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Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Wednesday

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):
Order, please!

Oral Questions

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Apparently, the Government is becoming more and more a Government that likes to govern by commissions and committees. We have the economic development of the Province vested in the Economic Recovery Commission, we have problems related to the various pension plans now being looked at by a Pension Commission, and we recently learned that the Minister of Education is proposing to establish an independent curriculum commission.

Now, the Minister knows, Mr. Speaker, that while the Province has a denominational educational system, the laws of the Province provide exclusive responsibility and authority to the Minister and his Department to determine school curriculum. I want to ask the Minister, is he proposing to amend the Department of Education Act to have this responsibility transferred to an independent curriculum commission?

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

DR. WARREN:
I thank the hon. Member, Mr.

Speaker, for his question.

I said in an interview recently that in order to deal with this question of sensitive materials, one of the options the Department was considering was the establishment of an independent committee to review such things, and if and when a decision is made, I will report back to the House on that, and also go through the appropriate procedures to see that it is established.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister obviously knows full well that consultation is one thing, but giving the authority vested in the Minister to another group is something else. The Minister has indicated, as I understand it, that this curriculum commission would make recommendations to the Minister, but here is the Minister's quote, 'And the Minister would abide by it,' would abide by those recommendations. Will the Minister tell the House why he might be attempting to build those walls around him? Is it because he does not want to take the decision, and then the responsibility for the decision, and would rather have the decision made by some nameless, faceless, unaccountable group? Is that what the Minister wants to do, Mr. Speaker?

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

DR. WARREN:
Mr. Speaker, the Department has a number of advisory committees.

There is a General Advisory Committee, I guess to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council through the Minister, which has a whole range of groups on it, and the Minister consults widely with that Committee. The Minister also has an Advisory Committee on the Curriculum. That Advisory Committee has not been operating effectively, and we are now in the process of reviewing the membership of that Committee on the curriculum. The interview the hon. member is quoting relates to dealing with rather sensitive issues, and I must say I would appreciate any person in this House, and anybody in the Province suggesting a way that we could make sure that these materials are dealt with fairly.

The Minister is ultimately responsible for decisions in the area of curriculum, but the Minister is anxious to open up discussions and to involve people in decisions that are very difficult decisions. The Minister is right most of the time, but there are times when he may make a mistake, and he wants to ensure that he gets the broadest possible advice, and perhaps one mechanism for dealing with that is the establishment of an independent committee, with a representative from the Department, say, and a representative of parents. As I said the other day, the Writers Alliance might want to have a representative on that, but ultimately any decisions with respect to curriculum development of the Province is the responsibility of the Minister. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I say to the Minister again that consultation and advice is one thing, but the Minister has said clearly that the Minister would abide, if he in fact sets up this committee, would abide, would be bound by the recommendations of the committee. Now that is something totally different than Ministerial responsibility. If that is the case, if the Minister is proposing to do that and the Department of Finance can handle the teachers' payroll, the Department of Finance can send out cheques to the School Boards and so on, if the Minister is proposing to do that, to be bound by this committee, what role will there be for the Department of Education left under the statutes of this Province? The one exclusive role the Minister and the Department have is to determine curriculum in our schools.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I said I would be inclined as a Minister to abide by the recommendations of such a committee, a broadly-based committee, dealing with these very limited areas. But these are only limited areas that the committee would address, areas such as sense of language and related areas. Many of the other areas would still be the responsibility of the Minister, as that one would be ultimately. I can go through the Department's functions, if the hon. Member wants me sometime, all the things my officials do extremely well. We have a tremendous Department of Education.

in this Province, and we are working together; we have a lot of initiatives I want to put before this House in a whole host of areas, and sometime if you want it, I could put it to you, put it to the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, we look forward any day to the Minister bringing some initiative before the House; he has not brought anything before the House, so far.

Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Minister this: When this Province opted to enshrine denominational education rights in the constitution, the one area left exclusively to the people, to the people's elected representatives, which is this Legislature, was school curriculum. Now, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell the House why he would wish, why he would even consider abrogating that responsibility that has always been exclusively held to the people of this Province through this legislature, through the Government, which is answerable to this legislature?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the hon. Member's premise at all, and I am not sure what he is talking about. I would like him to clarify what he is talking about. I am not sure he understands it. There is one thing the Minister does understand, the legal authority in education in this Province, and I assure this House that I will do nothing that is

illegal in education in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PARSONS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Education. During the election, one of your platform issues was to abolish school tax authority. It is rumored that Government has had considerable dialogue within the Department and options are being considered. I would like the Minister to tell this hon. House what the status of this issue is.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend raised a very important question. I could spend some time talking about the school tax -- very timely, very important. Do you want the long answer, Mr. Speaker? I guess the hon. Member wants the short answer.

The short answer is that the Party, in the last election, announced that either we would review the school tax with a view to either abolishing it or reforming it. I can assure you that the officials of my Department have been very active in studying the tax. We are soliciting views from all over the Province; letters are coming in arguing for and against the tax. There are some major benefits to the tax. I want to state that there are some major benefits, so we are not going to rush into a

decision that is not in the best interest of the people of this Province, and in the best interest of education. And when the time comes, we will announce the decision of the Government, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PARSONS:

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, I am right, and I am not saying the Minister is a liar, but I am sure the word 'abolish' was the term used. Mr. Speaker, I am led to believe that some consideration is being given to raising our personal income tax to equal what is now collected by the School Tax Authority, plus the Roebothan Commission has recommended that an extra \$15 million be spent on education across the Province. If the approximately \$30 million from the School Tax Authority were lost and the recommended \$15 million, which the Commission said was a must - by the way, that is the hon. Minister's Commission, as well - what percentage would have to be added to the personal income tax to offset the lost revenue?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member asked a good question. There are two or three major criticisms of the tax. One is that the tax is inequitable, that it does not result in greater equality throughout the Province, and some would say that we should not have a tax that results, in effect, with promoting inequality in the Province. There is a criticism of

the tax that it is not a progressive tax. I do not mean Progressive Conservative, it is not a progressive tax; it is not related to income. That is a major criticism. The third criticism of the tax, Mr. Speaker, is that it is inefficient and it is difficult to collect.

We are looking at all of these in the process of reviewing the tax, with a view to either abolishing or reforming - abolition or reforming the tax. We are looking at other options. There are a number of options. The hon. Member mentions one, the income tax. Perhaps that is one that might be more equitable.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How much? How much?

DR. WARREN:

The amount? We have not finalized this discussion, but we are looking at the other options that include other taxes that might be used in lieu of the school tax.

I can tell the hon. Member that we are now collecting \$28 million through the school taxes in this Province. If you are going to replace that, I think the hon. Member should be able to calculate what it means in income tax, sales tax, dog tax, whatever. We will look at all the options, if we decide to abolish the tax.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PARSONS:

Mr. Speaker, the legislation that brought about the School Tax Authority was implemented by the Liberal Government at the time. The worry a lot of people have out

there, including myself, is what is going to happen before whatever changes they make are brought about, or whatever they are to make.

My question to the Minister is, would the Minister give an assurance to the House that before any decision is made by his Department, or Cabinet, that the School Boards and the School Tax Authority, and other interested individuals, will be included in the discussions?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, we will consult broadly before such an important decision, I can assure the Member of that. Open Government has been the policy of this Government, and we will continue to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder if the Minister of Education, then, would tell us whether or not a decision has already been made, and despite the fact that the President and other members of Treasury Board fought vehemently to have the School Tax Authorities abolished, the Minister, in his persuasive manner won out - because he was right and he has always defended the School Tax Authorities - and managed to have Cabinet agree with him, and despite the fact they did not consult the School Tax Authorities, or he did not attend the Provincial School Tax Authorities meeting this year, a

decision has already inwardly been made to keep the School Tax Authorities?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Member indicates, I have had some knowledge of the school tax and some involvement, and consulted widely over the years on the tax. In fact, two or three years ago, I was a member of the Task Force to study the whole issue of school taxes, and had the opportunity to consult widely and, I think, understand most of the issues.

Secondly, I thank the hon. Member for appointing me a member of the Task Force last year, an outstanding Task Force.

When the hon. Member was Minister, he made a very wise decision to ask the present Minister to look at the financing of education. I must say, I appreciated the invitation of the Minister and I did the best I could. I could not finish the job, but I can assure the Minister I thank him for the opportunity to learn more about financing education in Canada and in this Province, and I did learn a great deal.

Now, the Minister's question deals with whether a decision has been made. I had forgotten all about the question. The former Minister's question is, Has a decision been made? No, Mr. Speaker, a decision has not been made. When, in due course, we make the decision, we will announce it to the public. I want to assure the Member on one further point, though. Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that if the tax is abolished - if the

tax is abolished - that school boards will be guaranteed that money they would have gotten as a result of the tax. I want to assure that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am glad to hear the Minister acknowledge his appointment to the Committee. We are looking forward to the report being acted upon. We sent the Minister and several others around to consult with people in the field, and they came back with some tremendous recommendations which he will now have to live with. But in order to delay time, he sent them back out for feedback. So we will be looking forward, in the next Session, to seeing an action on the report.

I would ask the Minister if, on behalf of his colleagues who went around during the election, the Member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir in particular, the Member for Gander and the Member for the Strait of Belle Isle, saying they were going to abolish school tax authorities, 'there will be no such thing as school tax authorities. Abolish them', if he is going to apologize on their behalf. And while he is doing it, will he apologize to the Curriculum Committees set up in his own Department, some of the most competent people in the Civil Service today who are being bypassed as he sets up a Committee outside so that he can get off the hook in relation to any sensitive

issues, a Committee that was handpicked by his Executive Assistant?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, there are for or five questions there, so let me see if I can respond. As to the Report of the Roebothan Committee, we are actively considering it. It is an excellent report, I might say, with all due modesty. We have asked for submissions from the public, from the School Boards, and the School Tax Authorities, the very thing that the Leader of the Opposition was mentioning, we have asked for input, and very shortly we will be considering these recommendations, and hopefully we will implement the ones that are in the best interest of Education.

Secondly, one thing with reports. We have had so many task forces, I have been told. I was told a few weeks ago that we had fourteen committees, under the last administration, in a period of three or four year, fourteen reports sitting on a desk with nothing done. I can assure the Member that we are not going to have all these reports done and do nothing. We have a task force on Math and Science, we have a task force on administration, and as soon as we decide on policy, we will go ahead and implement. Action, is the word, Mr. Speaker. Action!

DR. WARREN:

He had two questions, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

DR. WARREN:

The second question, my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I have a very able group of colleagues, very independent-minded. I know they may stray a little bit sometimes from the Party policy, but the Party policy in the last election was we either abolish the school tax or we reform it. Now, some of the independent Members, some of my colleagues, may have said something different. Maybe the hon. Member -

AN HON. MEMBER:

No.

DR. WARREN:

No? No? I do not know who they are.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I did not.

DR. WARREN:

You did not? I hope you did not. I will strap you if you did. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have another question about inaction on a Liberal campaign promise, and it is for the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, who is also President of Treasury Board, and it is about pay equity.

Mr. Speaker, the Peckford Government adopted the principle of pay equity, or equal pay for work of equal value for the Public Service, including employees of hospitals and the other Government

funded agencies. During the election campaign, both the PC Party under our present Leader, and the Liberal Party under the leadership of the present Premier, promised to enact pay equity legislation, legislation that would entrench pay equity for the Public Service, and would extend it to the private sector.

My question for the Minister is, when is he going to bring forward the promised legislation?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, as the Member knows, the process is well underway. We are presently analyzing some specific branches of Government; the evaluation has to be done on the specific jobs before the pay equity can be implemented. The program is well on schedule. As a matter of fact, it is probably a little ahead of the schedule envisioned by Members opposite when they were in office.

MR. SIMMS:

You missed the question, totally.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A supplementary. I would still like an answer to my question about when the promised legislation will be introduced, but my supplementary is, given the fact that Government just accepted recommendations about salary and benefits for members of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary following the report of an

arbitration board, and given the fact that Government will soon be going into negotiations with the nurses, does the Minister accept and will he implement the principle of a recent Ontario Supreme Court decision which validated comparisons between police and nurses?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, to the first part of her question, I can guarantee her it will not take us seventeen years to bring in the legislation.

To the second part of her question, Mr. Speaker -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

The Chair has, on certain occasions, said that it can only entertain one question, and repeatedly today Members to my right, when a question was asked, immediately the Member started asking another question. One question at a time, please!

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In answer to the second part of the question we will soon be undertaking negotiations with the nurses, as we will with the rest of the Civil Service in the next few months, and I am sure the negotiations will go well. I am not prepared at this time to comment on exactly what is going

to be done during those negotiations.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the Minister is, in approaching negotiations with the Province's nurses, will he apply the principle of pay equity involving extending the pay and benefits given to the police to the nurses after comparing the education, the training, skill, effort and responsibility required for the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, police work on the one hand and nursing work on the other?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

I say to the Member opposite that in terms of our negotiations with the nurses, as with all the unions, the key principle will be fairness and balance. In terms of her reference to the recent settlement with the Constabulary, it is obvious from her question that she does not really understand what the salary settlement was.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Menihek.

MR. A. SNOW:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation. In response to a question I asked last week, he left the impression with this House and with the people of Menihek that I was asking to have the Trans Labrador Highway completely ploughed, from

Wabush/Labrador City to Churchill Falls, when in point of fact I specifically asked that a portion of that highway be ploughed of snow, the stuff that falls on the Trans Labrador Highway in western Labrador. It is approximately nine kilometers of road, and it is something that would enable a small business operator to operator a sawmill, which could help diversify the local economy, and I am sure that it would fall within the guidelines of what this present Administration would like to be able to see - this is what they are articulating - but the Minister has suggested that he does not have the necessary funds in his budget to do that portion of road. Can he assure me and this House that he will make the necessary allocation to have that snow removed this year?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I answered the Member's question last week, and I will have to give him the same answer: There is no provision for any funding for snow clearing on the Trans Labrador Highway this winter. There are no funds available for it, and I do not plan to make them available this year. As I told him, it will be considered in next year's budgetary process, and then I am not sure.

MR. A. SNOW:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Menihek.

MR. A. SNOW:

I must inform the Minister that

there is a portion of the Trans Labrador Highway being maintained this winter, the portion that is commonly referred to as the Fermont Highway in our area, from the border down to Wabush. So there are funds being spent there this year. I am not sure if it was deliberate or not, but I put it down to -

MR. DOYLE:

We did it on the front end last year.

MR. A. SNOW:

Last year there was a special warrant, I believe, of \$50,000 spent to have the snow removed from the Labrador City/Wabush area to the Roth Bay Junction -

MR. DOYLE:

Right on!

MR. A. SNOW:

- to ascertain what cost would come to the Government if, indeed, they kept that road open all year. I do not know what the results of that study were, but I will again ask the Minister the question, why, indeed, is he not falling in line with the policy that is articulated by this Government, which is to support and maintain an infrastructure in this Province to help and foster and promote the idea of small businesses getting started and operating?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, indeed it is the policy of this Government to foster business in the Province, and I am sure that the Department's concerned with the development of small business are

working very hard to ensure that we try and correct some of the wrongs and ills that were inflicted on the people of Newfoundland during the seventeen years of the previous Administration.

Mr. Speaker, as to the allocation for ploughing, the part of the Trans Labrador Highway he asked me the question about was the part between Labrador City and Churchill Falls. As I pointed out in my previous answer to the question, that road is not completed as yet. There is no provision in my department's budget for ploughing the road this year to the gentleman's sawmill. There is no provision made now, and I do not intend to make one this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Shame! Shame!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs. The Minister will be aware, no doubt, Mr. Speaker, he has a Board of Directors within the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. I want to ask the Minister how many meetings the Board of Directors have had in the last ten-month period.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:
I would have to find out the answer to that question. I am not really sure how many meetings they have had so far this year. I will

say that we are revising the policies of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. A lot of those policies will be affected by the fact that we have done a Province-wide survey on housing, and that survey has indicated some changes should be made in our policy thrust. As a result of that, we will be re-examining where we go with housing policy next year.

To be specific about the question, I will find out the number of meetings and report back to the House.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker, I say to the Minister that the information I have indicates that the Board of Directors have not met in the last ten-month period.

AN HON. MEMBER:
What!

MR. DOYLE:
Since January, ten months ago.

In view of that fact, Mr. Speaker, and in view of the fact that the Board is mandated - I stand to be corrected, but I think it is required by law, under legislation, to meet at least four times a year. But, in any event, it is mandated to meet four times a year. Could the Minister indicate how expenditures by the Corporation, and the policies and the planning of the Corporation are being approved by the Board if they have not met in that time period? Who is approving all these expenditures and approving the policies and the planning if the Board has not met in a

ten-month period? And, on top of that, the Planning Committee, the Finance Committee and the Policy Committees have not met, either. So it is interesting to ask who is approving all the policies, who is approving the expenditures of the Board, if they have not met in a ten-month period, since January?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

We have only been in power, Mr. Speaker, since May, so I cannot speak at all prior to May. But, certainly, since May, I would say the policies of the Corporation are being undertaken with -

MS VERGE:

How can you (inaudible) without a board?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, I said I would find out the number of meetings the Board has had and I would report back to the House. Other than that, I can say the Corporation is working very, very well. The policies are being followed, and I have not heard complaints from any Members of the House about the Housing Corporation and the mandate we are following in this Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. DOYLE:

This is another example, Mr. Speaker, of the Minister having too much responsibility. His Department is too big. He does not have to check to find out how

many meetings the Board has had, because I can tell him. The Board has not met since January. For a ten-month period, they have not had a meeting.

Will the Minister agree to table in the House, so I will not have to go through the Freedom of Information, what expenditures have been made by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation over that last ten-month period, under what authority have these expenditures been made, and who has approved them?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, as the Member knows, the revenue and expenditures and the responsibility for the Corporation lies with Cabinet, ultimately, and any expenditures and any operations, if you like, ongoing operations, and the mandate of the Corporation are directly the responsibility of the Minister, and through the Minister, through to the Cabinet. I would say that authority is very much in place and has been carried forward.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question Period has expired.

Orders of the Day

Private Member's Day

MR. SPEAKER:

It being Wednesday, the Leader of the Opposition on his Private Member's resolution.

The hon. the Leader of the

Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For the second week we will have an opportunity in this Legislature to debate a resolution, a motion and a topic that is very, very important to the future of this Province, and very, very important to the future of this country.

Last week, we saw a resolution from the Government, Mr. Speaker, that did nothing more than wish to pat the Premier and the Government on the back.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

If that is the hon. gentleman's reaction, that is fine, Mr. Speaker.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that this whole question deserves a much closer examination than just a patting on the back, than just verbally assuring the Government and the Premier that whatever position they wish to take is the right position and the correct position for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, there have been, over the last number of weeks in particular, tremendously false statements made about the possible impact on Newfoundland and Labrador if the Meech Lake Accord were to be approved.

It seems, Mr. Speaker, that the approach the Government wishes to follow in promoting public debate on the issue is not inviting reasonable, and rational, and sane and sensible debate. On the other hand, it seems that the

Government's position is to promote fear, to promote the big lie, Mr. Speaker, to always come out with the most ludicrous and unreal statements to promote the big lie often enough so that eventually people will become scared and will believe whatever has been said.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is not the way, in my view, to promote public debate on this important issue. There are people on the other side of the Meech Lake issue who have promoted and articulated valid arguments against the present Accord. There are people, Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, who have presented valid, defensible arguments in favour of the Accord. There comes a point in time when the country, and this Province, and all of us have to make a decision. What I want to do today, Mr. Speaker, is analyze some of those particular arguments in my opening remarks, and in the closing remarks, that I will make later in the day, spend some time concentrating on those as they relate to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the most widely held argument, the most often articulated argument by the Premier and the Government relates to the distinct society Clause. Mr. Speaker, there is an organization in Canada, and the Premier has generated a lot of interest across the country, and in Newfoundland and Labrador by appearing - what we have to be careful of, Mr. Speaker, is appearance and perception - by appearing to take a position that is totally, totally against any admission of the distinctive nature of the society in Quebec. That is the perception. When you read the proposals the Premier put

forward to the First Ministers' Conference, for example, it does not come across that way, you take the distinct society provisions and put them somewhere else; you take it from the Meech Lake Accord and you put it into the functions of a reformed Senate, and I will have more to say about that later on. But the perception that a lot of people have in their minds is that this distinctiveness should not be recognized in any way, and should not be given any effect in the body of the Constitution of Canada, in this case, in the Meech Lake Accord. That is the perception. Now, Mr. Speaker, there is an organization in Canada today, and the Premier has generated a lot of interest on that particular point, that and a couple of others on the distinct society Clause, a lot of interest, and some people are mouthing the word support. I am not denying that, Mr. Speaker, but I wonder why a lot of this interest is being generated because of this perception. There is an organization in Canada today called The Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada, whose official motto is 'One Official Language, English'. I do not know if Members have ever seen this document, or are aware of this particular document.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame on you! Shame! Shame on them!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not care about the shames, right? I am not worrying about that. But this document, Mr. Speaker, which just came out since the First Ministers' Conference, makes it very, very clear on the third page that the people of Canada who support this particular

organization, with their avowed motto of 'One Official Language, English', in their thousands, maybe even in their millions - out of a population of twenty-six million, I would suspect there are quite a few - should be very, very grateful and look to the Premier of this Province, in particular, and the Premier of Manitoba to be the spokesmen for their cause, so much so, Mr. Speaker, that this organization goes out of its way in its printed document to not only ask its Members to write the Premier, to send off telegrams of congratulations, but even suggests what the wording should be, some of which we have seen appear in print in this Province over the last several days, some of which the Premier has read out here in the House of Assembly over the last several days.

This group goes and really persuades its Members to write to this Premier congratulating him on his stand on Meech Lake, 'or some other message straight from the heart', it says, Mr. Speaker. And it says it does not make any difference what the message is. Here is the quote from their document, Mr. Speaker, 'quantity is what counts.' Quantity is what counts. In other words, if you can have it come in in mailbags full, if you can block offices, if you can do all of that, then the recipient, Mr. Speaker -

AN HON. MEMBER:

No way (inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Well, this is not my document, Mr. Speaker, this is a public document. I am not manufacturing this. I will table it. Anybody who wants to have a look at it can look at it.

And they go on, Mr. Speaker, to promote the addresses of the recipients, in this case our Premier and the Premier of Manitoba.

MR. SIMMS:

Maybe that is where some of the mail is coming from.

MR. RIDEOUT:

That is probably where a lot of the mail is coming from, a lot of the mail. How does the Premier know, Mr. Speaker? I say to the Premier, how does he know? There is no indication here that they have to identify who they are, it is just Canadian citizens being asked to write the catalyst, the lightning rod of the cause that this particular group is admitting. Now the Premier might not like to hear that, the Government might not like to hear that, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador might not like to hear it, but the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, it must be made known. It must be made known, because we all know there are people in our own society, there are people across Canada who believe this to be the case, and there are people who want to have their cause promoted. And it is fine for them to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is an historic fact that we have to recognize in Canada, and that historic fact is simply this: Long before there was a Confederation, going back to just shortly after the Plains of Abraham, there was recognized by the British a French fact in Canada. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the British Parliament and Government of the day recognized that in special legislation, special statutes passed by the Colonial Parliament,

the Commonwealth Parliament, the Mother of Parliaments of today, recognizing the special nature of Quebec as it relates to language, culture and a different law system, a civil law system. When this country became a country, Mr. Speaker, that was recognized in the British North America Act. What happened in 1982 was that recognition was not built into the present 1982 Constitution. So there was set out in this country through the first Ministers to try to develop a process that would again bring into recognition in the constitution of this Country the recognition of that distinct society in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, it was not easy. During the 1982 process, the then Premier of Quebec had twenty-two demands that would have had to be met by the then first Ministers under the Prime Minister of the day, Trudeau, in patriating the Constitution - twenty-two demands, and that can be documented, Mr. Speaker. Through the Meech Lake process and with the leadership of Premier Bourassa, those demands were narrowed down, and narrowed down and narrowed down, and finally there were six; there were six, Mr. Speaker, that finally found their way into a document called the Meech Lake Accord.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. gentleman only has a very short time, and I would ask hon. Members on both sides of the House to please refrain from interfering.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

There is a great deal of misunderstanding in this country, in my view, that Meech Lake will somehow or another convey onto Quebec special status and special powers that no other Province has.

If you look at Supreme Court decisions on the language issue just a few months ago, Mr. Speaker, you will see clearly that the Supreme Court of Canada did not uphold that distinctiveness in terms of linguistic responsibility, law-making responsibility in the area of language onto the Province of Quebec. It clearly did not uphold that.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What court?

MR. RIDEOUT:

The Supreme Court of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, what was used?

MR. HEWLETT:

The sign language law.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, the sign language law. They did not uphold it, no.

MR. HEWLETT:

Which brought on the invocation of the notwithstanding clause.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Which caused, Mr. Speaker - the hon. gentleman put his finger on it - the invocation of the notwithstanding clause, and it is in this area that there is a lot of confusion, that there are a lot of people confused, because the notwithstanding clause has no more to do with the Meech Lake Accord than I have to do with the man in

the moon. The notwithstanding clause, Mr. Speaker, is in the present Constitution. I do not know if it is going to come out at some point in time. I would like to see it come out at some point in time, but the fact of the matter is, it is there and it was used in this case by the Government of Quebec simply because, Mr. Speaker, the highest court in this country did not uphold the right of the Province of Quebec to exclusively make laws in the language area. That is a fact. So, therefore, the distinct society clause that is in the present Meech Lake Accord will not give Quebec the authority and the power that this Premier says it will give them as to making those special laws and having them upheld, because, Mr. Speaker, in the final analysis they have to be interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, where is the second big lie that comes forward in all of this debate? The second big lie that comes forward, Mr. Speaker, has to do with somehow or another if we approve Meech Lake as it presently stands, this Province and other smaller Provinces will be enshrining and entrenching forever in the Constitution of Canada regional disparity because of the opting out provision of Meech Lake.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I say nothing could be further from the truth. I have listened with open ears to the Premier in his remarks on that particular provision of the Accord. And there is nothing, Mr. Speaker, only if you want to run off and make statements that cannot be defended, there is nothing that I can see, and there is nothing that the large body of expert opinion on Constitutional

matters can see, to back up that particular argument.

It refers only to new programs in exclusive areas of provincial responsibility - new programs, Mr. Speaker, in areas of exclusive provincial responsibility. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the counter-proposal put by the Premier, I believe, would have the effect of putting the Federal Government into a more difficult straitjacket, because the Premier wants to use 36.1(c), I believe it is of the present Constitution, so that, in other words, seven provinces, with 50 per cent of the population, would have to agree to any new program before the Federal Government could act on it.

Under the Meech Lake proposal, Newfoundland or any other province would be able to opt out of a national program and receive financial compensation provided that - provided that - we were to institute our own program that met national objectives, and, therefore, we would have the flexibility of being able to introduce to Newfoundland and Labrador, with federal fiscal compensation, with federal fiscal support, a program that better matched the reality of Newfoundland and Labrador, and that did not necessarily match the reality of metropolitan Toronto or some other large metropolitan place on the mainland of Canada. Child care is an example that comes to mind. If we are to have an effective child care program, Mr. Speaker, in Newfoundland, it has to be a program that can be readily available to the rural nature of Newfoundland and Labrador; and the guidelines of that program cannot be the same as they would be in the metropolitan population centres across Canada.

We have always been complaining about the Fisheries Response Programs and the Job Strategy Programs, and how we are handcuffed and straitjacketed in this Province because there is not enough flexibility in the guidelines; the guidelines are made up for the Mainland, they are not made up for the unique circumstances we find ourselves in here. So, Mr. Speaker, there is that flexibility that, I think, will be beneficial for this Province, and somehow or another that does not get to be part of the debate, that it is beneficial for this Province.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is something more fundamental than that as it relates to Newfoundland and Labrador that I see wrapped up in the rhetoric of the Premier's position. There is something more fundamental than that, because I believe the Premier's position on this issue reflects the mind-set of a Newfoundland and Labrador that goes back to the 1930s. The Premier has made it clear in this House on occasion after occasion, and on numerous occasions throughout the Province, that we should not have any more authority in the fishery, our most important resource, because we cannot manage the authority we have now. The Premier has said that time after time. We should not have any more rights to have a say in the management of the fishery, because we cannot properly use the authority we have now.

That is not true. You are twisting it.

MR. RIDEOUT:

That is not twisting it, Mr. Speaker. That says to me exactly what was said in this Province, and about the people of this

Province, in 1933: we cannot manage our own affairs. We do not have the ability, the determination or the fortitude to be able to manage this place. That is what that kind of argument says to me. In 1933, we had heaped upon us the humiliation of being the only people on the face of the globe of British stock to have taken away from us the right to govern ourselves. And if that mind-set, Mr. Speaker, is now back in trend again, in 1989, if the mind-set is that we cannot exercise any further authority, we cannot exercise any further jurisdiction, we do not have the ability and the spirit and the determination to manage this place for future generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, that the people best able to do that are people in other parts of Canada, people in the central part of this country, then this Province, Mr. Speaker, might as well give up provincial status and become a territory, a ward of the state and a ward of Ottawa - if that is the mind-set of the Government, if that is the mind-set of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is not a concept that I support. I believe that in this Province today, with appropriate leadership and appropriate challenging of the resources, the energy, the intelligence and the ability of the people of this Province, there is the will and the determination to make Newfoundland and Labrador work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
We do not have to throw up our hands in despair and put our heads

down in despair and say somebody else can do it better. We do not have to take the welfare opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We do not have to take that kind of indignity in this Province, but we will continue to take it, I am afraid, unless the people of this Province can see in their leaders, can see from this House of Assembly and from this Government, a different direction, a direction that says we can manage what has been given to this Province, we can manage our own affairs. We can have more say right here, not in some federal institution in Ottawa. We can have more say right here in this Province so that, when all is said and done, it will be the people of this Province who will be controlling their own destiny and their own future.

That is the sickness, the big sickness, Mr. Speaker, that I find revolting in the opposite argument, when the Premier says, 'Ottawa made a mess of the fishery, however, we would not have done any better if we had had the jurisdiction.' The Premier did not take the initiative, Mr. Speaker, to say to Ottawa, 'Yes, you had the jurisdiction and you made a mess. But we have 500 years of experience here, and if you listen to us, we could probably help you out.' Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There is a lot to cover and I do not have much time, so I will ask

hon. Members now if they would not interrupt, because I would like to get through. I will just ask them for quiet now.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is going to come as a surprise at the end of the day, perhaps, to find that the Government intends to vote in favour of the resolution as it will be corrected. Once we take the falsehoods out of it and the wrong statements, we will explain our position on it.

Mr. Speaker, the position that has been put is not justified on the facts. The Opposition Leader just sat down after having talked about the Government saying, we would have managed the fisheries the same way. I said no such thing. What I said was, if we had had the jurisdiction, we would have used the same scientists and made essentially the same decisions on the basis of the same advice, with essentially the same results. And that is exactly what would have happened.

Mr. Speaker, I have great confidence in the ability of the people of this Province to manage our affairs. What I do understand is we do not have the financial resources to exercise the jurisdiction that we might like to have. And the hon. Members opposite just do not seem to understand that concept. I do not know what it is, but they cannot seem to get it into their heads. They make the representations that the Leader of the Opposition made here today, about it being so much better for us to have this jurisdiction, about our being able to handle it so much better, without understanding what we really need is more say in the exercise of federal jurisdiction. And, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the

Clerks now to table a couple of reasons to demonstrate that. One is some statistics demonstrating the regional economic disparities within Canada, that was tabled at the First Ministers' Conference. The second is Bill C-3.

Now, let me just tell hon. Members of the House about Bill C-3 and what is happening in Ottawa because we do not have an effective say in the exercise of federal jurisdiction. Just let me tell the House what the Tory friends of hon. Members opposite are doing in Ottawa:

If you had to ask anybody in this Province or in this country today to identify in ten words or less the real economic future of this country, let me tell you what words they would use: industry and technology in Canada, trade and commerce in Canada, science in Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, anybody who knows anything about the economic and scientific state of the world and the developed nations of the world, knows that in those ten words is encompassed the entire economic future of this country, of North America, of Western Europe. You may ask why I say that. I say that for one reason. The Federal Government brought to the House of Commons and had approved by the House of Commons, dominated by Ontario and Quebec Members of Parliament, a Bill, C-3. It was approved on June 22, 1989 to create the Department of Industry, Science and Technology. That Department has been given, 'the duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction... relating to Industry and Technology in Canada; Trade and Commerce in Canada; and

Science in Canada. Now, that is one of two responsibilities that is given. That is number one, and it is in subsection (1) of Section 6.

Subsection (2) of Section 6, identifying the powers, duties and functions says this: 'The powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction... relating to Regional economic development in Ontario and Quebec'. That is what they are doing with the future of this country, that is where they keep putting the future, that is where those Tories in Ottawa say the future is, that is the effect of Meech Lake even before it is implemented. That is what happens. That is why I am concerned about having Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and Manitoba and Saskatchewan impact on the exercise of Federal judgement. That is why we need more say in the exercise of Federal jurisdiction, to stop this kind of thing, the concentration on Ontario and Quebec.

If you look at the statistics that will be filed, Mr. Speaker - if the Pages were around I would them to take this and table it - you will see that since the present Government took Office, the level of support for Industry and Business in Atlantic Canada on a per capita basis has gone down to be the lowest in the country, with central Canada and western Canada ranking ahead. That is why. Before that, it was way up there, right at these peaks.

MR. SIMMS:

What year is that?

PREMIER WELLS:

1981. It started going down after 1981, and it really dropped off the map from 1984 onwards. Those statistics make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, what has been happening in this country and why it is necessary for us to have more say in the exercise of Federal legislative power. We are not saying and never had said, contrary to the false statements that are in this Resolution, that 'the Premier has rejected opportunities to advance Newfoundland and Labrador...'. That is utterly without foundation, Mr. Speaker. Not an iota of truth in it.

The second one, 'and whereas the Provincial Government has no constitutional power over the management of the fishery' - that is true - 'the Province's most important industry, yet the Premier is prepared to scuttle the Meech Lake Accord provision for negotiation of shared federal-provincial fisheries management.' There is no provision in the Meech Lake Accord for shared negotiation over fisheries. There is a stupid, silly statement that our former Premier accepted that just boggles the mind, that anybody with a modicum of intelligence could accept, other than a baby taking a sucker to keep quiet.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, just stop and think about it. If ever we are going to change the roles and responsibilities in the fisheries, how is it going to change? It is only going to change if the Prime Minister and enough of the Premiers are disposed to change it. If they will agree to change

it, that is the only way it is going to change. Now, Mr. Speaker, if they do not agree to change it, it is not going to change no matter what you write in the Meech Lake Accord about discussing it and putting it on the agenda. You can put it on the agenda until you are blue in the face, it is not going to change. But if there is a disposition to change it, if they are prepared to consider changing it, then you certainly do not need a constitutional requirement to discuss it. So how incredibly stupid can anybody get to accept that, and how much worse is it to put it forward as something meaningful? It is just incredible! It boggles the mind! At least it boggles any competent mind.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has also said that there were false statements, false positions made by me. Mr. Speaker, from the beginning it was I who asked the Prime Minister and the other Premiers to deal with the issues of the Meech Lake Accord; stop avoiding dealing with the issues by attacking personalities. That is the position I have been taking for months, not the other way around. The Prime Minister is attempting to sell the Meech Lake Accord on one proposition, and this is it, Mr. Speaker, that in 1982 a Federal Government, led by a strong French-Canadian, Pierre Trudeau, dominated by strong French-Canadian Ministers, and nobody has any doubt that the Government of Canada of 1982 was dominated by French-Canadian Ministers, that that Federal Government, together with nine provincial Governments, got together and ganged up on the Province of Quebec and did a

dastardly deed to Quebec to exclude them from the Constitution, which they would not have done to Ontario. Now, that is the Prime Minister's basic representation, that is his basic argument, and that now, because of that, it is necessary for us to perform a massive national act of contrition, to submit ourselves totally to the will of Quebec in this massive act of contrition, to seek forgiveness for this god-awful deed of 1982.

Now, Mr. Speaker, look at the truth of the matter. I have already described that Government of Canada in 1982; its domination by strong Quebec Ministers. The simple fact is, the Government of Quebec of the day was a separatist government that would never have agreed to anything that promoted the Federal union of Canada. They would never agree to anything. And if Ontario had been in that same boat, with a separatist government, and Quebec and all the other provinces were agreeing to support the constitutional changes, exactly the same thing would have happened and Ontario would have withheld itself from participation. It would not have been excluded, it would have voluntarily refused to participate, because that was its mind-set anyway. Now that is the truth of the matter, and it is grossly irresponsible for the Prime Minister of this country to try an foster ill will and animosity amongst the people of this Country by putting this forward as the basis for accepting the Meech Lake Accord.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

To suggest that the 1982

constitutional amendment did not have Quebec participation is the worst misrepresentation of all. It is the falsest misrepresentation of all, or the most false, I guess, if my English grammar is to be correct, and here is why: The 1982 constitutional amendment, Mr. Speaker, if you want to go look at it now in the House of Commons, is signed by four people. Four persons signed it, one of whom was Her Majesty The Queen. She had to sign it. The second was the Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, that noted strong French-Canadian Quebecer. The next one was Jean Chretien, another noted strong French-Canadian. And the third one, Mr. Speaker, was Andre Ouellet, another noted strong French-Canadian.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:
Talk about false basis and suggestion. They have been so far removed from the truth they no longer recognize it anymore. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have some sympathy for the position they find themselves in now, because they now know that they are speaking for maybe 25 per cent of the people of Newfoundland, and 75 per cent of the people of Newfoundland are telling them they are wrong, and they have to try and scramble back off it and try and make the best they can of it, and today represented the lowest of the low in performance along that line, when the Leader of the Opposition stood up and waved this pamphlet of a bigoted group in this country, a bigoted group who will never agree to anything, a bigoted group I have no time for.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

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

For the previous speaker I asked that there be silence, and I am asking the same thing now. I remind hon. gentlemen that the Premier's time is not up, he has approximately five minutes.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to pull that stunt just demonstrates to me that they are collectively saying we have no confidence in our ability to deal with the issues, so we have to try and mask the terrible position we find ourselves in now of supporting the wrong side, that we are committed to it. So they will stoop and resort to anything to try and do it, including waving the position of a bigoted group who takes this position. If anybody knows anything or understands anything I ever said, and let me correct the misrepresentations of the Leader of the Opposition in this respect, Mr. Speaker, at no time have I ever said Quebec should not be recognized as a distinct society. I have turned myself inside out to emphasize that Quebec is a distinctly different society, distinctly different than any other in this country, and it is appropriate to recognize it. My quarrel is with the creation of special status for any one Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:
Now, for the Leader of the

Opposition to misrepresent that and to wave this paper put out by a group of bigots somewhere who merely support my position because it will, in the end, result in stopping the Meech lake Accord; they do not care how, or why, or principle or anything, all they want to do is stop it. Merely because they express support for the position I have taken, to associate me with that is a new low, even for the Leader of the Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the other thing I want to mention in the couple of minutes I have left, before I move the amendment which I will move, and I will give the Pages to distribute now, is the attempt the hon. the Leader of the Opposition made at trying to persuade everybody that there was no special status.

Well, just look at it. Anybody who is a lawyer - the hon. the Minister of Justice knows - I spent twenty-five years before courts arguing interpretation of statutes, and I have even a modicum of knowledge of how courts look at it, and courts will look at it and say every province, including Quebec, has the responsibility and the right to promote the basic characteristic of French and English Canada. Then they look at the separate authority for Quebec, the recognition that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society. Then they have to say, now what does that mean? It is something different than it is in 1(a) so, therefore, we have to give it a different meaning. That is what a court will say.

They will say the same thing about Subsection 3, which is the role of the Legislature and Government of Quebec to preserve and promote, not the distinct society, the distinct identity. And what does that mean? It introduces a new concept. Does that mean it has a distinct identity, different from Canada on the international scene? A court is going to have to wrestle with it and say, that is what it could mean. And nobody in Canada wants that, Mr. Speaker. That is what politicians in Québec are claiming it will mean today. But the Prime Minister goes to Quebec and says it means one thing, and he goes to English Canada and says that it means diametrically the opposite. Now nobody can accept dealing with constitutional changes on that basis, Mr. Speaker.

Clearly the Accord would give the Legislature of Quebec a role. What is the role of a Legislature? What is the role of this Legislature? To pass laws. That is the only role of a Legislature, to pass laws. A lot of hot air gets discharged in the meantime, in the process, but its role is to pass laws. Now if you say the role of the Legislature is to promote and preserve this distinct identity of Quebec, then you clearly accorded a role to pass laws in that direction. That is a role and status that no other Legislature has. Even Peter Hogg, whose opinion the Prime Minister puts on the table and says, "It does not create a special status," says so on this basis: it does not involve a significant transfer of power to Quebec, but it does involve a transfer. Then he says, "Because I do not consider the transfer of power that is involved to be significant, I, therefore, conclude it is not special

status." Now there is a weasely argument, with great respect to my good friend, Peter Hogg; he is a personal friend and I acknowledge him as such. But on this, even Peter Hogg says that, and clearly there is a special status.

For all of those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I move that all of the false statements that are in the recitals, the whereas clauses, be deleted. We have no quarrel with supporting the resolution as it is, but we cannot support the false statement that the Premier rejected opportunities to advance Newfoundland and Labrador; that the Premier is prepared to scuffle the Meech Lake Accord provision for negotiation of shared provincial fisheries management. There is no provision for shared provincial fisheries management. 'And whereas the Premier has stated flatly that there is no point for the Province to seek more power because the Province does not have the ability to exercise it.' I never said any such thing. That is a false statement. What I said is we have no financial resources to carry out the jurisdiction.

And, the final one is, 'And whereas the Premier is advocating that more power over the lives of the people of the Province be centralized with the Federal Government in Ottawa.' That is not correct, Mr. Speaker. What I said is it benefits only big provinces.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Premier's time is up.

PREMIER WELLS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am about to conclude.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave.

PREMIER WELLS:

The final one, Mr. Speaker, is the worst insult of all, the reference to the 1933 Royal Commission. So on that basis, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. the Member for Eagle River, the resolution which I have tabled.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

To a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

We have not seen a copy of the amendment, but as I understand it -

PREMIER WELLS:

I have tabled it.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, we have not seen a copy of it, so my remark still stands.

PREMIER WELLS:

Maybe you could bring me back one copy?

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, by deleting all the whereases, I would submit to you that the amendment is not in order. It is out of order for a number of reasons, not the least of which are those reasons contained in Beauchesne, Paragraph 567, Page 175, 6th Edition, which simply say, 'The object of an amendment may be either to modify a question in such a way as to increase its acceptability, or to present to the House a different proposal as an alternative to the original question.' It also goes on to say that it should not be an amendment that will negate the

purpose of the original resolution. That is the intent. I would submit that this amendment clearly goes against the thrust of the resolution for obvious reasons.

It also says an amendment must be relevant to the question on which the amendment is proposed. Well, this is not very relevant. If you are just merely deleting everything in the resolution, it is not amended at all. All they have to do is simply get up and speak against the preamble if they wish, explain their positions, and vote against the resolution if they want. Or they can vote for it, having explained their position. But, I would certainly argue, Mr. Speaker, very strongly that this particular form of amendment, deleting the entire preamble to a resolution, is certainly highly irregular and certainly highly out of order. I would suggest to Your Honour that it is an important matter, and that Your Honour might want to take a few moments to consider the matter, because it is a matter of some importance.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This particular resolution is quite simply stated. The resolution is, be it resolved that, and be it further resolved that. There are two things that we are resolving. Eliminating the whereas clauses does not significantly change the resolution. It does, in fact, conform to Sections 5, 6, and 7, which says the object of the amendment is to modify a question in such a way as to increase its

acceptability. Obviously, it increases its acceptability, Mr. Speaker, because the whereases are patently false. So it obviously increases the acceptability of the resolution if we are, in this House, concerned about truth.

Mr. Speaker, there is also no tie-in in terms of the whereases, there is no tie-in between that and the be it resolved part. The be it resolved part, and the be it further resolved part stands entirely on its own and is not changed in any material way by eliminating the whereas clauses, so I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment is entirely in order. Section 569 says, a motion may be amended by leaving out certain words, and then goes on. That is what we have done, left out certain, unacceptable words.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Since the Government House Leader pointed out 569 (1), I will go on to point out 569 (2) for your consideration, which goes on to say, 'If an amendment is irregular in one particular, the whole of it is not admissible and must be ruled out of order'. Now, in my opinion, this is irregular. It has never been done before. I am not aware of any precedent where the entire preamble has been amended, therefore, if it is irregular in one particular, the whole of it is not admissible and must be ruled out of order. That is 569 (2), so your Honour might want to consider that, as well.

MR. SPEAKER:

We will recess the House just for a few moments.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER:

In making a decision on this particular amendment, the Chair would like to quote our own Standing Orders. First of all, our own Standing Order 36 (a) has to do with Motions and it says 'A motion may be amended: (a) by leaving out certain words; (b) by leaving out certain words in order to insert other words; (c) by inserting or adding other words.' So there are three forms. But when it is of the first form, by leaving out certain words, when the amendment is of that form, Mr. Speaker shall put a question that the words proposed to be left out do stand apart of the question.

In the past, in the House, we have, on many occasions, made amendments to resolutions. We have deleted the whereases, we have added to the whereases, but in most cases we have deleted the whereases, because in the legal sense it is the recital, and the recital simply gives reasons for the main resolution, be it resolved. I am sure hon. Members have often heard his Honour talk about the importance of the 'be it resolved'. That is the Resolution, the be it resolved, and if hon. Members had tied into the be it resolved some of the recital, then that would make the case a little less clear-cut. But there is no references at all to any of the recitals, and the motion stands by itself, the two be it resolved, with the whereases, the preamble, being irrelevant to the motion in terms of its essence. So the Chair rules the amendment in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, could I ask Your Honour, on a point of order for a further clarification, perhaps on a future occasion, if you wish. I understand Your Honour's ruling pointed out that we have practices in the past and precedents where, whereases have been left out and changed. Can Your Honour tell me if he found in his research practices in the past where the entire set of whereases in a preamble to a resolution have been deleted in this Legislature?

MR. SPEAKER:

No, the Chair cannot say that they, at this point, found where the total has been, but where certainly many of them have. I think it is still irrelevant whether one has or whether they all have. The important thing is the resolution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

To a further point of order, then, Mr. Speaker. I accept Your Honour's ruling, of course, and I did not appreciate Members across the way suggesting that I did not, but I need to have it clarified, because, obviously, we now have in our Legislature a brand-new precedent, so that every resolution that comes forward from now on, it is perfectly acceptable to delete all the whereases in a resolution. That is the only point I am making so that it is in the record and so that we all understand it, even though I know

that the Government House Leader and I have had discussions on private Members' resolutions, where there was an understanding that we would not even bother bringing in amendments. That was generally a practice.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker, there is no precedent being set here. It is very simple. The Speaker said, and I heard him quite clearly, that it really does not matter whether one has been deleted or two, it is the principle of the thing. What we are voting on is the resolution, and that is the only important part. That is what we vote on. I do not understand what the Opposition House Leader is trying to do. He is trying in a roundabout way to question the ruling of the Speaker. He is, then, in another way, saying that we are establishing some earth-shaking precedent here. I wish he would understand that this is not a precedent, this is simply a simple amendment to a resolution, as has been done hundreds of times before in the House.

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

MR. SIMMS:
I resent the Government House Leader implying that I do not accept your Honour's ruling. That is not correct. That is false. I do accept it. However, for the Government House Leader to suggest that this is not some kind of a

new precedent, and to suggest that this has been done hundreds of times is false. It is not correct. It is not accurate. The Speaker, himself, has admitted it has never occurred before in this Legislature, and that is the point of order. I wanted clarification. His Honour has given that clarification, and I accept the ruling.

MR. SPEAKER:
His Honour certainly wants to have a final word here with respect to whether it was not done before. The Chair simply said that to this point in time the research did not reveal it, but it is possible, as the research continues, that it might be revealed. But my research to this point in time did not reveal that.

As a final conclusion, I want to say again that whether or not it is a precedent or whether or not in the future all recitals will be able to be wiped out again depends on the resolution, because I quite clearly said that in the resolution there was absolutely no reference to the recitals. And if we have a resolution that makes reference to the recitals, well, obviously, then, that becomes a different matter.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MATTHEWS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess we are seeing for the first time today, which, of course, was the intent of the Opposition, the Premier's real position being exposed and will be shown to the people of this

Province and, indeed, to the Country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MATTHEWS:
I would like hon. Members to listen and say the Premier's real position not perceived position, and there is a big difference. Once the people of this Province know the Premier's real position, then we will see what will happen to the 63 per cent or the 75 per cent, and so on around the Province. We will see! Because as has been alluded to by the Leader of the Opposition, what we saw with the Free Trade debate in the last federal election is very similar to what we see happening with the Meech Lake debate in this Province and in this country, that when people do not understand an issue as complex as the Meech Lake issue -

AN HON. MEMBER:
Shame!

MR. MATTHEWS:
Never mind 'shame'. It is true.

AN HON. MEMBER:
People in Newfoundland know what (inaudible).

MR. MATTHEWS:
No, Newfoundlanders do not understand. And if you go out in your district sometimes, as you should go, you would know how many Newfoundlanders out there do not understand the Meech Lake Accord.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. MATTHEWS:

But you do not go to rural Newfoundland, as I do. That is why I get so many calls from your district.

So, what we are seeing today, really, is the Premier becoming very uncomfortable with his position. That is what we are seeing. He is very, very uncomfortable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MATTHEWS:
I guess it begs the question, Mr. Speaker, why today, for the first time since we made an agreement with the Government House Leader on Private Members' resolutions, have we, on this particular resolution, seen the guts taken out of it by the Premier?

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

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:
That is the second time, Mr. Speaker, that an agreement has been alluded to, that there would be nothing changed in resolutions. I believe that is it. That agreement still stands as long as Members of this House are interested in the truth.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:
To that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, what we have seen here is an attempt by the Government House Leader, now that the Premier has left, to interrupt the hon. Member's speaking time. He has twenty minutes to speak on this resolution. Clearly it is not a point of order, it is a point of opinion which he tries to express. He is doing nothing but trying to take the House on his back and interrupt hon. Members who have the right to express their views and opinions on this very important subject. I ask the Government House Leader to move outside. If he cannot take the heat, get out of the kitchen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order.

To the point of order. It is a difference of opinion among hon. Members, but no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would suggest to the Government House Leader that if he wants to have the truth espoused in this House, he should first talk to his Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MATTHEWS:

We had a little session on that in the last Session of the House, Mr. Speaker, and, of course, being a man of principle, I do not withdraw the truth.

The Premier took great exception today to a piece of literature and correspondence the Leader of the Opposition referred to, from APEC. He went off the handle when that was shown in the House.

I just want to make the point that you cannot on one day be gloating in front of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and the people of Canada, showing hundreds and thousands of letters coming into your office, of which hundreds are from a particular group or promoted by that group; you cannot gloat about these letters in the Premier's Office with the TV cameras on you, and on another day come into this Legislature and take great exception to the very group that is promoting these kinds of letters. You cannot have it both ways. You have to be consistent. I guess that is another thing about the Premier that we are exposing, his inconsistency.

I was hoping the Premier would be here when I spoke. I was hoping the Premier would get as upset about this particular piece of paper, which is the labour force flash sheet for Newfoundland and Labrador, comparing October, 1989 to October, 1988, where we have seen, this October, an increase of 2.4 per cent in unemployment in this Province. I was hoping he would be here to react to that, to see if he would get upset. What is the old saying? 'While Nero fiddled', is it not? 'While Nero fiddled', I think is the key.

MR. PARSONS:

'Rome burned.'

MR. MATTHEWS:

Yes, 'Rome burned.' Of course, I did not want to finish it, because I am sure most hon. Members over

there know that and have read some bit of literature and history. Not all of them, but some.

Mr. Speaker, to get to the thrust of the debate, no one can refute the 'BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this Hon. House of Assembly declare complete faith in the ability of the Province collectively to handle additional power through the Provincial Government and exercise it to the benefit of th Province.' But the core, the center of the Premier's position, whether hon. Members opposite want to accept this or not, has certainly been to display a lack of confidence in the people of this Province and our ability to run our own affairs and to manage our resources. That is the centre of the Premier's position. Now, whether they want to accept that or not is up to them.

But as I watched the First Ministers' Conference and the television reports and read the newspaper reports, the first thing that came to me was that what the Premier was doing, really, was comparable to an act of surrender. He was surrendering Newfoundland and Labrador. He put up the white flag and he said, 'We are no longer capable of managing our own affairs in this Province, of managing our own resources, particularly our most important industry, the fishery.'

There are strangers in the House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TOBIN:
Who is he?

MR. MATTHEWS:
The next thing is we will have all the Executive Assistants sitting in the House, running the House as well as they are running some of

the Departments opposite, and we take exception to that.

Really, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier has done, as of the last First Ministers' Conference, is he has abandoned any hope that this Province has for self-sufficiency. He has done that. He surrendered! He has thrown up the flag and said, we cannot handle it, Mr. Prime Minister, we cannot handle it, People of Canada, let us go back. And it is such a contradiction to what the people of this Province want and desire. And they have wanted it and desired it for years, for generations. They wanted us to be self-sufficient and to make it on our own, not to go running off with cap in hand to Ottawa every chance we got, as we see the Minister of Employment and the Minister of Fisheries doing today. That is the intention, that is the plan and the plot of this particular Government.

Of course, the Leader of the Opposition has referred to what happened in 1933, Mr. Speaker, and what we see happening today is very, very comparable, when, as the Leader of the Opposition said, we were judged then to be - a sick society sounds terrible, but we were not very well, the society of Newfoundland and Labrador, and we were really without the capacity or the capability to manage and govern ourselves. That, in essence, is what came about when we lost our self-Government. And of course, when we entered Confederation again, the jurisdiction for our fishery -

DR. KITCHEN:
(Inaudible) the Tory Government.

MR. MATTHEWS:
The hon. Member is talking about

Tory Government over there. Why does he not go about managing the financial affairs of the Province? and perhaps we will be a little better off. There are a lot of people in this House who were both Tories and Liberals at one time, and the hon. Minister has attended a number of Tory meetings in the Province, Mr. Speaker. Of course, some people leave organizations and associations voluntarily, others go by other means.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MATTHEWS:

Of course, Mr. Speaker, there has been great concern expressed in this Chamber over the last three or four weeks, and throughout this Province, about our most vital industry, our most important industry, that being the fishery. We had an opportunity at the First Ministers' Conference and at future First Ministers' Conferences to have our most important industry placed on the discussion agenda at First Ministers' meetings in this country, the fishery. There were two items, the Fishery and Senate reform, but our Premier has seen fit to not put as much importance upon our fishery. He could have suggested that we would like to get involved with Federal Government in managing our fishery, to have shared responsibility, shared jurisdiction. Because, I am sure, as out of touch as he is with the fishery, as out of touch as this Premier is with the fishery, he knows how vital our fish resource is to our Province. We know a fair bit about it, sometimes we claim to know all about it, but we know a lot about our fishery.

There is no question we need the

Federal Government, as well, we need their diplomacy, their support in international markets. And I suppose they would say it with tongue in cheek, as the Leader of the Opposition already referred to, when you mention scientific expertise today, you lower your voice about it as a result of what has happened, and we have all come to recognize that. But the thing is we will still have to rely upon scientific expertise and scientific data if we are going to properly manage the fish stocks off our shores, and let us not forget that. And, of course, in discussions with the Federal Government, we always need financial help. In saying that to the Federal Government, how we need them, the Premier as well could have said, but you as well need us: you need our knowledge, our experience of the sea and of the fishery, you need our commitment to the responsible management of the fishery.

Why do we not share responsibility? Let us have further discussions about including it in the Constitution. That is what our Premier could have said, if he had allowed himself the opportunity before he shot himself in the foot on the fishery issue. But he did not say that, and the Leader of the Opposition again referred to it when he said he did not blame the Federal Government. If we had used the same scientists, the same management measures, we probably would have created the same mess in our fishery. That is, in essence, what he said. And the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and the people of Canada saw that. He said, in essence, we do not want or we do not need any responsibility for the fishery. Now that is a complete

contradiction and a reverse position for a first Minister of this Province to be taking to a First Ministers' Conference.

We, for years, have been striving for more jurisdiction, more responsibility, more say over our resources, in particular our fishery. The Premier says that we cannot afford more responsibility. We cannot afford to share. He says that at a time when the very fishery is collapsing around our ears. We will have thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have been dependent upon this most important industry thrown out of work, and somehow the Premier, and I guess the Government, do not understand that if we had better control and better management, and more jurisdiction over the fishery, there would be more fish and with more fish for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians come more jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, better paying jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and more money in the provincial treasury. Consequently, we could afford the type of responsibility, jurisdiction and measures that the Premier so readily says we cannot afford. With employment and better paying jobs in this Province, greater contributions are made to the Provincial treasury in various tax measures, so why, then, could we not afford to do what we for years have been asking to do? But, no, the Premier again has surrendered on this very issue.

The Premier is very, very content with full federal jurisdiction in the fisheries because, again, as the Leader of the Opposition has referred to, he thinks as those who were making decisions and

recommendations in 1933 thought, that we were not capable as a people and as a Province and as a society to manage our own affairs; we were incompetent. But, yet, as well he must be saying, and he said it very clearly, I think, that Canadians from other Provinces are better at managing this Province and managing this Province's resources than we are. That again is very, very appalling, very, very alarming and very upsetting to any red-blooded Newfoundlander and Labradorian - it is nice to welcome the Minister of Development in with his lunch - to hear that kind of an approach being taken by a First Minister of this Province, that we are not capable of managing our resources but people from other provinces are.

In essence, this Premier and this Government are taking us back twenty to twenty-five years in their approach to provincial/federal relations, to management of our resources, or I should say lack of management of our resources.

The Premier is very, very content to do that, to say to Ottawa we do not want any responsibility, we do not want any jurisdiction, someone else can do a better job of managing for us than we can do for ourselves, and that is very alarming.

If the hon. gentlemen opposite would stop and think for themselves for a moment -

AN HON. MEMBER:

They will try.

MR. MATTHEWS:

You are capable of doing that. I am not being insulting by saying that, you are capable of doing

that. But you must allow yourselves to do that, and not believe every syllable that comes out of your Emperor. You must think for yourselves and go out about Newfoundland and Labrador. Because, you see, the Premier has put fear in Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; he has talked about economic devastation and greater regional disparity, but he never elaborates on how that will be caused. He hangs his hat on a Senate reform. A reformed Senate is going to take care of all of that and correct all the economic ills of Newfoundland and Labrador. Senate reform is big on his agenda. Such changes in the Senate, let me just say to the hon. gentleman -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. MATTHEWS:

I am not saying that there should not be changes in the Senate and reform in the Senate. I am not suggesting that for one minute. But if we get the type of Senate that the Premier suggests, there is no question that we will see a realignment of political forces in this country and in the Commons to counterbalance the regional forces and the regional power that will then be structured in the Senate. You are going to see checks and counterbalances take place. For anyone to think any different is crazy. For us to have five or six Senators is not going to solve our economic woes in this Province.

The House of Commons, there is no question, with a reform Senate as proposed by the Premier, will be more sensitive than it ever was and it ever has been to the base of its power, which is Ontario and Quebec, and, of course, the ever-emerging power of British

Columbia. More than ever before the Federal Government will become sensitive to that, and consequently will play to that power base. The recipe for Government will be affection in the House and disaffection for the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Senate reform, as important as it is for this country, and, as I said, we do not disagree with Senate reform; as a matter of fact, I would say there is a fair number amongst this caucus who would agree with the Senate being abolished. Senate reform, to some people, means abolishing the Senate. For other people, it means a Triple "E" Senate. But the question has to be asked and someone has to give the answer, and I suggest it should be the Premier, what will a reformed Senate, a Triple "E" Senate do for people in Lord's Cove and Point May and Fogo and Nain?

MR. BAKER:
It will do a lot for them.

MR. MATTHEWS:

The hon. Member says a lot. Well, I would like to know what it is going to do for them. It is not going to cause more fish to swim inshore in Lord's Cove or Nain, so what is it going to do? That is the question. Because the Premier has consistently said that if we do not reform the Senate, regional disparity is going to increase and the economic ills of the Province are going to get worse. Why? And how?

Now we all know about the Senate and what it stood for all those years in this country, and we all have our opinions on that. As a matter of fact, there is pretty wide-spread opinion that it is a

place to go to and have a long nap. Now, a reformed Senate would be elected and so on, but it will not solve the economic problems of this Province. And for anyone to go around this Province fear-mongering, scare tactics, that is what is happening, frightening people that their economic plight is going to get worse if we do not have a reformed Senate, how naive do they think Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are? The biggest threat to the Newfoundland and Labrador economy and the people of this Province, Mr. Speaker, sits across this Assembly. That is the biggest problem.

The Premier has never elaborated on economic depression and regional disparity that will consequently come about, and I say it is time for him to get down to specifics and not just be talking in generalities, as he did the other day at the Board of Trade, where he frightened the daylights out of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians by saying how tough it is going to be if we do not reform the Senate.

The Premier has missed a great opportunity to have the fishery included on the First Ministers' discussion agenda. And, of course, that was a first opportunity, the fishery and Senate reform. We could have carried on after that, Mr. Speaker, and got it into the Constitution eventually, shared jurisdiction and shared responsibility in the Constitution. And, you know, it is kind of ironic, I think, that while this Premier sloughs off the importance of the fishery to this Province, the industry is falling down around us and the Province is coming unglued. All you have to

do is listen to the newscasts every day and read the newspapers to see what is happening in communities all around this Province, with their demonstrations and their action plans to try to save the fishery and their communities. Yet, it has been very, very difficult to convince this Government of the problems in the fishery. Of course, their plan is to downsize.

How will Newfoundland and Labrador fare under the Premier's proposed constitution, Mr. Speaker? That is another very, very important question that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are going to have to come to grips with. How will they fare under his proposed constitution and his reformed Senate? Well, we do not like to refer back to the 1930s because those were not good times, but I would suggest that perhaps we will fare just as well under his proposed constitution as we would have fared then, if, back in 1933, we had obtained appointment of six representatives in the House of Lords in Britain. That is about what the Premier's proposed reformed Senate would mean to us.

MR. BAKER:
(Inaudible).

MR. MATTHEWS:

Yes, it is, because in the real politics of the Commons, the Senate, the Reconciliation Committee and the Executive Regional Alliance will be a necessary legislative strategy. And maybe, the Premier going to the last Maritime Premier's Conference had something to do with it.

Logically, for Newfoundland and Labrador, we will find it in our interest to associate more with

the Maritime Provinces. The country is going to move, under the Premier's concept, towards the Trudeau-vision of a federal community of five regions, Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, the Prairies and the Atlantic. And you know where we will be in that, at the fringe of the Atlantic region and at the fringe of the country. That is the destiny that Clyde Wells, the Premier of this Province, has set for our Province. Because, getting back to the resolution, he has no confidence in the ability of our people to manage ourselves and to manage our resources. He has no confidence whatsoever in the people of this Province.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is terrible.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Yes, it is terrible. I agree it is terrible that this Premier by a fluke, 47 per cent of the electorate as opposed to 48-point-something, became Premier.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has elapsed.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Yet, in concluding, Mr. Speaker, he hangs his hat on a reformed Senate to cure the economic woes of this Province. I say to hon. Members, you can go on supporting him, but I will tell you something: You will be supporting a loser in the end - supporting a loser in the end.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Eagle River.

MR. DUMARESQUE:

Monsieur Le Président, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for this opportunity. I am very proud again today to rise in this hon. House and speak to this particular issue and support the Government's position.

I want to support the Government's position for several reasons: I want to support the Government's position because I am a native Labradorian, because I am a Member of the Metis Association of Labrador, and because I am very concerned about minority rights that will be eroded by the institution of the present Meech Lake Accord, and I will elaborate on that in the next little while.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to rise here and enunciate those views because I am a Liberal. I want to be here to support this Government's position because I believe in the pluralist view of society. I believe that there have to be checks and balances in our system to make sure that one part of our country does not do something to the detriment of the other part of the country. I believe, as I said, in pluralism not extremism. I believe in highlighting the principles as enunciated by Mackenzie King in moderation and toleration, not obstinateness, Mr. Speaker, not coming in and saying this is the way or no way. We are saying that we have to acknowledge the pros and cons of a lot of the different aspects of this Accord, and I am proud that our Premier has been able to that.

Another reason, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to rise today and debate this issue is because I am a Member of this Government. Since 1949, we have never had an

opportunity, although we have put forward some fine Newfoundlanders, we have never had an opportunity to help out in nation building. We have never had an opportunity to be able to, as the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and as the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, to dictate, to be able to try and assist in the building of this great nation, Canada. Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a Premier who is recognized from coast to coast as a nation builder - as a nation builder, Mr. Speaker.

We have never had the opportunity and we will never have it again, where we will be in such a position. It is a watershed occasion for our Premier to be recognized as one of the further fathers of a great Confederation.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to, of course, apart from the reasons I just enunciated, touch on some of the aspects of the Meech Lake Accord and enunciate why this Government has taken the right position. I want to touch on the topic of Federalism, Mr. Speaker. The structure that we now have in place in this country, I believe has fostered regional disparity. The structure that we have had in place in this country since 1867, I believe as far as Newfoundland and Labrador is concerned, has failed us. The structure that is in place has been catering for too long to the political representation in the House of Commons. We know what the mathematics are, we know what the numbers are, we know what the political implications of these numbers are.

With our regions of the country, in the Atlantic and in the West, what we have now are our regions in very bad shape when it comes to

average income for individuals, or the rate of growth, or the prospects of prosperity. What we have is an expression of the institution of the political reality in the House of Commons. Mr. Speaker, what we have is a critical time. It is a critical time in our history to take advantage of reforming the Senate. The Senate is the only opportunity we have right now in our Confederation to have an effect upon our social and economic well-being in different regions of the country, a Senate that is elected, equal and effective.

The timing, of course, Mr. Speaker, is critical. We have had instituted in this country, much to our chagrin and certainly much to our displeasure, a Free Trade Agreement that has accentuated the north/south relationship and, again, a giveaway to the corridors of the triangle of Central Canada.

If we do not do something to counter that particular power and that influence, that economic channel, that economic pipeline, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to have our people leave and go to that part of the country when they should never, never have to. Again, it is imperative that the Senate be elected, be equal, and be effective.

There is one more thing I want to talk about, Mr. Speaker, and that is the distinct society. We have heard different versions of what the distinct society means and exactly what power it has in the Meech Lake Accord. The institution of the distinct society clause in the main part of the Meech Lake Accord, and therefore put into our Constitution, it is no

understatement that if that is allowed to persist, that combined with the notwithstanding clause that presently exists in the Constitution, will surely make way and make haste to the exit of Quebec from this nation, and we will not stand to have that happen. The Liberal Party wants Quebec in this country.

We are not going to allow that the Legislature of Quebec will be different than the Legislature of Newfoundland and Labrador. We will not allow the power to accompany that Legislature that will be able to undermine the rights of the Anglophones in Quebec, and neither will it be allowed to undermine the rights of women and native people in Quebec or any part of this country.

Now, maybe you are saying that I am talking in generalities, but I want to give you a specific example of how this notwithstanding clause and how the power of the distinct society can impact upon our daily lives. I grew up in the Labrador Straits. I grew up two miles from the Quebec North Shore and the province of Quebec. I grew up there, and my father grew up there, when Quebec was another country. I grew up there when the Rangers of Newfoundland and Labrador manned that border and we would not be allowed to go over that border with a sack of flour unless we paid our tariffs. That is what we grew up with. And I can tell hon. members that as a result of that notwithstanding clause and the institution of Bill 101, and other laws on language, right now on the Quebec North Shore they want to join Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DUMARESQUE:

Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because that language law that was put in place took the dignity from every English-speaking person on the Quebec North Shore. It told their kids that they had to go to a French school and told them they had to fill out their tax forms in French, and they could apply for a job only if they had a card which said, 'I am bilingual.' Well, my friends, that is not the way to treat the minorities in this country, to say you have to have something like that or you get no work.

We cannot put up with that kind of special treatment, Mr. Speaker. I am sure if they did any reading as far as the academic understanding of this particular agreement is concerned, they will see that this distinct society is definitely moving in that direction.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not have something to say about the feelings and aspirations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as it applies to this particular Accord.

I must say, after spending six months in this Legislature, I observed, I think as well as anybody, the deliberations of the Official Opposition and the positions that have been articulated by the Official Opposition as alternatives for our people, and alternatives to the Meech Lake Accord.

After our Premier articulated those concerns, the first statement issued by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, was, 'There is no fish in Meech Lake.' What a condemnation of the

intelligence of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians! What a shallow, ill-conceived, intellectually corrupt statement to make through this Legislature to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, 'No fish in Meech Lake!'

I say to the hon. the Leader of the Opposition and to the Opposition over there, never, never underestimate the intelligence, the courage and the conviction of the average Newfoundlander! Never put yourselves above the intelligence of the average Newfoundlander!

Mr. Speaker, it is timely again today to say that we do have some evidence of how Newfoundlanders and Labradorians feel about the Meech Lake Accord. That is why I am proud to be able to present this poll to this hon. House and our Members, to see the independence shown in this study, that 63 per cent -

AN HON. MEMBER:
What? 63?

MR. DUMARESQUE:
- 63 per cent, Mr. Speaker, support the Premier on this particular issue. Forty-seven per cent, Mr. Speaker, have adamantly indicated, 'We do not like the Accord.' When asked, 'Do you like the Accord?' All of 16 per cent said, 'Yes, we like the Accord.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DUMARESQUE:
I do not know how many of the twenty Members over there were polled, but I am sure it was a factor. That 16 per cent was there, real and alive.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I was not polled.

MR. DUMARESQUE:
Well, for sure, you are in there.

I will certainly present this to the hon. House. I would like to table it, Mr. Speaker.

Now, some of the other speakers who have been up earlier have been saying, 'What is this Premier doing? What ever does he hope to obtain from his dreams and his aspirations for Newfoundland and Labrador? An equal, effective and elected Senate. How foolish can you get?' That is what people opposite are saying. How bad can you get, Mr. Speaker? They say the Premier is pipe dreaming. I say to the hon. House and to the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues that when Czechoslovakia and Hungary and West/East Germany were making dreams for democracy, it was no pipe dream, today it is a reality.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DUMARESQUE:
There is nothing wrong in the Eastern Block countries dreaming for democracy, no more than there is for Newfoundland and Labrador and the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador to dream about this Province taking its meaningful place in this Confederation.

However, Mr. Speaker, it was the Liberal Party of the country and the Liberal Party of the day which did turn its back on the dream for world peace, as Mr. Pearson certainly went forward to and obtained a degree to, and then Prime Minister Trudeau accentuated that with his initiative. It was the Liberal Party that did that.

It was the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker, who brought in medicare, the envy of the world when it comes to taking care of our citizens health services. These were not pipe dreams, Mr. Speaker, they were aspirations that were followed with conviction and courage, the same way as this Premier is going after a rightful place for this Province.

I have no doubt in my mind that it will be the Liberal Party of this Province which will again bring this country together and again make this Province proud; it will be this Premier, Mr. Speaker, who captured the imagination of the country. He will be a very important cog in the wheel that turns this nation. There is no doubt about that in anybody's mind. It is Premier Clyde Wells who is being told by people all across this country - 'we are not going to let him go - 'We want you to be our Prime Minister.' That is what they are saying.

There is absolutely no doubt, Mr. Speaker, no doubt in any body's understanding mind about where this Premier has taken us in such a short while, and there will never be any doubt, I am confident, of where we are going to go.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I must say with all due respect to the hon. the Leader of the Opposition on this issue, not unlike what Senator Lloyd Benson said to Dan Quayle, 'Son, you are no Clyde Wells.'

Monsieur le Président, et tout le monde, merci beaucoup. (Mr. Speaker, and everybody, thank you very much).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Green Bay.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is a hard act to follow.

MR. HEWLETT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it may be a hard act to follow in terms of the rhetoric and style, but, Mr. Speaker, a lot of what was said I do not think has much to do with Meech Lake.

To the matter at hand, Mr. Speaker, before I make a few brief remarks, I wish to move, seconded by the Member for Humber East, a subamendment to the amendment by adding the following words prior to the resolve part of the resolution. 'WHEREAS the Premier and the Government rejected the notion that Newfoundland and Labrador can advance in increasing the power of the Provincial Government; and WHEREAS the Premier has said' - and this is a quote from Hansard - 'what good is power if you do not have the ability to exercise it.' I wish that added as a subamendment prior to the resolve part of the resolution.

I presume that is in order. Nobody is objecting.

MR. FUREY:

I will have to check the subamendment just to ensure that it is, indeed, in order. Could we have it tabled so that we could look at it to see if it is in order?

MR. SPEAKER:

We will take a short recess.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

His Honour has ruled that the subamendment is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Green Bay.

MR. HEWLETT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that has sort of been very prevalent with regard to the Meech Lake debate, and I agree with some of my colleagues that not everybody understands it, they have opinions on it based on perceptions of the issue created by the hon. Premier, and we have a very good example here this afternoon. The hon. the Premier stood in this House and he read a quote from a Canadian Law, Bill C-3, and he quoted section 2 of the Bill, about it applying to regional economic development in Ontario and Quebec, and gave the impression that Ottawa is only looking after Ontario and Quebec to the detriment of all the country. Yet, section 1 of the Bill plainly states that this Bill applies to industry and technology in Canada, in other words, it applies to the whole nation. Obviously section 2 is in there probably because Ontario and Quebec may well have Ministries of technology themselves. But the Premier deliberately picked out just one little piece of that Bill to create the wrong impression. He read the facts, he read the truth as written in the Law of the land, but the impression given was totally contrary to the spirit of the Bill as a whole. And that is one thing that has gone on quite

considerably with regard to this Meech Lake affair, that people think they know what it is about based on what they hear, and I do not debate the survey results raised by the hon. gentleman Opposite.

One other point of debate, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman opposite talked about the rights of native peoples and women with regard to the constitutional debate. They are playing catch-up pretty late in the game, Mr. Speaker. Prior to Premier Wells making such a fuss over Meech Lake, most of the objections in nongovernmental circles in Canada with regard to Meech Lake had to do with the rights of aboriginals and women. Now they are trying to piggyback that onto their position. But, again, it is a matter of perception, because the document sent forward by the Premier did not stress that at all. They are trying to make the perception in those particular circles that they are concerned about that, and the hon. gentleman from Labrador just throws it in as an afterthought and tries to give the people of Newfoundland the idea that somehow they have come up with something wonderful.

Mr. Speaker, I have only five minutes. I guess the Meech Lake debate, Mr. Premier, is about what this nation is all about. Our little resolution here today I call the Provincial Rights Resolution, but, Mr. Speaker, it is probably more aptly named the Provincial Pride Resolution. Hon. Members Opposite are good Canadians, but the question is, to what extent are they good Provincials?

Mr. Speaker, my former boss, Brian Peckford, did many things while he

was in office, but the one thing he always points out as being central to his achievements was his so-called revolution between the ears. After joining Confederation, Mr. Speaker, we availed very quickly of a lot of Canadian social programs and our standard of living took an immediate jump. However, when Peckford came to office some thirty years later, our standard of self-esteem, Mr. Speaker, had not taken a commence or a jump at all; the Newfie joke was common at parties and in the work place all over Canada.

MR. DECKER:
Not any more.

MR. HEWLETT:
I agree with the Premier. You can talk about the Sprung Greenhouse or this or that or the other thing, but the one thing he did do, I think, was to change our perception of ourselves, to restore in us our pride of person and pride of place.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DUMARESQUE:
Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this particular Liberal Government has a regressive attitude in these matters. We are falling back into the old Uncle Ottawa syndrome. I did not say Uncle Tom, Mr. Speaker, because that probably implies betrayal and is too strong. But Uncle Ottawa implies dependence. Government by Ottawa, Government by commission, but where is the Government by this Government, Mr. Speaker? Macleans magazine summed it up the other day. Our Premier they described as, 'Premier defends the Trudeau vision.' Then the Government House Leader, my principal when I

was in Elementary School, defied all credibility and stood up and said, 'Pierre Trudeau did not run essentially, a tightly controlled Government.' I do not think anybody in Newfoundland or Canada would agree with that, with all due respect to my former principal. Mr. Trudeau's vision of this country, Mr. Speaker, was that of an unitary state, and the reality of this country is that it is a confederal state. Mr. Trudeau, in his Charter of Rights, tried to change the confederal nature of this country, and with the Charter, to some extent he did. But this country did not grow up like this.

In the mid-1800s, the Americans had the same kind of debate we are having now. They did not settle it peacefully, they had a civil war; the confederal notion versus the unionist notion. The unionists won, so now below us we have the United States of America, not the confederate States of America. Sir John A. Macdonald was trying to put together a country up here, and from everything I have heard about him he would have liked the union too, but he knew there was no way he could sell it, no way on earth he could sell it, so he had to sell a confederation. We were invited to join it twice in the 1800s - we had debates on it - and twice leaders and parties advocating confederating with Canada went down to defeat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. HEWLETT:
Confederations are for reluctant partners, Mr. Speaker, and a confederation is a form of Government that allows us to have our own distinct society clause,

like our denominational school system, allows us our affirmative action programs because of our unemployment rate, allows Quebec to promote its language and culture. That is the essence of a federal state. So a federal state requires a province willing to exercise its rights, eager to exercise its rights. Unfortunately, this particular Government has a tendency to abdicate its rights to the federal level of Government, to commissions, to paid the people.

Mr. Speaker, I have only have a few seconds, but I guess I could sum it all up in a little story that you all learned at your mothers' knees about The Little Engine That Could, Mr. Speaker - the little engine that could. The Premier's locomotive is the little engine that says 'Ottawa can, Ottawa should, Ottawa can, Ottawa should.' But the PC locomotive is like the little engine in the story, 'I think I can, I think I can, I know I can, I know I should!'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, as we expected it would, this debate today was a very interesting debate. We saw today the Premier do what he is really good at doing, and that is quoting something that is factual, as he did in this House again today, but only quoting part. The Premier stood in this House today in defence of his position and took a partial quote from a statute passed by the Commons of Canada, trying to justify the

perception of his position that the Government of Canada through the House of Commons was exercising authority and power at the detriment of the regions of Canada, and he quoted Quebec and Ontario. That is half a truth. That is the problem with this particular Premier. He did not go on to say that this particular statute applied to all of Canada, he did not go on to say that there was this particular exception in for parts of Ontario and Quebec because they had been left out of the old DRIE legislation, he did not go on to say that that had to be corrected in the new legislation. In other words, he tried to continue what he has been doing for weeks and months, and that is hoodwink the people of this Province into believing something different.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the real essence of that hoodwinking came in the amendment that was proposed. The real essence came in that, because in the amendment proposed by the Government, Mr. Speaker, the exposure of the fallacy of the Premier's argument and the Government's argument had to be taken away. It could not be left on the public record. Because it exposes them to the truth, it exposes them to the other side of the argument, therefore, Mr. Speaker, you have to get rid of that, you have to take that out of the resolution altogether, you take that out of the public record. Well, Mr. Speaker, they were too slick by half, because while you can propose an amendment you can also propose a subamendment and the subamendment that we are debating now gives this House an opportunity to make a judgement on whether or not that false perception is important.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take just a moment to compliment the hon. gentleman for Eagle River on his presentation here this afternoon. As a matter of fact, he is one of the speakers I thoroughly enjoy speaking in this House. I like his rhetoric, I like his get-up-and-go, I like his oomph, if you want to call it that. He really puts himself into it, and I enjoy that, Mr. Speaker. He does it well. But let me say to that hon. gentleman, who talks about nation building, let me say to the hon. gentleman who touts his Leader as a nation builder, that this is the same hon. gentleman who, four and a half or five years ago, was going from one end of Labrador to the other promoting Labrador separatism.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Promoting Labrador separatism as the option for Labrador, Mr. Speaker. That is the kind of nation building, that is the kind of binding up of the wounds you get in this Province from people who are supporting this Government. Let me say to that hon. gentleman, and these are my words, that he is not even a Dan Quayle.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, the essence of the Government position when all of the rhetoric is rolled away, when it is all exposed, when all of the untruths and the big lie is torn apart and exposed to the scrutiny of public opinion, the essence of the Government position comes down to this - and this is where the people of this Province have to be

aware - and it is in the subamendment proposed by my colleague. How can Members on the other side not support the subamendment when, Mr. Speaker, the subamendment is the words of their Leader? The subamendment is, 'What good is power if you do not have the ability to exercise it?' - spoken in this House, right from Hansard, on the public record. That is the essence of this subamendment, and that, Mr. Speaker, is the essence of the Government position.

AN HON. MEMBER:
That is out of context.

MR. RIDEOUT:
It is not out of context, it is word for word out of Hansard. That is the essence, Mr. Speaker, of the Government position. We poor Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, bereft as we are of the ability to manage our own affairs, we poor Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who do not have the ability and the intelligence and the fortitude to manage the jurisdiction and the power that we have in this Legislature now, should make a conscious decision because we cannot do it, as the Premier's words point out, we should make a conscious decision to give that authority and that power to another federal institution.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what kind of federal institution are we talking about? We are talking about a house of national impotence. That is the first year political science -

AN HON. MEMBER:
What?

MR. SIMMS:
You heard right.

MR. RIDEOUT:
You heard right.

That is the first-year political science proposal, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of this Province had put forward as our salvation, a house of national impotence, a second House in Ottawa that will be useless. Why is it going to be useless, Mr. Speaker? Why it is going to be useless is found in the pages of the Premier's own document, simply for this reason: The Senate that the Premier talks about is proposed to be set up as a permanent Opposition to the Government of Canada, a permanent Opposition, Mr. Speaker, to the elected House of Commons. That is exactly what the Premier proposes. How is he proposing that, Mr. Speaker? How is he proposing it? He is proposing it by saying that the Senate will be elected on a different time frame than the House of Commons, number one. Secondly he is proposing it by saying that the elected Senators cannot serve in the elected Government of Canada. And he is thirdly proposing it by saying that the Senate that he wants to see created will have to vote and have vetoes along linguistic blocks in Canada. So he is setting up a permanent House of Opposition to the elected majority Government of the day. He is proposing that the majority of the people in this country, i.e. the people of Ontario and Quebec, will only have one institution to look forward to to carry out the majority view of Canada, and that is the House of Commons, and the other institution will, therefore, be forever in Opposition to what is happening in the House of Commons.

Now, how is that going to be broken, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Wrong. Wrong.

MR. SIMMS:
Listen to the argument.

MR. RIDEOUT:
I do not care if hon. gentlemen want to listen or not, Mr. Speaker.

How is it going to be broken? The Premier has gone two-thirds of the way to setting up a republican system of Government in Canada. That is exactly what he has done. He does not have the intestinal fortitude to go the one-third distance that is remaining. All that is remaining, Mr. Speaker, to have a pure republican system of Government in Canada is to remove the executive power of the House of Commons from the House of Commons, and make it a separate institution of Government, as is done in the United States of America. He has not gone that one-third.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker the Premier has proposed for this country a constitutional straitjacket, a constitutional straitjacket he realizes he has created. He realizes he has created it, and what solution does he propose to fix it? He proposes, Mr. Speaker, the setting up of what he calls a deadlock-breaking mechanism, Mr. Speaker, a reconciliation committee. This committee, Mr. Speaker, will consist of twenty people, ten Senators from this elected Senate and ten people from the House of Commons. This is what he is proposing. So, every item, every Bill, every spending authority, every treaty, every item affecting life in Canada, Mr. Speaker, that cannot get through the House of Commons and cannot get through the elected Senate, will have to go to this

reconciliation committee.
Therefore, Mr. Speaker, what that means is simply this: It means that the House of Commons and the Senate become nothing more and nothing less than the whim of twenty people.

Mr. Speaker, if hon. gentlemen opposite have not done so, they should read in detail the Senate Reform Proposal that their Leader presented a few weeks ago at the First Ministers' Conference, and they will see that every word I have said on the reconciliation committee is a fact. It is a fact! The Premier knows that the new Senate he is talking about will be set up forever - forever - in Opposition to the Government of Canada. They will not be allowed to be Members of a Government Caucus, they are not allowed to hold Cabinet responsibilities, they must be elected on different terms, and when a deadlock occurs, there are these twenty magic people, ten Senators and ten people from the House of Commons.

Now, Mr. Speaker, where is Newfoundland? Where is Newfoundland going to get all this new found authority? This little small Newfoundland, all of a sudden, is going to get this new found authority in this new Federal institution, when the essence of running the Government of Canada will reside in the hands of twenty people. Where are the -

MR. BAKER:
Not true.

MR. RIDEOUT:
It is true. It is in the document, Mr. Speaker. The hon. gentleman should go read it. Mr. Speaker, they can quote polls, they can quote what they like, but the other side of the argument

must be made known to the people of this Province. The other side of the argument has to be made known. If not, we will be doomed. From this Legislature to another institution in Ottawa will go power, Mr. Speaker, that we will never again have any chance of controlling. Never again will we have that opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and that is why this particular document is so dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, nobody is against the concept of an elected Senate. If you are going to have a Senate at all in this Country, if it is going to have a function and a role, and I do not think many people would be against the idea of having it elected, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, and what hon. gentlemen do not seem to understand, we will never get to Senate reform in Canada unless we have approval of the Meech Lake Accord. It cannot be done, Mr. Speaker. It cannot be done. It will not happen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, they can roar and they can rant and they can moan and they can groan, but the fact of the matter is, no Government of Canada, no Federal Government of Canada will agree to Senate reform while Quebec is not part of the Constitution. They would not agree to it with Ontario not a part of the Constitution, they will not agree to it with Quebec not part of the Constitution. It cannot happen! It will not happen!

Even Patrick O'Flaherty, that

great Liberal thinker, Mr. Speaker, has admitted that it cannot happen, and that it will not happen. And that, Mr. Speaker, is where it all breaks down. You cannot -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. RIDEOUT:

It will not happen! They can shout and try to shout me down all they like, the truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker is that it will not happen. If you believe that Senate reform is the answer to the problems that this Province has in the Canadian Confederation, the only way you will ever get a step closer to making it reality is having the Meech Lake Accord approved so that Quebec is part of the Constitution and you can get on with the discussion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Laugh all you like, Mr. Speaker. Even Liberals are starting to come to that conclusion, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TOBIN:

This is the first time you heard the truth, because all you get is a pack of lies.

MR. SIMMS:

Read Paddy O'Flaherty, boy, your own buddy.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, it is certainly backupable, a good Fleur de Lys term! It certainly is backupable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, unlike the Premier, we have sought opinion on both sides of this particular issue. The problem with the Premier is that he is his own advisor, and any lawyer will tell you that the worst thing a lawyer can do is become his own advisor. Therefore, this is where the Premier has made a fatal mistake. He has not listened to any advice whatsoever from anybody else. He just discounts that advice because it does not correspond with his own thinking.

MR. SIMMS:

He had his mind made up two years ago.

MR. RIDEOUT:

He had his mind made up two years ago, Mr. Speaker. Then, as I referred to briefly last week in the other debate, you finally must look at what has happened with the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador -

MR. EFFORD:

Yes, look at what happened to the seats.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Tap away, Mr. Speaker!

- a Party that, in this House, in the public record in this House, some Members who are still sitting in this House, the Member for the Strait of Belle Isle, the Member for St. Barbe, the Member for Gander, the Member for Port de Grave and others, sat behind a leader, Mr. Speaker -

MR. SIMMS:

Two leaders.

MR. RIDEOUT:

- two leaders, a full-fledged leader and an interim leader, Mr. Speaker; a full-fledged leader, democratically elected by their Party and an interim leader after the full-fledged leader was given the knife.

MR. SIMMS:

Elected by the caucus.

MR. RIDEOUT:

There was an interim leader elected by the caucus.

They sat behind those two leaders, in the public record, Mr. Speaker, in this House, and pounded their desks and welcomed the arrival on the scene of a document called The Meech Lake Accord. That is exactly what they did, Mr. Speaker, yet, within a month or so later, they had a change of leaders, who told them what to do, and then they can do that 360 degree turn, Mr. Speaker, and try to distance themselves from anything they had done just twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five days before. That, Mr. Speaker, shows the depth of the intellectual affinity of this particular Party with this particular issue. There is no affinity to it, Mr. Speaker. It is only the Premier's affinity. That is all there is to it, flip-flop. The real losers here are the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I have not even asked for the protection of the Chair like the Premier normally does, so they can babble and banter away. But the real people who are going to lose in all of this, Mr. Speaker, are the people of this Province. Because this Province has a Government today that is out of touch with the spirit and the

will of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have a Government that is willing to go back to the 1930s. We have a Government that is willing to accept the mentality that we cannot do it ourselves. We have a Government embodied in the Premier's own words spoken in this House, "What good is power if you do not have the ability to exercise it?" - quote unquote from Hansard - and that, Mr. Speaker, means that the people of this Province can only look forward to others controlling their destiny, others exercising authority that ought to be legitimately exercised in this House. People of this Province, Mr. Speaker, can only live to expect that this Government wants to turn back the hands of the clock, that this Government might even be just as happy, Mr. Speaker, if this Province were to become a territory of Canada like the Northwest Territories or the Yukon, and nothing more. That is what this Premier wants, that is what this Government wants, that is not what we want for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

First of all, the Chair would want to apologize to the Leader of the Opposition for not calling order; the Chair walked in with five minutes left. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would get the feeling it is like walking into a class that is operated by another teacher and is three parts over. The Leader of the Opposition had a high fever pitch going, I thought he was rather enjoying it myself, and I did not call the order. But I apologize.

Is the House ready for the Question?

On motion, the subamendment was defeated.

MR. SPEAKER:
All those in favor of the amendment, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Aye.

MR. SPEAKER:
Those against 'nay'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Nay.

MR. SPEAKER:
In my opinion, the 'ayes' have it.

All those in favour of the motion as amended, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Aye.

MR. SPEAKER:
Those against, 'nay'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Nay.

MR. SPEAKER:
The 'ayes' have it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Division.

MR. SPEAKER:
Division. Call in the Members.

Division

MR. SPEAKER:
All those in favour of the motion as amended, please rise:

The hon. the Premier, the hon. the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Efford), the hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation (Mr. Gilbert), the hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands (Mr. Kelland), Mr. Hogan, Mr. Reid, Mr. Ramsay, 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. Gover, Mr. Penney, Mr. Barrett, Mr. L. Snow, the hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (Mr. Gullage), Mr. Grimes, the hon. the Minister of Finance (Dr. Kitchen), the hon. the Minister of Education (Dr. Warren), the hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy (Dr. Gibbons), Mr. Murphy, Mr. Dumaresque, Mr. Short, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rideout), Mr. Doyle, Ms Verge, Mr. Simms, Mr. R. Aylward, Mr. Matthews, Mr. N. Windsor, Mr. Tobin, Mr. Woodford, Mr. A. Snow, Mr. S. Winsor, Mr. Langdon, Ms Duff, Mr. Parsons, Mr. Warren.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

CLERK (Miss Duff):
Mr. Speaker, the vote is 39 for and none against.

MR. SPEAKER:
I declare the motion as amended, carried.

Hon. Members, we agreed that we would call it five o'clock. I am not even sure we need to call it five o'clock on Wednesday, because the Speaker can adjourn. But we will stop the clock at five o'clock, and we will carry on with a couple of functions. One is the unveiling of the previous Speaker's portrait, and we have

asked the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition - I should ask a question. The request was put to me, and I forgot to ask, whether or not we would permit cameras here for still pictures. We resolved that, did we?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

Fine. All right.

The custom is that we unveil the portrait of the Speaker. As you can see, these are all Speakers around here, and we are about to unveil the latest one. I have asked the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition if they would unveil the portrait. We will ask the Premier to come to the front where the picture is and the Leader of the Opposition, and the former Speaker, Dr. McNicholas, and his wife.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

All set?

MR. SPEAKER:

All set.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Applause!

MR. SPEAKER:

Members can be seated, and we will ask the Premier to have a few words.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

As I just said to Dr. McNicholas, it is the first time I have had an

opportunity to participate in the 'hanging of a Speaker'. The term was used very lightly in that vein last week, when we discussed the matter in the House, Dr. McNicholas, but those of us who sat in the House, some of us for a very brief period, including myself, while you were Speaker, frankly enjoyed the opportunity and we are pleased with the manner in which you conducted and supervised the affairs of the House.

I am sure I speak for all hon. Members on this side of the House who sat, while you sat in the Chair during the four year period, while you were Speaker. Although there may have been the odd occasion when we thought maybe your ruling might more properly have gone in another direction, nevertheless we appreciated greatly the manner in which you presided over the Chamber, the decorum you maintained and the contribution you made to the history and record of the Legislature. On behalf of everybody on this side of the House I express to you the appreciation of all of us, and also I take the liberty of joining with the Leader of the Opposition and say to you, that collectively I am confident we can speak for all of the people of the Province when we say to you we appreciate the contribution you made, to the Legislature during your term of office, and in particular during your term as Speaker. We will look up fondly with memories from time to time, as we look up and see your portrait on the wall.

Thank you very much for coming. And to Mrs McNicholas we say we are very pleased to see you here, and we are glad you could join Dr. McNicholas for this afternoon.

Thank you again, and sincere congratulations to you, Dr McNicholas.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very historic occasion in this particular Legislature. I do not know of any other time in recent history, certainly over the last fifteen years or so, that we have, as a Legislature, publicly gathered in this fashion to unveil the portrait of the former Speaker. It has always been done, obviously, as we can see from the walls of the Chamber, but I believe it has perhaps always been done in a private session, or at a time when the Legislature itself was not in session.

This is an historic occasion, and obviously all of us are delighted to have Dr. McNicholas and Mrs. McNicholas present here this evening.

You occupy a very special place, Sir, in this Legislature. You were chosen by your peers to be the Presiding Officer of the people's Assembly in this Province. As you see, there have been only eight or nine since Confederation who have occupied that particular office. There have been hundreds of Ministers, but the Speaker holds a very special place in this Legislature so we want to take the opportunity, along with the Premier and all Members of the House, to offer our

congratulations, and to thank you for the fine job you did in presiding over this Legislature during your four or four and a half years as Speaker, and for, on one particular occasion, serenading us with your Irish ballad, 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling.' I do not know if that has ever been done in this Legislature before.

MR. SIMMS:
Unparliamentary.

MR. RIDEOUT:
It might have been unparliamentary, so a former Speaker tells me, but certainly Your Honour made a great contribution to this House in many respects, not the least of which was to sing for us on one particular occasion.

We are delighted you could join us for this special function this evening, and all of us, and all the people of the Province I am sure, join with us in wishing you and Mrs McNicholas every success and much happiness in whatever your endeavors might be in the future.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Come here for the last time. Speak here for the last time.

DR. MCNICHOLAS:
Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, this is indeed a great honour for me, and a great pleasure for my wife and myself to be asked to come on the floor of the Chamber and to participate in the ceremony today. It certainly moves me very

much. During the time I was Speaker here, I think there were quite a number of occasions when members did feel like hanging me, and not just hanging me like I am up there. I am not at all sure which side of the House wanted to hang me most. That was sometimes very much of a toss-up, and I will leave it at that.

I do remember on a number of occasions asking the present Speaker to take over the Chair while I was here, and I could see from the way he was conducting it that he was going to make a great job as a successor.

I will not take up any more of your time. I am leaving with a lot of regrets. I am not at all sure that I would like to sit in Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. MCNICHOLAS:

But be that as it may, I just want to say thank you. I really appreciate this today. It is a memory that will always live with me. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Applause.

MR. SPEAKER:

Now, I remind hon. Members and those in the galleries that there are refreshments after our meeting has finished. Hon. Members may take their places. We are now going right into a CPA meeting. It will not take very long. Hon. Members have been briefed on what the CPA is all about, and we are going to move right into the CPA meeting now.

One of the things I have told hon. Members about the offices of the CPA is the Presiding Officers of the Legislative Chamber are normally the Speaker and the Leaders of both parties, in this case, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, and the Clerk of the House is normally the Secretary.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, would you mind if I just ask Your Honour's indulgence. Maybe we could have the CPA meeting inside. I do not mind having it here, I just do not know whether there is anything wrong with having it. The mace is on the Table, the House is in session.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oh, I am sorry. We can close the House.

PREMIER WELLS:

Yes, I think we ought to close the House and have the meeting here or inside.

MR. SPEAKER:

I will close the House and we will go right into it.

MR. BAKER:

And we will still have it here.

MR. SPEAKER:

Yes, we will still have it here. It would be uncomfortable inside, very uncomfortable.

Order, please!

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