Twillingate (Mr. Carter), including the gentleman for Stephenville (Mr. K. Aylward) and others, all fifteen of them, Mr. Speaker, were in this Legislature and stood behind their leader and welcomed the Meech Lake Accord, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the same time in June 1987, after that leader had been disposed of and an interim leader was appointed, Mr. Speaker, that interim leader stood in this Legislature on two separate occasions, Mr. Speaker, and welcomed the Meech Lake Accord as a great Canadian way of doing things. It deserved to be supported. The Premiers who signed it ought to be congratulated, and over here, Mr. Speaker, you had fifteen, thump, thump, thumps.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, one other thing

happened the weekend after that, there was a new leader elected to lead the Liberal Party of this Province, and all of a sudden the thump, thump, thumps and the yeah, yeah, yeahs became nay, nay, nays because Clyde said so.

Nay, nay, nays because Clyde said so. That is what happened, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

So, Mr. Speaker, having been constitutionally inspired for weeks on end over here under other leadership, they became constitutionally blown out of the water and constitutionally constipated, Mr. Speaker, by this new vision that suddenly hit them when they are over here for weeks supporting another vision. So that, Mr. Speaker, points out the hypocrisy of the Liberal position on this particular resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this debate will continue another day. This debate will go on for a long, long time and this Party will stand by what it believes in on Meech Lake, because this Party believes in Canada, Mr. Speaker, a Canada that is decentralized so that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will be able to control their own destiny in their own Legislature, not in another Chamber in Ottawa.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

And Mr. Speaker you can talk about a distinct society and we will talk about it. You can talk about opting out, and we will talk about it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

I do not have the time.

But, Mr. Speaker, we will find the time because we will make another opportunity available which will be our chance when another Private Member's Day comes, Mr. Speaker, and we will debate some of the things that we want to debate as was pointed out by our colleague today.

AN HON. MEMBER:

No leave.

MR. RIDEOUT:

No, I do not expect any Mr. Speaker.

But let me say this in the final thirty seconds that I have, Mr. Speaker. This Party will not walk away from the kind of Canada and the kind of Newfoundland and Labrador we believe in because our plate is filled, and our head was filled with getting front and center in the middle of the stage in Canada, we will do what is right for this Province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear! Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Pleasantville.

MR. NOEL:

What the Opposition Leader has to realize, Mr. Speaker, is that his responsibility is to do what is right for Newfoundland and Labrador. Not what is right for Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

And not what is right for the PC Party. Because let us not forget how Meech Lake came to be in 1987 when the PC Party of Canada was trying to make the Prime Minister look good for the 1988 Elections. And of the eleven gentleman at Meech Lake, six were PCs, one was a PC by another name, and while another was Ontario and Quebec who had vested interest in Meech Lake, so let us not forget the political aspect of Meech Lake.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

Now my friends opposite suggest that we never had a mandate to oppose Meech Lake. I do not know where they were during the last election campaign.

The election day was April 21, when the people of Newfoundland and Labrador voted for a real change. And the front page of 'The Globe and Mail' the next day says: 'Tories worn of threat to Accord'. Toronto knew that we opposed Meech Lake, but the Tories never knew it in Newfoundland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

The front page, Mr. Speaker, the front page of 'The Toronto Star' on April 21 had a picture of the Premier, and one of his supporters kissing him. 'Newfoundland goes Liberal' was the headline, and above the headline the words were 'Victory for Foes of Meech Lake Pact'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Would the hon. the Member take his place?

A point of order.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like for the Member for Pleasantville to explain whether the photo shows somebody kissing the Premier's feet?

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no point of order.

MR. NOEL:

Mr. Speaker, they talk about having no mandate, well, I think we knew we had the mandate and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador knew we had the mandate. They say we have not held any hearings. Well, we will hold hearings, I am sure, before we decide what our final position is going to be in this matter. But, I remind those people opposite that they never held hearings before they approved the Accord in 1988, and there was no reason for them not to hold hearings. I would also remind the Leader of the Opposition that all of the gentlemen who sat in the Opposition when the Accord was approved voted against this House's approval of the Accord, and not for it. All except - I understand Mr. Barry did not vote that day, I think that was the case.

I cannot contribute to the Premier's defence of our position regarding the Accord itself. He makes it better than anybody in the country and he has made it again today. What I do need to do

is convince the hon. Members, if possible, of the need for our position. They do not seem to understand that constitutions are means and the Meech Lake Accord is a means, a means for us to get the kind of society we need for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and in spite of the promise of the terms of union, in spite of the 1982 Constitutional Amendment, in spite of John Robarts promises in the Confederation Conference in Toronto in 1967, and in spite of all the promises we have had since we have been Canadians, our relative position in the country has not improved and everybody seems to know it. I think even those Members opposite know it but they do not seem to be prepared to take any action to change the system, and now we have to convince the rest of the country and persuade enough of the rest of the country to join us in convincing them that we are now going to insist on change. If Canada is going to remain a country it is not the deprived of the country who should be asked to compromise, it is the prosperous.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:

If Ontario and Central Canadians want to keep this country together they have to pay the price of equality. They have to be willing to be equal with the rest of the country. They cannot expect people who are below their standard of living to continue paying a price so that they can continue prospering. Everybody seems to know that in this country and everybody knows that economics and politics are irretrievably linked. Back when I first spoke in this House I quoted Professor

Joan Robinson to the effect that all economic questions, except the trivial ones, are basically political questions and that is the only solution for Newfoundland's situation, to change our political system and that is what this Government is intent on doing.

I have a couple of quick quotes just to show that people in Ontario understand the extent to which Central Canada benefits from our Federal system. The former Finance Minister McDonald in the Liberal Government, and this was a long time ago, said that consumers in regions with little industry protected by the tariffs, subsidize producers in regions with substantial amounts of industry which is protected. The tariff has clearly been a source of significant subsidy to both Ontario and Quebec and we pay for that subsidy. This is the kind of thing that we have to understand and Canadians have to understand and the gentlemen and ladies opposite have to understand.

I would like to quote from an eminent British economist, E. F. Schumacher from his book 'Small is Beautiful, written some time ago, but is very relevant to the situation we find ourselves in in Canada. Mr. Schumacher said, 'The rich rarely subsidize the poor, more often they exploit them. They may not do so directly so much as through the terms of trade. They may obscure the situation a little by a certain redistribution of tax revenue or small-scale charity, but the last thing they want to do is secede from the poor. The normal case is quite different, namely, that the poor Provinces wish to separate from the rich' -

Now, one of the reasons why some of the hon. gentlemen opposite are so stupid is because they have this inability to keep quiet sometimes. It is not necessary to talk all the time if you want to become better informed.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. NOEL:
No, naturally, Sir.

'- and that the rich want to hold on, because they know that exploitation of the poor within one's own frontiers is infinitely easier than exploitation of the poor beyond them.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. NOEL:
'It does make a lot of difference if a poor community or Province finds itself politically tied to or ruled by a rich community or Province. Why? Because, in a mobile, footloose society, the law of this equilibrium is infinitely stronger than the so-called law of equilibrium.'

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

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

MR. SIMMS:
I just want to get something clarified, Mr. Speaker, if I may. Is it now acceptable in this Legislature for Members to call other Members in the House stupid? Because that is the term the hon. Member used. It is the second time today that we have had words from that side that have been unparliamentary, and I do not

think that is an acceptable form of referring to other hon. Members. I just think we should clarify it, because that just degenerates the debate.

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker, 'stupid', as Beauchesne will point out, is certainly not unparliamentary, and as long as the hon. Member is not misleading the House, he is in his right to say that. We on this side believe he is not misleading the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
To the point of order. It is very difficult, at times, to rule on whether a word is unparliamentary in terms of what is said in Beauchesne and what is not said in Beauchesne. Very often, it relates to the tone in which it was said and the context in which it was said. In the way the hon. gentleman used the term, I do not think he meant to use it in an unparliamentary sense. In the meantime, the Chair will pay attention.

MR. NOEL:
No, Your Honour, I certainly did not mean to use it in an unparliamentary sense. I did not mean that the gentleman in question was stupid because he was not listening to me. I would not suggest that. But because he was not listening to the person I was quoting, was what I had in mind at the time. To complete the quote

'Nothing succeeds like success and nothing stagnates like stagnation. The successful Province drains the life out of the unsuccessful and without protection against the strong, the weak have no chance, either they remain weak or they must migrate and join the strong. They cannot effectively help themselves'. And Schumacher makes another quote from Leo Tolstoy 'I sit on a man's back choking him and making him carry me, and yet to show to myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to ease his lot by any means possible, except getting off his back'. Now, Mr. Speaker, I assume we have a couple of minutes left.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair probably needs some direction here, but I do believe that the House will go until twenty five past five, so the hon. gentleman has five minutes, approximately.

MR. NOEL:

Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker is a Province with tremendous resources and with the people capable of properly exploiting them, and we are well located to do so. We entered Confederation in 1949 with a per capita income of forty-nine per cent of the Canadian average and that has only increased to fifty-six percent, fifty six per cent forty years later. We entered with a cash surplus of fifty million dollars, that is what Newfoundland had. March 31st, 1951 the per capita debt of Newfoundland was about twenty-eight dollars and up in Ontario it was two hundred and fifty-six dollars, but what is it today. The per capita debt of Newfoundland today is about nine thousand dollars Provincial per

capita debt. The Federal per capita debt that we are responsible for, is a similar amount and when you add in the commercial and personal debt of Newfoundlanders you get some idea of what is responsible for the standard of living we have in this country today. We are probably talking about a sum in excess of twenty billion dollars of debt that is responsible for what we have accumulated since we joined Canada. This accounts for many of the benefits assumed to be due to Confederation, Mr. Speaker, our standard of living as financed by the work, debts and resources of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians not by other Canadians. We owe nothing to Central Canada. Prime Minister Mulroney suggested at the recent First Ministers' Conference that it required a great deal of generosity to enable us to join Confederation. Generosity on whose part, I ask, Mr. Speaker, and where is the generosity in helping us develop Labrador's resources, and where is the generosity in Premier Bourassa's threats of economic retaliation or the possibility of it, and I have a quote here that I can relate to you if you do not believe it 'If we do not play ball on Meech Lake.' And where is the generosity in a Prime Minister who even talked about generosity in the way he did at the First Ministers' Conference, when he spoke to our Premier two weeks ago. We want to remain Canadians, Mr. Speaker, but we want to be equal Canadians. Central Canadians have to realize that and accept that. If they want to keep this country together, they have to realize that we have to be equal right across the country. We will not continue to play ball with a system designed to make Central Canada prosperous.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the House ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Those in favour of the motion, please say 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Aye.

MR. SPEAKER:

Those against, 'Nay'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Nay.

MR. SPEAKER:

In my opinion the 'Ayes' have it.

MR. SIMMS:

Division.

MR. SPEAKER:

Call in the Members.

Division

Hon. Members will know that the waiting period is ten minutes. This is a situation analogous to the situation we had the other day with quorum call with which the time period was three minutes. Of course with the desire of the House, with the consensus of the House, we do not have to wait the ten minutes. We can carry on and have the vote so the Chair naturally is guided by the House.

I should indicate to hon. Members a point that arose, and I do not think we dealt with it, by the hon. the Opposition House Leader on the vote of a division. He rose to say that there were some names not in Hansard at the time, so this might be an appropriate time to comment on it. The

Speaker's office was informed that indeed what the Opposition Leader had said was correct, that the names were not there but that it was too noisy in the House to hear the names. Maybe hon. Members ought to remember that today when we are doing division so that there is a fair amount of quiet so all names can be entered correctly in Hansard.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Of course.

MR. SIMMS:

I want to add a further clarification of that because I actually went up and listened to the tape. The Hansard people, in fact, suggested that possibly the microphone used by the table clerks may have been the problem because I really did not hear much noise on the tape. I think if Your Honour listened he might -

MR. SPEAKER:

Well, you might have to say that. I did not listen. I was just given the answer as I gave the House.

Those in favour of the motion please rise.

The hon. the Premier, the hon. the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter), the hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands (Mr. Kelland), Mr. Hogan, Mr. Reid, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Crane, the hon. the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Baker), the hon. the Minister of Development (Mr. Furey), the hon. the Minister of Health (Mr. Decker), Mr. Walsh, Mr. Noel, Mr. Penney, Mr. Barrett, Mr. L. Snow, the hon. the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture (Mr. Flight), the

hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (Mr. Gullage), the hon. the Minister of Justice (Mr. Dicks), the hon. the Minister of Education (Dr. Warren), the hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations (Ms Cowan), the hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy (Dr. Gibbons), Mr. K. Aylward, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Dumaresque, Mr. Short.

MR. SPEAKER:

I am sorry, the Chair was inadvertently awaiting for the count, but in order to get the count we have also got to have the other side.

Those against the motion please rise.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rideout), Mr. Hewlett, Mr. Doyle, Ms Verge, Mr. Simms, Mr. R. Aylward, Mr. Matthews, Mr. N. Windsor, Mr. Tobin, Mr. Woodford, Mr. Hodder, Mr. A. Snow, Mr. Langdon, Ms Duff, Mr. Parsons.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

THE CLERK (Miss Duff):

Mr. Speaker, the vote is twenty-five for, fifteen against.

MR. SPEAKER:

I declare the motion carried.

Order, please!

This House is now adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 2:00 p.m.