



Province of Newfoundland

FORTY - FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND

Volume XLI

Second Session

Number 16 / 15

VERBATIM REPORT
(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Monday

[Preliminary Transcript]

2 April 1990

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):

Order, please!

Before moving on to the routine business of the day I would like to advise hon. members that this is the first day of the live broadcast of the proceedings of the House, and at the appropriate time I will table the guidelines for the media.

Before getting into our business we would like, on behalf of hon. Members, to welcome to the public galleries today twenty-three Grade X and Grade XI students from Holy Heart of Mary School here in St. John's, accompanied by their teacher Mr. John Fitzgerald.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Statements by Ministers.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before we move Statements by Ministers, I would like to have the House mark the Forty-First Anniversary of the entry of Newfoundland and Labrador into Confederation as the 10th Province of Canada. Obviously, the Anniversary date itself was on a day when the House was not in Session, but I do not think it should pass by on the first occasion thereafter without all of us here marking the occasion. I know we are all proud to be

Canadians at this particular time. When there is a lot of strain on the Canadian family, it is perhaps a fitting time for us to be ever so cognizant of the benefits and privileges we have in this country. I believe all hon. Members would want to appropriately mark the Forty-First Anniversary of the newest Province of Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, I agree it is appropriate. Unfortunately, on the day when it occurred, on March 31, it was a day when the House was not sitting. We are in the middle of a debate now that is debating, in fact, the future structure of this country and what its constitutional structure will be like, and how, if at all, it will be changed from what it is at the moment. This is an appropriate time for all of us in this Province to recognize that I believe we are, first and foremost, Canadians. That does not make any of us any the less proud of our Newfoundland and Labrador heritage, but we are citizens of this great country first and foremost and I suggest that in all of our discussions and debates, particularly on the Meech Lake Accord that is before the House now, we ought to bear that principle in mind and ought to ensure that we put in place constitutional changes that will reflect that for all Canadians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I understand from public statements that the Government has had a confidential copy of the Harris Report now for, I believe, a week or so. In view of the fact that the Report was released and made public on Friday and, therefore, is in fact now a public document, I cannot conceive of any reason why the Government would not now be prepared to comment publicly on the recommendations of the Harris Report.

Mr. Speaker, would the Premier tell the House whether or not the Provincial Government has communicated formally to the Government of Canada its official response to the Harris Report recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the Report was only made public on Friday. There has been no meeting of the Cabinet since the publication of the Report. We will, within the next few days, be making clear - and we may not wait until the next Cabinet meeting, because we have had the Report for a while as hon.

Members know. I think we have had it for five or six days now, so we know very well basically where we are.

We have communicated to the Newfoundland representative in the Federal Cabinet the views of this Province. We will be making a formal public statement. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we had meetings concerning the matter this morning, and had discussions with fisheries officials and with others. We will be reviewing the Report with others in this Province as well as Government officials. I have asked for an immediate, fairly quick response from others who are interested so that the Government can consider other points of view before we take a formal public position. Hopefully, that will be able to be done within the next few days.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Government had an advanced copy of the Report, I am surprised that they would not have been ready to respond immediately. But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier could tell the House whether or not the Province will be demanding - I would have said have demanded, but the Province has not responded yet in the formal way to the Federal Government, as I understand it, but whether the Province will be demanding of the Federal Government, to use the words of the Harris Report itself, that it strongly recommends an immediate reduction in the fishing mortality of northern cod to a

level of at least 0.30, in other words, an immediate TAC of 178,000 tons and then moving at the earliest possibility to a level of 0.20, in other words to a TAC of 125,000 tons. Will the Government be demanding that the Federal Government move to implementing that recommendation immediately as it is being called upon to do by the Harris Report?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the Report having been available to the Government for the last five or six days, we could take a look at it. What we could not do is discuss it with other fishing interests in the Province, because we had no ability to make it public. It would have been a breach of the trust under which it was given to us, so that we have not had an opportunity until just starting over the weekend and today to address the concerns of other sectors and other people involved in this Province. Before we state the final position of Government, we intend to come to a conclusion as to what will be the most likely consequences of accepting what Dr. Harris recommended totall, or should it be staged on a more moderate basis or exactly what the position should be. We expect that we will be in a position to do that within the next few days, and I cannot, Mr. Speaker, do it on a piecemeal basis in response to questions by the Leader of the Opposition today.

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech and the Budget Speech the Government had delivered to the House over the last month or so, the Government informed the House and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that they were pressing ahead in an effort to forge a joint Federal Provincial agreement to respond to the present fisheries crisis. I wonder if the Premier could tell the House whether or not such an agreement has been approved in principle, whether or not an agreement has been initialed, or when we might expect some joint announcement from the Federal and Provincial Governments now that the Harris Report is out on an appropriate response package for the present crisis in the fishery.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

No, Mr. Speaker, no agreement has been initialed. An agreement has been drafted and put forward by the Province. We have put forward detailed proposals as to the manner in which we would expect the response should take place. As a matter of fact there was, I should say, a kind of agreement -- I cannot say there was an agreement in principle with the Federal Government. There was a substantial level of agreement, at least with one of the Ministers and with the Federal Task Force, as to the direction in which it ought to go. The Province and the Provincial Task Force developed a memorandum of understanding and for a period of time negotiated with the Federal Government and put this forward, and we have put

forward a pretty detailed plan of how the response should be. But I believe it was about three or four weeks ago, all of a sudden the Federal Government stopped working with the Province on it and, I have to say, there has been no substantial level of work with the Province in the last three to four weeks on that agreement, perhaps even a little bit longer on that; no substantial level of work since Mr. Valcourt became the Minister, but I do not want to be unfair to Mr. Valcourt.

I would say that is accurate, that there has been no substantial level of work since Mr. Valcourt became the Minister, but, in fact, I believe the change had really have started prior. So to be fair to Mr. Valcourt I would say the change of attitude of the Federal Government, in terms of working with the Province to achieve this kind of joint response to deal with the fisheries, the kind of three pronged attack that I have already outlined here in the House of Assembly and on other occasions publicly in this Province, so that up until about four weeks or so ago it seemed like the Federal Government was enthusiastic about the approach, then they seemed to have changed and the impression that we have today is that the Federal Government wants to go in its own direction. Maybe they have been recognizing that the Province has taken the lead and has shown the lead in the manner in which the response should be taken. Largely these proposals have all originated with the Province. It may be that the Federal Government is concerned about political credit or something, I do not know, but, in any event, over the last four weeks or so they seem to have walked away from it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We will have more to say on the Premier's last remarks over the next few days, and in due course. In view of the disturbing revelation the Premier has made to the House, that in fact for the last three or four weeks or maybe even longer there has not been any progress nor any communication made in developing a joint initiative with the Federal Government -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Discussions.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Well, the Premier said there has not been any discussions.

PREMIER WELLS:

No progress. It is not right to say no communication, no progress.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Okay, no progress. Well, I will be bound by the Premier's words, Mr. Speaker, 'no progress.' In light of that disturbing revelation, can the Premier tell the House whether or not he has personally tried to ensure that progress would be made and that it would get back on an even rail by calling the Prime Minister, for example, as he did on the refugee problem just last week? Has the Premier personally tried to get himself and the Prime Minister involved in making sure that this substantial crisis facing this Province is addressed appropriately by both levels of Government?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

The answer to that is yes, Mr. Speaker. The first time was a meeting with Monsieur Valcourt directly, when I had about a two hour discussion with him -

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible).

PREMIER WELLS:

Just hold on! If the Opposition House Leader will just hold his horses, I will answer the question so that it will be full and accurate, rather than just the little bit he may want.

MR. WARREN:

Because you say so.

PREMIER WELLS:

That is right. Because I say so, and because I have accurate knowledge of what I did.

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible) to the Prime Minister, that was the question.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, the first detailed discussion I had of this was about four weeks or so ago within a couple of days of Mr. Valcourt's appointment, when I sat down with him for at least two hours I would think, or very close to two hours, and we had a detailed discussion. I talked to him about the manner in which the Province would prefer to see it develop. I told him of some concerns I have, that the Federal Government stalled the thing last fall, to the point where the Province had to put up money to extend the notice period when the Federal Government failed to do it. And I did not want us to be in this position again, so I would like for the Federal

Government to respond positively as quickly as possible.

Nothing very much has happened. It was a major matter with the Atlantic Premiers when we met in Corner Brook. I presented a detailed paper to them and spelled out the position and the concern we have with the failure of the Federal Government to properly respond. A communique was issued out of that conference and I wrote the Federal Government again in the last few days sending that communique and asking for a meeting with the Federal Government and the Provincial Premiers affected by this before any definitive position was taken by the Federal Government. Now that has just gone out in the last couple of days, so I cannot expect a response to that just yet.

On Thursday, I guess, of last week I spoke to the Prime Minister and I wrote the Prime Minister. I told him about our concerns about lack of development in the fishery, and I told him about certain apprehensions we had. I was addressing the question as well of the refugees, both the refugees and the fisheries matter, and I expressed some apprehension that I had about the attitude of the Federal Government. He assured me there was no basis for any concern about the attitude of the Federal Government, but that he would explore the matter fully and get back to me. Up to this point in time I have not yet heard back from the Prime Minister, but I expect I will shortly. If he does not, I will call him again.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Fisheries. Last week I questioned the Minister on the \$2.1 million reduction in the Department of Fisheries Budget, and in giving an explanation for the reductions the Minister listed three reasons: one was the conclusion of a Northern cod study, a \$200,000 payment to the trustees of the Rose Ting Group of Companies, and \$300,000 not needed now because of the middle distance efforts being reduced.

On scrutinizing the Budget, one can see on Page 121, Subhead 3.1.06, that this year there is \$53,000 more being spent on the middle-distance effort.

I would like to refer the Minister to Pages 120 and 121, Industry Support Services, 3.1.04, Aquaculture, where we see a reduction of \$48,700; Subhead 3.1.07, Fishing Vessels, reduced from \$2 million to \$600,000, a reduction of \$1.4 million; and Subhead 3.1.08, Inshore Fishery Support, where there was \$300,000 budgeted last year and no money this year. I ask the Minister what impact will these severe reductions have on the fishing industry and, in particular, on the fishermen throughout our Province?

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Hear, hear! A good question.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I am going to have to take that question as notice. I am sure the hon. Member would not expect me to be carrying in my

head explanations for the various aspects of our Estimates. I can only tell him that I think the Estimates Committee is meeting on Friday night and then, I am sure, he will have ample opportunity to ask me questions on the Budget and I will have ample opportunity to respond to the questions.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) Friday night, is it?

MR. W. CARTER:

Wednesday, I think, is it not? Wednesday night.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just one comment to the Minister. He very readily had at his fingertips last week the three reasons as to why the \$2.1 million reduction occurred in the Budget. But, of course, upon scrutinizing the Budget, I found that the major items of reduction were not even mentioned by the Minister.

I would like to refer the Minister to Page 124 of the Budget Estimates, Subhead 4.1.03, Special Fisheries Emergency Response. For this year, we see a paltry \$80,000 budgeted for that program, and when we look at the current crisis in our fishery, where we will see reduced landings and, consequently, reduced earnings, how can the Minister justify eviscerating this very important Fisheries Response program for fishermen of the Province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, again, I think the

hon. Member will have to contain himself until the Estimates come before the House on Wednesday night. I will be very happy then to provide answers to all of these questions.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to say to the Minister before posing my final supplementary, that I hope he is faster coming with answers to these questions than he was with tabling the conditions attached to the funding to Fishery Products International, for which I asked the second day the House opened this year. I have not seen the answer yet, which tells me there are no conditions.

Mr. Speaker, Page 126, Subhead 5.1.04, Fishing Boat Bounties. Last year, in the Budget, there was \$3.6 million allocated under that program; this year it has been reduced to \$3 million, a reduction of \$600,000. Now, certainly, the Minister can provide an answer as to the effect and the impact this dramatic decrease will have on fishermen throughout the Province. What effect will that \$600,000 reduction, under Fishing Boat Bounties, have on the Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, again, I shall provide the hon. Member with the answers when our Estimates come before the Committee on Wednesday night.

MR. GREENING:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. GREENING:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture. At a meeting held last night in Lethbridge between your officials and the commercial sawmillers from Unit 2, which come under the jurisdiction of Unit 2, the sawmillers were notified that their licence had expired on March 31. Would the Minister tell this hon. House if a sawmiller was caught cutting or selling pulpwood or lumber, would he be charged and prosecuted or would the Minister implement some temporary licence for these sawmillers?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member is basically right. The commercial sawmillers, commercial licence holders in the Province will not be prosecuted. They are looking at the licence being issued on April 15 as opposed to April 1, as it always was. As far as domestic cutters are concerned, we are in the process now of getting ready to issue the licences to domestic sawmillers. If the licenced sawmiller, be he domestic or commercial, is harvesting without a permit and the reason he does not have that permit is because of actions by the Department of Forestry, he will not be prosecuted.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. GREENING:

Mr. Speaker, the understanding given sawmillers is due to the fact there is no federal/provincial agreement as it pertains to clear-cutting and silviculture and the cost of the silviculture, the clear-cutting would have to be passed on to the sawmillers, they would be forced to do their own clear-cutting. Would the Minister tell this hon. House if he would give the sawmillers a chance to have an input into the cost if they must clear-cut while using their commercial sawmill licence?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, clear-cutting is a matter that is decided by the Department's officials in conjunction with the sawmillers. In some areas of the Province we clear-cut and in some we do not. In some areas it is right to clear-cut and in some areas it is not advisable to clear-cut, where you have mature timber dispersed with young growing stands. Any time my officials or the Department makes a decision that clear-cutting will take place in a certain area, it is normally after conversations with the sawmillers.

Mr. Speaker, the Member made reference to the Forestry Federal/Provincial Agreement. the Forestry Federal/Provincial would have nothing to do with whether or not an area will be clear-cut or not clear-cut, that is a decision made by the officials, normally in conjunction with the users of the resource.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. GREENING:

It was explained last night that due to the cost of clear-cutting the Department would force the sawmillers to clear-cut, which is going to be a heavier burden on the commercial sawmillers. Due to the fact that it depends on the area they are cutting in, would the hon. Minister agree to meet with the commercial sawmillers of Unit 2?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, I have no problem in meeting with the sawmillers of Unit 2. I will also check with my officials to see whether or not instructions have been issued in certain areas of Unit 2 that require clear-cutting and the reasons for that. If the decision is right and proper with regard to good forest management, then I guess it will have to stay that way. If it is creating a difficulty for the Member's constituents or the sawmillers in the area, then I will certainly look at their concerns and discuss those concerns with my officials.

MS DUFF:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MS DUFF:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to direct this question to the hon. the Minister of Education. I understand the Minister represented the Government House Leader last week in the capacity of the Minister responsible for the Status of

Women in a meeting with the Hon. Gerry Weiner. Was the Minister authorized to give Mr. Weiner any indication that the Provincial Government might be prepared to cost-share, or to enter into a cost-sharing arrangements with the Department of Secretary of State in the event that the Department of Secretary of State were prepared to reconsider the 100 per cent funding cuts for the women's centers?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, yes, I did represent my colleague last week at a meeting with Mr. Weiner. I was accompanied by two officials from the Women's Policy Office, and Mr. Weiner was accompanied by his officials and Mr. Ross Reid.

I did convey to the Minister our concerns about this issue. I conveyed the substance of the resolution passed unanimously in this House. We did consider a variety of options, but I think it would not be appropriate for me, at this point in time, to indicate to the House what these options were. I have reported briefly to my colleague, and I intend to further brief him on the nature of these discussions this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MS DUFF:

I am sure the Minister is aware that even as late as this morning there were a number of women - I think thirty women - actually arrested because of their continued sit-in, and that certainly has to be taken as an indication of the depths of

frustration and the depth of feeling of the Women's Movement about that issue.

In the course of conversation with the Secretary of State, did the Minister urge Mr. Weiner to directly respond to the Leaders of the Women's Movement by getting in touch with them personally on this issue?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

DR. WARREN:

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that we reflected the deep feelings of the women involved and the Province generally on this issue and indicated that the women did want to meet with him directly, and my meeting was no substitute for that meeting. We did indicate that to the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MS DUFF:

I would like to ask the Minister if Ottawa in spite of all urgings fails to make a timely and reasonable response on this issue, what is the Provincial Government's bottom line? Is the Provincial Government prepared to let the women centers die, or do you have an alternate strategy, either jointly with Ottawa or unilaterally, to ensure that the Centers will remain open?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I should like to inform the hon. Member that we have not given up in our quest to have the basic funding done by the Federal Government. The meeting in Ottawa, on Friday, was stage one of that particular process. There is further communication today along the lines of insisting that the Federal Government do something in terms of something more than they have now agreed to do, in terms of providing the basic funding to keep the women's centers open.

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance.

Last week we exposed the Minister of Finance's attempt to hide \$2.5 million of increases in the price of alcoholic beverages and mislead the people of this Province into thinking that there was no increase to be applied to liquor, wine and spirits.

Today the Liquor Corporation has announced, in fact, that effective today there is an increase of from 50 cents to 80 cents per bottle. I predicted last week that at least 20 cents of that is because of the \$2.5 million the Minister of Finance is taking from the Liquor Corporation in his Budget.

Will the Minister now confirm that that is indeed the case? What is the breakdown? How much is being applied for increases from suppliers? Is it indeed, in fact, 20 cents on each bottle because of

the \$2.5 million the Minister takes in his Budget?

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, the Member is making a mountain out of a mole hill.

As I indicated the week before last, in Hansard, the distillers have put up their prices and this will result in an increase.

I would like to go back a little bit and tell you precisely what happened, because you indicated the only way Government has of getting money from the Liquor Corporation is for them to raise their prices. That is not true.

The Liquor Corporation has substantial retained earnings. This year they are proposing to make a profit of \$78 million. How are we going to get \$81.5 out of \$78 million? Because they are going to take \$2.5 million from their retained earnings. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the suppliers to the Liquor Corporation are raising their prices. Spirits are due to go up because of increases from suppliers, and the Liquor Corporation tacked on fifteen cents, I think it was - fifteen cents on the fifty was their tacking on. They did that on their own. This is what they do normally.

In addition to that -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

DR. KITCHEN:

In addition to that, the prices of wines are altering; some wines are going up and some are going down, and the Liquor Corporation decided that they would assess wines by ten cents.

AN HON. MEMBER:

So you are (inaudible).

DR. KITCHEN:

Not a fixed percentage at all. What I would say, though, some of the wines are going down by as much as ninety cents a bottle. So anyone who wants to avoid the tax, merely switch your brand.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Before I recognize the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl I want to advise hon. Members that it has been brought to my attention by the audio people that many Members are speaking low and they cannot hear them. I would advise hon. Members and Ministers to speak loudly so that they can be picked up by the Hansard system.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know who the Minister thinks he is fooling. The Liquor Corporation, if they have \$80 million profit, then my next question is why is the Liquor Corporation making profit over and above the amount the Minister of Finance demands they return to the Provincial Treasury each year? Now, that is not a profit that is reported by the Liquor Corporation, the Minister dictates the amount that the Corporation is to return. Over and above that the Corporation is expected to

operate in a balanced budget basis; they are not in a position of making profits. Profits for whom?

So, Mr. Speaker, the question is: If indeed they are making profits, why are they making profits? And who does the Minister think he is kidding? You know, it is very clear that the price of these beverages is going up.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. gentleman has gone into a supplementary, and I think he has asked a supplementary. I will ask the hon. the Minister of Finance to respond.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, the retained earnings

MR. WINDSOR:

I have not asked it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. gentleman -

MR. WINDSOR:

With due respect, Mr. Speaker, I have not asked the question.

MR. SPEAKER:

I thought I picked up the question. I will ask the hon. gentleman to get to it quickly?

MR. WINDSOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes. Indeed I will. I will ask the hon. Minister then, Mr. Speaker, how much will beer be expected to increase? I had predicted thirteen cents per

dozen. Will the Minister tell us now how much beer is going to increase over and above any suppliers increase that is expected?

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, I wish to correct, first of all, the statement the hon. Member made when he said that the retained earnings were our problem. It was while he was Minister of Finance that the retained earnings built up to \$19 million and the cash balance to \$6 million. So last year we took away some of that retained earnings, and this year we are taking an additional \$2.5 million.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. gentleman is trying to play games with numbers and he does not understand them.

Let me get into another issue, a related issue, Mr. Speaker, of the payroll tax. In the Minister's Budget and I quote, the Minister says, 'The general rate of 1.5 per cent to employer payrolls in excess of \$300,000 each calendar year.' We were led to believe by officials that companies that had payrolls in excess of \$300,000 would pay 1.5 per cent on the amount in excess of \$300,000.

MS DUFF:
The Minister said that.

MR. WINDSOR:
And I believe the Minister, in fact, said that. In recent days, officials are telling employers who are calling his Department that no, if your payroll is over \$300,000 you pay 1.5 per cent on the total payroll.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. WINDSOR:
My question is this, Mr. Speaker, and I realize I am being long. My question is, which is correct? Because if you have a payroll of \$400,000, 1.5 per cent on the extra \$100,000 is \$1,500. But if it is 1.5 per cent on \$400,000, it is \$6,000 — a big difference. Which is true, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
A good question.

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member is always coming up with these strange concoctions: He had a leak from this official. He got a leak from the Federal Government. He is always in the business of leaks, and he manufactures these silly arguments. No official of this Department, of the Department of Finance, ever told a customer or a client that they did not have to subtract the \$300,000.

MR. WINDSOR:
That is not true.

DR. KITCHEN:
And he might as well start telling the House, not manufacturing these imaginary leaks. The correct answer, Mr. Speaker, is that from every payroll \$300,000 is subtracted and the 1.5 per cent,

if it applies to that sector, is on the balance.

MR. WINDSOR:
You better tell your officials that, because they do not know.

MR. SPEAKER:
Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Works, Service and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:
I would like at this time, Mr. Speaker, to present the exceptions to the Public Tendering Act for the month of February.

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a special warrant. This applies to last year and it is for the amount of \$560,000. And also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table some orders in council. The four orders in council, Mr. Speaker, relating to precommitments, some by the Department of Works, Services and Transportation in the amount of \$30 million for roads and \$900,000 for printing for Tourism, and a further \$2 million for Tourism for promotions and something like \$7.7 million for education for text books. These are precommitments, Mr. Speaker, and in addition I would like to table one further order in council having to do with the creation of a new subhead with the Department of Employment and Labour Relations.

Orders of the Day

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 23, to ask leave for an adjournment of the House to discuss a matter of urgent public business. This issue, Mr. Speaker, is the release on Friday past of the independent review of the state of the northern cod stock, commonly referred to as the Harris Report.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I say to Your Honour and to the House that there is no doubt about the importance of the Harris Report for thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Therefore, it is urgent that the Government responses to this report be debated by this House immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I refer you to Beauchesne, the fifth edition section 286 which reads as follows. 'The matter must be so pressing that public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention.' Now, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Harris's first recommendation that the total allowable catch be immediately - not at some time in the future - but immediately reduced from 197,000 tons as it is set for 1990 to 178,000 tons, and that it be further reduced to 125,000 tons as early as possible, surely, Mr. Speaker, points out clearly and more adequately than anyone can say, that in fact the public interest will suffer if this

report is not given immediate attention. Nothing is more pressing than the possible commercial collapse of the northern cod stock. And therefore, with that collapse the collapse of hundreds of communities and the economic survival of thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I refer Your Honour again to Beauchesne the same edition, section 287. That particular section states, 'that the subject be brought on early enough and that public interest demands that the discussion take place immediately.'

Now, Mr. Speaker, since the report was only released on Friday, this is the first opportunity, obviously, that we would have to bring this urgent issue before the people's House. The recommendations of the report, Mr. Speaker, demand immediate discussion.

Mr. Speaker, for further reference I refer Your Honour to Hansard, May 29, 1978. The Speaker at that time said the following: 'It is a matter in which the Speaker's judgement has to be used.' And he went on to say, that 'Obviously I think the matter is urgent and the Chair has to exercise discretion with respect to whether there is a reasonable expectation that the matter would be debated within a reasonable period of time.'

Now, Mr. Speaker, even while the Speaker of the day was making that judgement, the address in reply on the Budget Debate were still on the Order Paper and the Speaker noted in saying that we are dealing with parameters and I have to use my judgement on what hon. Members consider urgent and that shall not be insulated from what

the public appear to thing is urgent and important, and it would appear to me that if Standing Order 23 has any meaning, and I think it does, Mr. Speaker, that it is a matter which falls within this criterion, and the Speaker allowed the motion and allowed the debate to follow. At the present time, as everybody knows in the House and in the Province, at the present time, this House has been forced by Government order, because Government calls the Orders of the Day, to debate the rescinding Resolution on the Meech Lake Accord, and it is perhaps very, very likely that that particular debate will continue at least until the time set aside for the Easter adjournment.

So, Mr. Speaker, there will be no other opportunity immediately available to debate the Harris Report except for, under the provisions of Standing Order 23. Finally, I refer you to Beauchesne's 6th edition, paragraph 390, which says the following: "Urgency" within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means "urgency of debate", and I cannot see how anyone can argue that with the tremendous implications, immediate implications if the report is to be accepted over the next two or three days or before the end of this week, the immediate implications of that report on the people, hundreds of communities, thousands of people in Newfoundland and Labrador. Finally, Mr. Speaker I want to quote the words of Your Honour, yourself, in ruling on a similar situation in Hansard, on November 14, 1989, which was resolved eventually by agreement by both sides of the House, but, at that time, Your Honour indicated that: "Whether debate today would do

something to help the situation", obviously, Mr. Speaker, we think it would, because the Government's response to the Harris Report, and the Government is going to have to respond to it in a very in-depth way over the next few days, but the Government's response to that report would be significantly helped by debate and discussion right now in this particular House. More telling, is Your Honour's other quote: "The key matter is whether the debate should be held today, and in this matter, his honour would have to decide whether or not conditions in the fishery today, are any more dramatically worse than they were yesterday". Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question today, in light of the Harris Report, obviously has to be a resounding yes! So, Mr. Speaker, if Your Honour would so rule, my colleagues and I would rise in the required numbers to ask that debate begin immediately on the subject of the Harris Task Force Report.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, to this particular request or motion. Standing Order 23, provides leave to make a motion for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance. In examining the meaning of that particular condition, we go to Hansard or go to Beauchesne, and in Beauchesne we find that in the House of Commons they have a similar mechanism and the wording of the mechanism is discussed in much greater detail and paragraph 390, page 113, indicates

specifically that "Urgency" within this rule does not apply to the matter itself'.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we all know that the situation in the Fisheries is indeed an urgent matter and do not dispute that the fishery situation is indeed urgent and has been urgent for some quite considerable time. When it was first indicated that the Federal Government and their advisors had made a mistake, a very serious mistake, which resulted in over-estimation of the Northern codstock, and from that point on, there has been a very urgent situation in the Fisheries.

However, Mr. Speaker, urgency within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means urgency of debate. In other words, is there any reason to have that debate today, which would make some difference tomorrow, that would make some difference to the Northern codstock tomorrow? Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that a process has to be gone through, a fairly complicated process that would be gone through as quickly as possible and that the Northern codstock will not replenish itself overnight. Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to Your Honour, that there is ample opportunity in the House to discuss these matters. I would like to remind Members opposite that every second Wednesday they have the opportunity to call whatever motion they see fit to put on a Monday therefore, Mr. Speaker, that is one opportunity. Obviously, the Throne Speech and the Budget Debate are still on the Order Paper and this would provide ample opportunity in the next couple of weeks for a debate on that particular topic.

In conclusion, we do not question

the urgency of the situation but what we do point out is whether we debate it today, tomorrow, or next Wednesday it will make little difference to the Northern codstock. The Newfoundland Government, if it is to be sensible and reasonable, will have to go through the process and talk to all parts of the fishing industry and so on, get input from all sectors of the fishing industry before a detailed response can be done anyway. So, Mr. Speaker, there is no urgency of debate in that sense right now.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House is going to recess briefly to give the Chair a chance to take a look at the request.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

As hon. Members have pointed out in their submission, in a debate of this nature, in an emergency debate, the key is the urgency of the debate and not of the matter itself, and in so ruling I refer to a ruling made by Speaker Ottenheimer in 1975 when a similar situation came to the House. He said, 'In my opinion the matter is obviously urgent, obviously of public importance, but I do not concur that there is urgency of debate at this moment.' I would also refer to a ruling of Mr. Speaker Lemerieux given in the House of Commons and available in Hansard of July 9, 1969, he stated, 'The motion is acceptable only if it concerns a matter that has unexpectedly become urgent and not if it concerns a situation that has prevailed for some time.'

If I understand correctly the hon. Member's comments, the question is no doubt both important and urgent but it has prevailed for some time and the debating of it today would not possibly change the situation. The other accompanying reason is the fact that there is ample room to talk about this matter and indeed one could not rule it out on Meech Lake which is a constitutional matter. We are indeed dealing with a federal matter and the Speaker would be hard pressed to rule somebody out of order when addressing that in the discussion of Meech Lake, so I rule that it is not in order.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

On motion 12, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Motion 12.

Order, please!

I think we asked for a decision with respect to the hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains as to whether or not he be permitted to continue to speak today. I think that was a matter raised by the Opposition House Leader.

I point out to hon. Members that when the hon. Member introduced his motion the records from the Table show that he had two minutes remaining in his presentation. Even within our own, and then there were points of orders raised, Standing Orders that points of order are normally taken out of that and the hon. Member would not have any time left.

I also read a rule on this with respect to this kind of

situation. It is from the House of Commons by Campion called 'An Introduction to the Procedure of Rules for the House of Commons, paragraph 3, section 3, and it says this: 'A Member who has seconded an amendment may not after such an amendment has been disposed of speak to the main question or move or second another amendment.' So this quite clearly says that a Member who has moved a motion cannot speak to the main question again.

So I rule that even with our own Standing Orders the hon. Member's time was up other, of course, than my concession of the House.

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. WARREN:

A point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains on a point of privilege.

MR. WARREN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

What happened on Friday past, Sir, in my opinion I believe my privileges as a Member in this House had been breached. I refer you, Sir, to page R51 in the Hansard of Friday. The Speaker in the Chair at the time when I said: "I adjourn the debate" the Speaker said: "The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains has adjourned the debate."

On page R53, Mr. Speaker is speaking again, and Mr. Speaker's says and I quote: "The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains has adjourned the debate." On two occasions, Mr. Speaker, the Speaker recognized that I adjourned the debate. It was not

until R 74 that the Member, Mr. Gullage, to quote 'Mr. Speaker, I now rise to adjourn the debate.' Mr. Speaker, that was something like two hours later. When I was speaking, Mr. Speaker, when I brought in the resolution 'I move, seconded by the Member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms) that the resolution be referred to a Special Select Committee of the House.' I at that time, Mr. Speaker, had seventeen minutes left in my speech. Mr. Speaker, seventeen minutes when I moved that motion. Then the Speaker took the 'ayes' and the 'nays' - the Speaker said the Ayes had it, and with that, Mr. Speaker, the House went into a turmoil. And by the House going into a turmoil at that time, Mr. Speaker, it caused me, as an elected representative of the people in this Province, to be deprived of my rights to finish my debate in this particular resolution.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that in all due respect, Sir, my rights were breached on Friday past by the events that occurred after I introduced that resolution as it pertains to Standing Order 35.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is obviously not a point of privilege, but I hear what the hon. Member is saying and I believe that we had indicated across the floor on Friday that the hon. Member wanted to finish out the time that had been remaining when he made the motion,

that we would be quite agreeable to him doing so. And I agree with Your Honour's ruling because of the motion that that precluded that possibility. But Your Honour also pointed out with agreement, we could allow him to conclude the two or three minutes left in his speech. And I say to the Opposition House Leader through Your Honour that we would be willing to let him continue for two or three minutes, if we had an agreement from that side.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Yes, Mr. Speaker, just to show how cooperative we are as usual, if the Government for once is prepared to relinquish the power that it has, and the majority that it has, and by agreement allow the Member to speak for five minutes and that will be acceptable to us. Five minutes?

MR. SPEAKER:
The table informed me that it was two minutes, maybe the table can check. But again by agreement of the House if they want to agree let the hon. Member speak for five minutes and we can do five minutes.

Five minutes.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WARREN:
Mr. Speaker, when I was abruptly interrupted on Friday-

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. WARREN:
Mr. Speaker, the reason I guess I stood in this House two years ago in support of the Meech Lake Accord is I believed at the time and other Members in this House believed that we have to get on with national reconciliation. I think we have to get on with finalizing the work that was started on the constitution. Mr. Speaker, our energies should not be devoted to continually debating, debating, debating. I think our energies in this House should be devoted to creating jobs. Mr. Speaker, we have to get on with the future. We have to work for the future and anyway we do that naturally is by all of us in this House, on each side of this House, is to support the Meech Lake Accord.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I heard the Premier say on a number of occasions and other Members 'it gives special status to Quebec.' Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is true. It does give special status to Quebec. But then again, Mr. Speaker, every province has special status in one way or another. Let us look at our own Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have our own special status with our denominational educational system. So, Mr. Speaker, I believe we are special. I would say that the greater risk, Mr. Speaker, if we do not accept the Meech Lake Accord, it will be moving Quebec further away from our Canada as we call Canada today. Mr. Speaker, I think that is what I am concerned about. You have to look, Mr. Speaker, at many of those sections that are in the Meech Lake Accord and even by giving Quebec the

special status, it still gives the power to the Legislature in Quebec. Mr. Speaker, if they have the power surely goodness we are not naive in other parts of Canada, in the other nine provinces and the two territories to even suspect that Quebec, through its Legislature, would do things other than what they believe and what should be right for the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, there are concerns in the Meech Lake Accord that I am not familiar with and in fact I do not appreciate at the same time. I am concerned about the Supreme Court judges and I am also concerned about the Senate, Mr. Speaker. We have all said it is not acceptable. Many people across Canada have said it is not acceptable but nothing we do, whether in this Legislature, or in any other Legislature in Canada, is acceptable to everybody. There are always flaws. Any rules, regulations, statutes, or anything else that is passed in the Legislature there are always some people who will find something wrong with it.

I do not like, for example, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories being left out of the Meech Lake Accord. I am not completely satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that the Innu and the Inuit people of Northern Labrador are not included in the Meech Lake Accord under its present form but there is the suggestion from McKenna of the parallel accord that will address those issues. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, it is better for us to take what we have now and let us go forward from this day and improve on what we have. Do not destroy what we already have because I am concerned with the attitude of the Premier of

this Province. Although today in this Legislature when addressing the congratulatory message of our forty-one years in Confederation the Premier said we all should be proud to be Canadians. I only wish that the Premier was not speaking from both sides of his mouth because unfortunately he is not practicing what he preaches. I believe the Premier will let Canada break up in order to get his own way and that is the unfortunate thing about it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Firstly, I would like to commend all the previous speakers who have spoken on the issue. I will try to add something, if I can, to the debate. Other than what has already been said that will be difficult because I think all of the points have been touched on, but I will try my best to add and contribute to the debate.

Senate reform is probably the most contentious issue of all, and it seems to be discussed more than any other point concerning the Meech Lake Accord.

I recall one of the previous Members spoke about the situation in the United States and the fact that having equal representation by each state does not, in fact, contribute to removing the regional disparities that exist. I would like to take issue with that to some degree because I find it to be an unconvincing argument when you consider that surely if you have an equal number of

representatives from a state or from a Province, it has to be preferential to a larger number from a given province or a given state verses a smaller number.

Surely anybody can envision a group of people across a table or across a legislature and if the numbers are unequal, the larger numbers would create a great disparity - and we see that now, of course, in Canada. The fact that we have a legislature, we have a House of Commons that is weighed heavily in favour of the stronger provinces with, I believe, some fifty per cent. I stand to be corrected but I believe it is fifty per cent of the Members of the House of Commons are from the provinces of Quebec and Ontario.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Sixty per cent.

MR. GULLAGE:
Okay, sixty per cent. So it is greatly disproportioned as far as the House of Commons is concerned. Obviously we would like to correct that disparity to some degree by way of having an equal elected and effective Senate where balance can be provided, at least in the upper House.

Mr. Speaker, I am going back a way now in history, but looking at the United States situation back when they had the conference back in 1787 - I suppose probably one of the greatest constitutional conferences ever held. And at that time - I am reading from a text - It says, 'What one real point almost wrecked that convention? How to protect the interests of both the small and the large states.' That is the very issue that divides Canada now, 203 years after the Americans

solved the dilemma for their nation, and it is the very issue that will split Canada apart if we do not do something about it. This issue in 1787 became for the Americans what it is for Canada today. The issue of representation in the realms of legislative power. The real difficulty lies in the affair of representation. If this could be adjusted, all other matters would be surmounted.

Mr. Speaker, we do indeed have a parallel situation to the situation which occurred or which was prevalent in the United States prior to the drafting of their constitution. And that was, at the time, the most difficult matter to settle, and they took some considerable time in dealing with it, considerable debate, a lot of proposals, and finally reached the conclusion that it was wise to have a Senate with equal representation from all states regardless of population, regardless of power, regardless of economic strength. And indeed the Senate in the United States is far, far - I do not think anybody would argue - far, far more effective than our Senate because of the way it is comprised and the fact that it is equal regardless of the size and population of any given state.

Mr. Speaker, why do we need a more effective Senate? Why do we need an elected Senate? I believe the most important reason is to help correct and help foster the strength of the poor provinces, help correct the disparities and continue to provide some strength to the smaller provinces that do not have adequate representation or equal representation in the House of Commons. Regional disparity, of course, is something

that we have had to live with ever since Confederation, and we are still far behind.

Far behind even our neighbours in the Atlantic Provinces. Mr. Speaker, we will slip even further behind if we do not have some correction in the way the nation is governed.

Bill C-3, dealing with regional development in Ontario and Quebec, was just recently introduced in the House of Commons. I am going to read a couple of paragraphs from the Bill: "The Minister shall exercise the powers and perform the duties and functions assigned to the Minister by sub-section 6(2) in a manner that will (a) promote economic development in areas of Ontario and Quebec where low incomes and slow economic growth are prevalent and where opportunities for productive employment are inadequate; (b) emphasize long-term economic development and sustainable employment and income creation; and (c) focus on small and medium-sized enterprises and the development and enhancement of entrepreneurial talent."

It goes on to deal with setting up a special initiative to deal with science and technology focusing entirely on Ontario and Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, that is what is wrong with most of the regional development programs we have in Canada. Instead of focusing on where the real needs are, which is in Atlantic Canada, as one example; certainly, on the East Coast it is clearly Atlantic Canada, and specifically, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, the two poorest Provinces in the nation. Instead of focusing where the real needs are

and making sure that money is delivered even within a Province where the greatest unemployment exists, we have programs that are introduced for the Atlantic Provinces, federal initiatives that clearly are negated by the fact that they introduce a similar program for Ontario and Quebec.

I just gave you an example of a program that is about to be introduced to further distance us in terms of wealth and development, from the richer provinces of Canada. Because if they are spending equal dollars per capita in Ontario and Quebec, such as they are attempting to do here with this regional initiative as they call it, science and technology, putting dollars into an already rich economy — nobody would argue that certainly, Southern Ontario is the richest part of this nation

The very thought that they are going to further enhance and further enrich that particular Province with a program for regional development, surely heavens, whether it be the Atlantic Provinces or Manitoba or any other area of Canada that needs assistance, until the rest of this nation has received regional dollars and regional programs that will help bring us up to par — not necessarily ever to be in the same category as Ontario, Southern Ontario, in particular, one of the richest parts of North America, let alone Canada. It would be just a pipe dream for us to think, I suppose, that we would ever be as wealthy. But any chance we have to develop our industry, our resources, our businesses, has to be done in co-operation with a strong central Federal Government. And we cannot have a strong Federal Government

if we continue to have initiatives all over Canada on an equal basis regardless of need. We are seeing that now. We are seeing our programs negated by the fact that dollars continue to be spent by the Federal Government disproportionately in areas where those dollars are really not needed.

So we have a great concern that the weakening of our Federal Government will impact dramatically on our situation in Newfoundland.

We do not see any movement at all, of course, from Mulroney or Bourassa. All they want to do is let it happen. Let us sign Meech Lake, that is their attitude. They do not want to sit down and discuss any of the points that are being made by the dissenting provinces, they are not open for discussion. They want to discuss everything afterwards. Let us discuss Senate reform after the fact. As if we had some magic guarantee. We have to go into this thing with a blind trust, a blind faith, and who could ever trust Mulroney now at this stage. Surely heavens he has lost any trust that anybody ever had in him. He is just running out his time now. Everybody realizes that it is just a matter of a couple of years and the electorate will make sure that he no longer participates in the governing of this nation, and will no longer create the kind of problems that he has created so far in his term of office.

But he and Bourassa continue to dig their heels in. They say there is a deadline, and indeed it is a deadline. I thought first that perhaps it was just a political deadline that you could

just pull away and say it does not exist anymore, we will take another year, we will take another six months. But I understand it is really a deadline because it was established by the First Ministers at the time, and it is indeed a deadline that we have to deal with. So they are holding that up and saying that we have this deadline. We have to meet it and we want everybody to agree to it, all the Provinces to agree to it. Never mind your concerns, leave all your concerns on the table and we will address those concerns after you have signed Meech Lake.

I believe that given Mr. Mulroney's track record, leave Bourassa alone for a moment, I think that would be a most dangerous thing to do. I believe with the changes that we need we have to negotiate and make happen before Meech Lake is signed.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw a parallel, if I may, to one of the areas of my Ministry that have made me very popular in most parts of Newfoundland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. GULLAGE:
That is amalgamation. Hopefully we can turn all that around before - what is it they say 'It is not over until it is over' and I can assure you that will be the case. I remain confident in spite of the press.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at Canada and we look at the disparity between the Provinces we can draw a great parallel to that if we look at Newfoundland and the communities in this Province. I believe Meech Lake parallels to a

great degree, a lot of the conditions in Meech Lake, a lot of the discussion in Meech lake, parallels to a great degree the discussion that is going on in the amalgamation process. If you were to hear a lot of the presentations made by town councils and city councils, you would understand the differences between many of our communities because indeed almost every grouping has a mixture of a relatively prosperous community with a poor community, where perhaps all the industry is in one community and only residential content in the other. That is the same kind of disparity that exists in Canada. We have very wealthy provinces and very poor provinces.

What is our Confederation all about except being able to help one another by way of regional initiatives, true regional initiatives. I do not mean by way of providing the same dollars as I mentioned earlier in all provinces on an equal per capita basis which just negates the whole process, but real regional initiatives that address the needs of the poorer parts of this country.

We are trying to do the same thing with the amalgamation process. Again, if you were to look at a lot of the presentations that councils are making, you will find that the disparities are there, they are there in every region of the Province and Labrador. Where we do have, indeed, a town where there is a fish plant, or a prosperous industry, a paper mill, whatever, and in the next town there is nothing, absolutely nothing, except residential housing. So the disparity certainly exists.

To carry the point further. We had a consulting firm work with

our financial staff, looking at the various initiatives we worked with the communities on, financial initiatives, tax incentive grants and so on.

One of the first things they flagged was the great difficulty in coming up with an equitable tax situation in a Province where the disparities are so great between our people and between our communities in particular, our incorporated and our unincorporated communities. The suggestion they have made, and it is rather an obvious one, is that we have to deal with these communities differently. If, in fact, we have a situation where a town or city has a good solid tax base, it has good industry, good business as well as a residential tax base, then consideration has to be given to that community differently from a community that has only a residential tax base and, indeed, may need some special assistance because it does not have the assets in place, it does not have the business and industry in place to sustain itself and provide the necessary revenue in the same way as the more prosperous towns or cities would have.

Is that any different than talking about Canada as a whole, special consideration to the parts of this nation that are different? Surely that is what Confederation is all about, Mr. Speaker, that is what Senate reform is all about. For anybody to argue that an elected, equal and effective Senate is not going to be helpful in governing this nation, it has to be a very hollow and empty argument. Because surely it will help put some balance into the situation in the House of Commons right now, where clearly we have very little say in the programs that impact

upon us dramatically. As we all know, the bulk of our revenue, and I stand to be corrected, I think almost half our revenue, 48 or 49 per cent, comes from federal coffers. Now, granted, we contribute in the first place, but that is a significant amount of money and I would hate to see any result of Meech Lake impact upon the need for assistance that we have.

We are in for - I was going to say terrifying and perhaps I should - a very difficult time in the years ahead. In almost every area of our Government, and almost every Ministry that you can name, we have difficult situations. Certainly all the resource sectors are going to have a difficult time in the years ahead, and we can get into all the reasons for it. Everybody realizes we have a crisis in the fishery; we are certainly going to have difficult times in the paper industry as we become more and more a part of the North American scene, if you like, the international scene, as we now have free trade. We have not yet seen the impact of free trade upon us. Add to that the GST which very shortly, in less than a year now, will be in effect. I talked to the Minister of Finance about that, and the difficulties we are going to have bringing in the GST.

In fact, the Federal Government seems to be saying in that particular area that the provinces are going to have an obligation to introduce, if you like, and to put in systems to collect their tax. Incredible, Mr. Speaker, a tax that all the provinces, to my knowledge, have spoken out strongly against. Why did they bring in the GST? I suppose if you want to go back it started to be discussed around the same time

they were debating free trade. I remember that when they talked about the importance of free trade, one of the main points was the fact that we had to strengthen central Canada, they were really talking about, we had to make sure our manufacturing and our industry in Ontario and Quebec could compete with the United States. And what are we finding now? You will find that some of the industries they spoke about at that time they now have plans for closing, because they are deciding in the head office, somewhere in the United States, that perhaps we can operate with just one large plant located on a regional basis, such that they can distribute to the market from one central location and why bother with these branch plant operations in Canada? Has it really worked. Well, it is too early to tell, I suppose, in all fairness, but we are seeing some bad signs.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Jobs lost.

MR. GULLAGE:
That is right. One Member says jobs lost. Obviously, if a plant closes, the chances of it reopening in the free trade scenario, with the competition from the United States, with ten times the population - everybody knows the difficulty of competing against industry with that kind of a population base to draw upon, that kind of a market to manufacture for and to sell to, the great difficulties of trying to introduce new industry or trying to bring an industry back once it has been closed.

At the same time, they started talking about the GST, and, of course, obviously it is tied in, because again they wanted to

strengthen industry in Central Canada. That was the prime thrust behind it, remove it from the manufacturing side and put it directly onto the people on the retail side. Is that not wonderful? Who gets hurt the most by that? Why, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, all the poorer provinces which can least afford to pay it, and particularly Newfoundland, with a 12 per cent sales tax already. I am not the first one to say this, many others have said it in debate before, but we have the highest of everything bad and the lowest of everything good: the highest unemployment and so on, the highest taxes certainly; twelve per cent, and in less than a year from now we are going to have the GST added to it.

So we have a serious situation ahead of us, as I mentioned, with problems in most of our resource areas, a difficult challenge for this Government to deliver programs, to deliver initiatives that will sustain us through these difficult years, so, Mr. Speaker, I submit we have to have a strong Federal Government behind us. It is imperative that we do. Any program, Meech Lake or any other constitutional change that might be considered, has to be done with consideration for regional disparities in mind, particularly the great disparities that exist between Newfoundland and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, last year I had the opportunity as a newly elected Member of the House, shortly after the by-election in Waterford - Kenmount, to speak to an amendment proposed by my colleague, the Minister of Development, at the time the MHA in the Opposition for

St. Barbe, and his amendment was on the recognition that Newfoundland and Labrador does indeed constitute within Canada a distinct society. I am now quoting my own words, at the time, in response to the amendment: 'Newfoundland was, in fact, very distinct prior to 1949 in that it was a nation with equal status to Canada and in that respect alone deserves distinct status. Quebec has never ever had that status, even though it was one of the founding partners. French and English were the predominant languages and the predominant cultures at the time of Confederation, but certainly Quebec could never argue that it was, in fact, a distinct nation as Newfoundland can certainly argue.'

But, Mr. Speaker, I am not about to resurrect that amendment or that debate or to get into the fact that we are a distinct Province, because you can argue that about almost every province in the country. But there is a strong argument, if you wanted to make it. We probably have a stronger argument, perhaps next to Quebec, because we do have to recognize that they are a distinct province, with distinct culture, distinct language and so on. They were one of the founding partners. We are not arguing with that, Mr. Speaker, but we can make a terrific argument, if we wanted to make one, for Newfoundland being very, very distinct as well. And if I recall the debate a year ago on the amendment proposed by my colleague, I think we made a very strong case on that amendment for Newfoundland being a distinct society.

Mr. Speaker, at that time I also said that \$32 million in salaries alone were faced off against

Federal Fisheries. In my research then, I found out that the total fish landings were \$257 million and that the Federal Government is getting pretty close to that in expenditures, including salaries to their people, which constitutes about 10 per cent of the total figure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government, of course, spends a lot of money on the fishery; they spend a lot on surveillance, \$32 million in salaries alone, a lot on surveillance! An argument was being made, and it is still being made, that one of the things we would achieve by approving Meech Lake as it is now - possibly achieve - is more jurisdiction; we would have an opportunity, if you like, if we were granted it, to have more jurisdiction and more say in the Fisheries. Now, Mr. Speaker, after what I have said so far about conditions in this Province and the difficult time we are going to have ahead of us, just the thought of taking on the obligation of sharing in Fisheries jurisdiction - surveillance alone is just unthinkable! Surely, we have to have a strong Federal Government and strong federal jurisdiction over our fishery.

We need to have management say, yes. We proposed at the time that there should be a joint management board similar to what is being proposed for the Oil industry, for oil developments. We need a stronger say in management, yes, but the very thought of being part of the jurisdiction per se, and being given jurisdiction, where we would have to pay our share, whatever that happens to be, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we would have a hard time playing our part and paying our share.

We do, indeed, want to see Quebec become part of the Constitution, and we would like to see the Meech Lake Accord dilemma solved, but we cannot do that at the expense of Newfoundland. We have to have movement, we have to have some consideration for the points that are being made by Newfoundland, Mainitoba, New Brunswick and others who have signed and are now expressing concern. We have to have consideration of Mr. Mulroney, Mr. Bourassa, to other points of view besides their own. So far, and we have only have two and a half to three months left, a very short period of time with, I would think, a strict deadline, or it appears to be - assuming that it is, indeed we have a difficult time ahead of us in these next three months. But we can talk all we want about it, we can make as many proposals as we like, Mr. McKenna or any other Premier can make proposals and suggestions on all sorts of ways of solving, in their minds the stalemate at which we are right now, but nothing will ever happen to solve these problems or solve the problem we have with Meech Lake until the Prime Minister and the Premier of Quebec decide that they are going to negotiate and they are going to listen and come back to the table and be willing to make changes.

I would submit that is where we are right now, and I would hope for the sake of Canada and for the sake of Newfoundland and Labrador, that we see some movement on the part of these two Gentlemen so that we can get on with solving the dilemma we are presently in and see this great country finalize the Constitution which will serve us long into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Before recognizing the hon. gentleman for Grand Falls I would like to welcome to the galleries today thirty-two Grade VI students, accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Hubert House, with five chaperones from the R. L. Ash Elementary School in Lethbridge, in the District of Terra Nova.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate and, at the outset, to say a few words with respect to the Amendment proposed. I think the Amendment is straightforward and probably acceptable. I see little difficulty, why Members on the other side would even have any trouble voting against it. It simply asks the House do the courtesy of advising and informing Members of the House of the results before the Governor General is notified of same, and I think that is a perfectly acceptable, perfectly legitimate Amendment, one which I feel quite confident Members of the House, including Members on the Government side, would probably support.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address, first of all, in this debate, and it is difficult to address everything in only a thirty minute time slot, but I shall try to cover the points I want to cover.

First of all, I want to comment on some of the misunderstandings, misrepresentations that are coming forth quite often and have come forth quite often in debate. One, for example, that you often hear, particularly from Members on the other side, where the Opposition is trying to block debate or delay debate on the Meech Lake resolution. Indeed it is quite frequently what you see from the press reports, the Opposition continue delaying tactics. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to try to overcome that particular perception because, in our view, it is not quite accurate, and I will try to make the points.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

First of all, the Opposition in presenting its case is trying to make a case for public hearings on this particular issue. That is the number one approach of Members of the Opposition, which is precisely the same request the Premier made back in his speech on the original Meech Lake issue in 1988 asking for public hearings.

Mr. Speaker, let us just look at the argument that the Government puts forward with respect to us attempting to block debate. We have had a night sitting last Tuesday, on an occasion when most of the normal afternoon sitting was taken up with debate on petitions, not debate on petitions, but debate on whether Members had lost the right to present petitions on behalf of the public, because all that happened on that particular occasion is that one Member, the Member for Humber Valley (Mr. Woodford) presented a petition and that was all that we were allowed to

present while we had others to present, or not the Member for Humber Valley, I am sorry, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rideout), I believe. Anyway there was one. And that is all that we were allowed to present when the Government House Leader intervened and attempted to, and did I guess, successfully eventually move that the House move to Orders of the Day.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we have seen in this first week of debate from Tuesday to Friday is simply this: from the Opposition, we had one petition on Tuesday, only one petition; but on Tuesday there were two statements from Government Ministers, two rather lengthy statements as a matter of fact. On Wednesday we had one petition which was in keeping with what we were doing anyway with respect to petitions, presenting petitions on behalf of the people. On Thursday we had three petitions and then we had a normal day of debate, regular debate, but we went then into a night sitting because the Government insisted on ramming this thing through and would not approve the motion to adjourn on Thursday. And on Friday we had only three petitions but the Government brought in four ministerial statements, so just who is delaying what is open to interpretation in my view. But it is not fair I do not think to abuse the Opposition of delaying tactics.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No, no!

MR. SIMMS:

In fact, we have hardly had a chance to debate the issue mostly because of procedural problems that have arisen and that have been quite legitimately debated in

this House, in my view. The petition one in particular on Tuesday, and certainly the charade and farce that we witnessed here in the House on Friday.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have had, after one week of debate, since the Government proceeded to call this issue, we have had one speaker on the main resolution and four or five speakers I believe it is now on the amendment. So that deals with that particular misrepresentation.

Now there is another one over there that Members opposite often throw across to us, why did you not hold hearings on the original Meech Lake Accord back in 1988? Not that it really makes any difference, Mr. Speaker, because the Members here are now the Government, and when in Opposition they asked for public hearings. Now they are the Government let them hold them. So I mean that is not really a relevant argument. But the simple answer is this, and I ask Members to consider this. For example in the 1981 debate with respect to repatriation of the constitution there was no debate on that particular matter in Provincial Legislatures. None whatsoever.

Secondly, back in 1987, with respect to Meech Lake and the Meech Lake Accord, the situation was quite different. Members know this, but they continue to put forward a different impression, in hopes of confusing the public, I suppose. But at that particular time in 1987, every leader of every Government in Canada, every Premier and the Prime Minister in Canada, all agreed with the Meech Lake Accord, every Government in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, every leader in this Legislature of the day agreed and welcomed the Meech Lake Accord. The leader of the Liberals, the leader of the NDP and the leader of the Government at the time, the Premier. So, I mean, to somehow suggest, 'Why did you not hold public hearings?' - the answer is simple. The situation was quite different back in those days from what it is now, quite different, because of the unanimity there was among all the Premiers and all the leaders of all the Governments in Canada. As well, in our House, the leaders of all three parties welcomed and agreed with the initiatives at the time. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, all three Federal party leaders, the Federal leader of the Liberals, the Federal leader of the New Democratic Party and the Federal leader of the Progressive Conservative Party all supported the Meech Lake initiative.

One would have to admit, even the most ardent Liberal in this House would have to admit that the situation back in those days, 1987 - 1988 was considerably different, not like the situation today, where you have all kinds of factions opening up across the country, you have a lot of divisiveness, lots of controversy. And, in those days, I guess, there was more of a political will to try to resolve a major problem.

So that addresses that particular misrepresentation, I suppose, if you will.

The other matter I want to address is with respect to speaking time. We talked about it. Members opposite tossed across 'Back in 1988 when you brought in Meech Lake there was not much debate on

it, not much discussion,' and so on. The Premier says it. The Minister of Development, one day, flicked across, 'You only had two days debate.' Now, where he got that I have no idea. But the point is, Mr. Speaker, it is misleading to suggest it and to hide the facts, because it is untrue, it is unfair, it is wrong and, what is worse, Members opposite, I am sure, know it.

The fact is, in 1988 on the original debate on Meech Lake, thirteen out of the fifteen Members who sat in the Liberal Official Opposition spoke in that debate. Just about every Member of the Official Opposition spoke in that debate. In fact, the leader of the party, now the Premier, spoke three times in the debate and the Member for Stephenville, I believe, spoke twice. There were nine Members of the Government who spoke. The Premier, on our side, spoke twice and the now Leader of the Opposition spoke twice. The two NDP Members in the House both spoke to the resolution. So practically all the Opposition Members in the House had an opportunity to speak.

The facts are these: The debate was held over a thirteen-day period, thirteen different days. There was no particular rush, as there is now, because the Meech Lake resolution was introduced March 17 and was not concluded until July 7, no closure, and it ran over a three and one-half month period. So there was no push, no rush, as there appears to be these days. There were twenty-four different speakers, a total of about eighteen hours spent in the debate, a total of thirty speeches, including the leaders -

The Premier can shake his head all he wants. These are the facts.

We have had, so far, about six hours of debate, not counting today, of course, and only nine Members, in total, have spoken, not counting today, and five Opposition Members.

Mr. Speaker, those are the facts. It is a fallacy, it is a myth, to throw across the House that there was not much time for the original debate of the Meech Lake Accord and somehow give the impression that we have rushed it through. That is not true, that is wrong, and the Premier knows it; that is what makes it even worse.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to comment briefly on what transpired during this past week in this Legislature. First of all, what we saw on Friday was the tyranny of a majority. Without question, without doubt, that is what we saw here on Friday in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Which is something, Mr. Speaker, that we, as a minority in the Opposition, are supposed to be protected from.

First of all the resolution itself is unprecedented - asking for rescinding of another resolution - that is unprecedented in this Legislature. The Government is using its majority to ram through this resolution forcing night sittings and things of that nature, as early as the first night and the second night, and then we saw Friday's spectacle.

On Tuesday, we saw the public's right to petition - which is one

of the absolute rights the public is guaranteed in the Constitution - cut off because of heavy handed tactics of the majority Government Members. Then we saw an absolutely shameful, unprecedented move here in this House on Friday where the Speaker rightly ruled that the Opposition motion had carried. Yet the Government proceeded to use its majority in a way never done before in this Legislature, to overrule that vote and embarrass its own Speaker, in my view, in that process.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to quote, if I may, because of the seriousness of that matter on Friday and I feel very strongly about it, I can assure hon. Members. Let me just quote a few short passages for your benefit from Beauchesne. These are excerpts from Beauchesne. Members might be interested in hearing what Beauchesne has to say about it. The very first paragraph in Beauchesne, paragraph 1, page 3, "The principles of Canadian Parliamentary Law are: To protect a minority and restrain the improvidence or tyranny of a majority; ...to enable every Member to express opinions...and to give abundant" I repeat abundant "opportunity for the consideration of every measure, ..."

Under The Constitution Act section, paragraph 3, on page 4, referring to Government's and Parliaments in Canada, and I quote: "...such traditional features as respect for the rights of the minority, which precludes a Government from using to excess the extensive powers that it has to limit debate or to proceed in what the public and the Opposition might interpret as unorthodox ways."

And, finally, Mr. Speaker, again paragraph 4, page 4, under Privileges of Parliament it says, and I quote: "Few of these" privileges "are of greater importance than the right to regulate the internal proceedings of the House, or more specifically, to establish binding rules of procedure."

I would say to hon. Members it might do them well to reflect upon these particular passages and ask for themselves whether or not they think these most important principles were met particularly with what transpired here on Friday.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to get more to the subject at hand, having said that, particularly the issue of rescinding this resolution or the resolution that rescinds the original resolution.

I have serious concerns and I do not mind saying it, whether the Government agrees or not. Or the Premier agrees or not is irrelevant to me. But I have serious concerns about this very dangerous precedent in itself. The question is, who would ever trust us in the future? It could in fact become a bit of a joke. Every time there is a change in a Government and a constitutional change passed legitimately by an elected Legislature previously, may not be liked by a new Leader or a new Premier, he can rescind it, if it is not yet proclaimed. I have concerns about that.

MR. NOEL:
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:
I say to the Deputy Coordinator of the Meech Lake Speech making, the Member for Pleasantville (Mr.

Noel) I have concerns about it, whether he agrees or not I do not care. I have the right to express my opinion and that is exactly what I am doing here today.

I also, Mr. Speaker, have been following what the Premier has been saying on the issue. Trying my best to understand. But I have to admit I have trouble understanding his stubbornness and his unwillingness to show some flexibility and leadership in trying to resolve this constitutional crisis.

I have concerns about it. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have concerns about it, I will deal with that when the time comes, if the Premier would like to settle down. I also have trouble understanding, how come the Premier sees it one way and just about everybody else sees it another way. Anybody else who has any constitutional expertise, we should say. Mr. Speaker, the Premier says: 'Meech Lake will mean that small Provinces like Newfoundland will never be able to enjoy a better or more improved standard of living, if Meech Lake goes through.'

I wonder how come, PEI, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, these smaller provinces do not agree with him. They do not believe what he is saying. Three of the Provinces have premiers who are lawyers and the other one, I believe, is an Economist, so I have trouble, I do not understand, I cannot understand why he is so stubborn. Many people tend to forget the real purpose of Meech Lake in the beginning, was to get Quebec as a full partner in its signatory to the 1980 Constitution, and it was done, as I say, with the agreement of every Canadian leader of every

Government at that time. I do not know why that is not being emphasized and repeated over and over by the Premier. I suspect they know why, but I do not understand it. I also want to say up front, and in response to what the Premier just threw across the floor of the House, with respect to Mr. Bourassa's comments. I have no hesitation in saying that I, too, do not appreciate the comments made by Mr. Bourassa, which he made publicly. I found them offensive and I will go as far as to say that I did not like the Prime Minister's comments either, at the First Minister's conference, which were basically in the same context, about Newfoundland owing Canada. I did not appreciate those comments either, and I have no hesitation in saying I was pleased when the Premier stood up and made those comments.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Did you write him about it?

MR. SIMMS:

No, I did not write him and tell him, so let there be no hesitation about that Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely no hesitation in making those comments and I would not have stood for it either, if I had been in the Premier's place, and I commend him for taking that particular position. But the question is, is not the real answer though, to somehow try to rise above all of this rhetoric, rise above all the legal mumbo jumbo that we hear, day in and day out on this issue that does nothing more than to confuse Canadians, because that is what is happening. Is it not more important to work as hard as possible to try to unite Canada, the country of Canada and at the same time, and more importantly, I

guess, to work on Newfoundland's behalf? Is not that what is most important, showing that you care for our own people, that is what I would like to see on the part of the leaders who are presently engaged in this debate across Canada. That is what I want to see. I want to see a willingness, a determination and I want to see a resolve to try to overcome this current crises that we have with respect to the Constitutional Amendment. It is all leadership, that is what we want to see in Canada today. That is what I want to see as one Newfoundlander.

Now let me try to touch on the three points, as I understand the Premier has articulated, and with which he has concerns and problems, and if I am wrong, or if he can explain to me a little more clearly, I would appreciate it. Perhaps when he closes the debate on the Resolution, but I want to run down through them and I want to give him my observations on the three issues which he mentions.

First of all: The concern about the restriction of Federal spending powers. I have read the Accord, contrary to what some of the Members opposite might believe, I have read the Accord, I have read the Amendment, I have read a lot of material put forth by people who are constitutional experts, shall we say, and I have asked people. As I read it, the Accord only mentions, first of all, New National cost-shared programs, to begin with, the Premier nods. The only thing restricted as I understand is the ability of the Federal Government to use its spending powers to intrude into areas of Provincial jurisdiction without the Provinces' consent. That is what I read. It does not affect any

existing cost-shared programs, it does not affect cost-shared programs or services under Federal jurisdiction, it does not affect spending initiatives undertaken solely by the Federal Government, as I understand it, and I cannot see where it affects Equalization or ACOA, Grants to individuals, Unemployment Insurance, any of those things, I cannot see that anywhere.

So, where has the federal spending powers been limited? We have always been, in this Province, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, we have always, as a Province, as a small Province in the Canadian Confederation, been subjected to a take it or leave it situation in regard to national cost-shared programs. If a Province did not accept the federal program then the federal revenues would not be available. But now as I read it for the first time we will be able to, as a Province, help shape some national cost-shared programs that would meet our need. That is the way I interpret it. The Premier can shake his head.

If we cannot shape a program to fit our needs then we can design one of our own that does, and receive federal financial support to help us deliver that program. Now that is the way I read it, that is the way I understand it, so again I do not understand the Premier's problem with this whole issue and his inability to see it. The second point deals with the special legislative powers for Quebec that the Premier, I believe, if I understand him, says is contained in the Meech Lake Accord. Again I have read it over and over and I have talked to others about it and I have read a lot of the comments put forth by many experts on that particular

point and quite frankly as a lay person I am not learned, I am not a lawyer, I do not see in the Accord where any federal powers, for example, would be transferred to Quebec, that is not there. He agrees. I can only read the distinct society clause as clearly spelling out basically the legislative powers that Quebec already has.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Ah, ah!

MR. SIMMS:

He can Ah, ah, all he wants.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Well, let me carry on, first of all, with my points. Even the allies the Premier had on this issue a couple of months ago, up until a couple of months ago, New Brunswick and Manitoba. Manitoba is still an ally - I am not quite sure - but at the moment they are. But both of their reports, as I understand it, agree that Meech Lake does not give Quebec any special new legislative powers - both of their reports.

PREMIER WELLS:

(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

The Premier can tell me where it says it but I am told that both of their reports agree that Quebec does not get any new legislative powers under this. Then I even get more confused when I hear the Premier say, as I think he said, I do not wish to put words in his mouth but maybe he will correct me when he closes debate, but he actually has no real problem with Quebec being recognized as a distinct society but he would

prefer to see it in the preamble, as opposed to in the body of the constitution.

Quite frankly it is just confusing and I think it is confusing not only for me as an individual who sits here, and I recognize the weaknesses I have in trying to understand everything, but I am here every day listening to it all, so I then wonder how can the public, how can the people get a full grasp of it? How can they understand? Why would they not be confused? I think it is clear.

MR. NOEL:

We are not confused.

MR. SIMMS:

Oh, the Member says they are not confused but I would beg to differ with the hon. Member. I believe the people are confused. I really do. I believe they have trouble following the Premier's logic. Frank McKenna has trouble following the Premier's logic, and Frank McKenna is in his own right, as I understand it, a bit of a constitutional expert. Perhaps more so than the Premier.

MR. WINDSOR:

The Premier shakes his head.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, he did his masters thesis on Constitutional Amendments and I would say that puts him in a category perhaps a notch above the Premier. Joe Ghiz and John Buchanan are both lawyers and they do not agree with him. They do not understand his logic. Gordon Robertson, who was a special advisor to Prime Minister Trudeau, a former secretary to the Cabinet, a very much respected individual does not agree with the Premier. He says the Premier is interpreting it wrong. Neither

can the forty constitutional law professors from all across Canada, from Osgoode Hall, Queens University, McGill, Dalhousie, UNB, University of Moncton, University of Victoria B.C. Forty law professors, constitutional lawyers, they say the Premier's interpretation is wrong. And then there are all kinds of other groups. The Quebec Liberal Party's Committee - what is it called? - the ad hoc Committee on the Anglophone community, they asked that Meech Lake be ratified. They even wrote us. We wrote them back and said, You should be writing Mr. Wells, the Premier. There is no point in writing us.

Mr. Speaker, another point I wish to make, because it has to do with logic, it is true I understand, -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

We will see. We will see.

It is true that the Premier, when he was in private practice I believe, argued Mr. Trudeau's position before the Newfoundland Supreme Court in 1981 that unilateral patriation was constitutional.

PREMIER WELLS:

No.

MR. SIMMS:

He says, 'No'. I am told he did. I am also told that the Supreme Court, in fact, rejected the Premier's arguments at that time. He shakes his head and says, 'No, that is not true.' But that is what we understand, and I hope he will take the time when he does get up to speak to correct that, because that is certainly the

impression given to an awful lot of people. And it is possible, therefore, that he could be wrong now.

And what about his predecessors? Liberal Leader Roger Simmons at the time, now Member of Parliament.

PREMIER WELLS:
Only a (inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:
Well, here is what he said in Hansard, May 20, 1987: "Now, Mr. Speaker, again for the record, let me say on behalf of my colleagues" - that is all of you over there - "that the achievement in bringing Quebec into the Constitution is a marvellous achievement, and we now have achieved that."

Leo Barry, now Mr. Justice Barry, May 1st. "Speaking on behalf of the official Opposition, we in the official Opposition" - that is you people - "welcome the developments which took place." He said, "I want to underline the fact this is a significant day for Canada, and in light of the entrenchment of the fisheries agenda item it is also a significant day for Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker." Even the present Minister of Fisheries, the Member for Twillingate, is quoted in the Evening Telegram, August 12, 1987 on the fisheries item, by the way. The discussion was the Liberal Leaders', in the Maritime Provinces, concern about Newfoundland's push to get fishery on the agenda. The Member for Twillingate, the Minister of Fisheries said, "I see the Province, for example, playing a role in having wide open consultation and input into the licencing policies of Ottawa, and have almost veto power in terms of quotas and things of that

nature." Now, Mr. Speaker, that is the Member for Twillingate.

And what about, Mr. Speaker, tending to matters at home? I will have to conclude it, I guess, with these few remarks. I have only a couple of minutes left. The Premier, I believe it is fair to say, has been quite successful in one thing in his first year in office. They have successfully camouflaged from the people the real problems and real issues our people are facing today. They have carefully masqueraded their incompetence, in my view, they have done it with the help of a lot of smooth talk, a lot of alibies, a lot of blaming other people, and an overabundance of legal mumbo jumbo. Mr. Speaker, I say to the Premier that the people of the Province are beginning to see through it. They see the increases in unemployment, they see the tax increases, they see the catastrophe existing in our fishery, they see the rising electricity rates, they see the forced amalgamation plan, they see Bill 53, they see Beaton Tulk, and they remember the promise of economic recovery, the promise to improve labour relations, the promise to cut out political patronage, the promise never to tolerate conflict of interest, the promise to bring home every Mother's son. They remember them all, Mr. Speaker. They hope, though, that people will forget. Well, what better way to make people forget than to camouflage the real issues of the Province by spending the entire time on this Meech Lake resolution, Mr. Speaker? I think people are getting a little weary of hearing the Premier and his colleagues say, but we have only been in office for a short period of time. Mr. Speaker, in two weeks

time the Premier will be leading his party into the second year of their mandate: the people want you to spend time at home.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

The people want you to spend time at home dealing with the issues. Because you, Mr. Premier, have many more fish to fry right here in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I would suggest that you do it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DUMARESQUE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Eagle River.

MR. DUMARESQUE:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I must say I am very fortunate to be in this House of Assembly. I am also fortunate today to have the opportunity to speak on this historic occasion, to have an opportunity to indicate some of the words I feel toward the future of this country. We never had that opportunity before in the Legislature of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I look forward to the next few minutes to be able to outline some of the things that concern me.

Of course, in a half an hour you do not have enough time to deal with all the complexities of Meech Lake and the constitutional problems of this country. I listened with interest to what has taken place in this House over the last number of weeks, and especially over the last few days

on the Meech Lake Accord. I guess I wanted to have this opportunity to outline some of my central objections to the Accord, and outline why I am against this particular document.

One of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I am dead set against this Accord is because I am a Federalist. I believe in the Federal Government. I believe in a strong Federal Government.

I also object to this particular Accord because I sit here in this House as a minority; I sit here in this House as a Member of the Metis Association; I sit in this House as one of the few Members from Labrador in this particular Legislature; I sit here in this House, also, as somebody who grew up with the minority of Quebec, with the Anglophones on the Quebec North Shore; I sit here knowing what has happened to the Anglophones of the Quebec North Shore.

I also, Mr. Speaker, take great pride in dealing with the issue as it is before us, but also in the form that is before us. I mean it is not every day that we have to come to the point of rescinding a particular resolution. Many scholars have noted that it is certainly a very, very rare occurrence in our parliamentary democracy, and certainly I think everybody should take it very seriously. I do take it very seriously; I take the rescinding of any particular resolution in this particular House of Assembly with utmost caution.

And when I get prepared to speak on this particular issue I have to say why, why is it that we have to take these steps? Why is it that at this point in time the Premier

of the day and the Government of this Province have to take this particular step? I say, Mr. Speaker, that there is no doubt about people who have expressed concerns over this resolution and have expressed concerns over Meech Lake and the lack of debate over Meech Lake?

You know, we have heard from different people saying in past points in time, first when it was introduced, there was no need for any debate, there was no need for public hearings.

There is no doubt that at the time, at the euphoria of the signing, when people thought the country was about to be brought together as it never was before, there was no need for debate, there was no need for public hearings, there was a need for celebration.

There is no doubt about what happened at that particular time, there is no doubt about the politics of perception and the image that has been created right from the very beginning. It was brought out from the darkness of that particular place to the fore of the Canadian political arena, encompassing all the roses and all the tributes that one could possibly make to any particular statement. And who in his right mind would say these are our leaders, these are our people who are making the decisions on this issue? Who would think they would ever go and display the lack of judgement they did? Nobody did. But it was not too long, Mr. Speaker, before people started to wonder. As the resolution was brought into the different Legislatures, as the media began to have a look at it and open it up, as people in this country

began to look at it and see their place in that agreement, as the women's groups got together and studied this agreement, as the Native people of this country got together and asked, 'Where are our places in this agreement?' as the minorities of the country, particularly the Anglophones in Quebec and other linguistic minorities outside Quebec got together and asked, 'Where are our places in this country?' they said, 'No, we are not convinced we have our places in this country. Meech Lake does not protect our particular places in this country.' And, they and the media looked at the essence of that document.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that as I view this move with utmost concern, I am disappointed with a number of things: I am disappointed that people trivialize the matter so much; I am disappointed that people belittle others' concerns; I am disappointed with the fearmongering that is taking place over this agreement, of late; I am very, very disappointed to understand that the Federal Government is preparing to put an open book on the advertising dollars to different communications firms to go out and sell Meech Lake, as they did Free Trade; I am very disappointed that people on all sides of the House and in all parts of this country are coming to this issue with their political baggage well in hand, and they are playing straightforward, crass, partisan politics with it. I think that is wrong.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DUMARESQUE:

I listen to different speakers and I cannot help but say the proof has to be there. People say they do not agree with different parts of the agreement. As the Member for Torngat Mountains noted in his speech today, he disagrees with the Senate not being part of this Accord; he disagrees with the Supreme Court judges and how they are going to be affected; he disagrees with the Native people and where they will be; he disagrees with parts about where provinces will not be coming in, and the amending formula. My lord, he only had a half-hour and he had already disagreed with about 50 per cent of it! I mean, how long do you have to go about defending the truth against pure crass politics?

The Opposition House Leader stood up today and blatantly said he disagrees with our position and that he heralds this Agreement as prospective unity for the country. And he compliments the Premier on it. Of course, he compliments the Premier, because he is the one person today who is recognized from coast to coast as a nation-builder, a person committed to federalism.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DUMARESQUE:

The record will show that in 1987, when this great document was brought into this House and debated for a number days, the Opposition House Leader did not have the opportunity to stand up and articulate the great benefits of that Accord at the time. I wonder exactly where his heart is?

I just want to revert now, Mr. Speaker, to a couple of things I noted in the beginning about one

of my basic disagreements with this Accord. It centers around federalism, what federalism means, what it has meant to the United States, what it has meant to Australia, what it has meant to other parts of the world which have actually used this exercise for the betterment of all its people and for the betterment of all its regions. It has meant tremendous strides for minorities, for the weaker regions of their countries, and for people who feel disadvantage through no fault of their own.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the reason we are taking this step, at this particular time, in this particular House, is because at this point in time we recognize that federalism in Canada has failed. Federalism, at this point in time, has failed to come together and take care of the weaker regions of this country, and to take care of the weaker in our society, namely, the minorities. You do not have to go back through a lot of history, any study of regional economic disparity will show that in the beginning of the country, when we started to build the country and bring together the pieces, you could clearly see that the per capita income of the poorer provinces, now the 'have not' provinces, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and others, when this country started to come together and work around these particular blocks, these provinces were well off, these provinces had a higher standard of living than they have now. But what happened? It does not take any great political scholar to figure out what happened. The political representations in the House of Commons, as they started to be divided up and as they became

involved in decision-making, clearly saw a path towards the well-being, betterment, and protection of central Canada. We saw decision after decision made in the protection of the infrastructure and the well-being of central Canadians. We saw departments created and we continue to see them created today, which are geared to the protection and well-being of central Canadians, and that is in fact not in fiction, not in anybody's mind, that is in fact a result of the structure that this country had operated under for those 120 years. It operated under a system where if you had the seventy-five MPs from Quebec and the ninety-five or so from Ontario, the same kind of representation was made in the Federal Cabinet. And it is not unkind for anybody to say. It is only natural to expect that people who have been given this kind of authority will exercise it; they will exercise it and they will take it to its end, and that is what has happened. It is happened to the point where we are today in a 'have not' position and we are not improving. We are in a situation in Newfoundland and Labrador today where we have the worst of all the good statistics and, I guess, the least of all the better statistics. Unemployment is well below one half or twice the times of the national average, our per capita income is significantly below the Canadian average. I do not need to go into all these statistics, but what we have is a full-fledged acknowledgement that Newfoundland and Labrador will continue to be in a position of 'have not' status. We will always be there.

And how do you say the Meech Lake Accord prohibits anything like

this from changing? Well, there are a couple of things that have particular significance. One is the amending formula. An amending formula that will be put in place now will mean there can never be any constitutional change in this country unless there is unanimity, agreement by all ten provinces. That will, without a doubt, condemn and prohibit Senate reform forever. There are not many things in this country right now that we can look to, I do not think, as parliamentarians to try and curb what I have mentioned in the past few minutes, not many things at all. You can look to a particular program and you will see again the program's objectives and the program's expenditures are going to be rationalized by the political representation. You can look at the Supreme Court and see how they are made up and what they are attempting to do. And you can look for political will. But again, you are going to come down, I think, to the one instrument of our particular structure, the Senate. That is the only instrument in federalism in Canada today that offers us an opportunity to change the way things have been for the last 124 years.

We are going to have to take advantage of this particular opportunity to forward the progress, to push towards the adoption of an equal and effective and elected Senate. We have to do that in order to provide any semblance of balance of political power in this country, and certainly any semblance of hope for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

People have to say, you know there are other things in that Accord, like the distinct society. The

Opposition House Leader has made many great speeches in this House. He has made many good insights into what happens as to the well-being of our people. But I just could not believe today, I could not believe today, that a man of his stature, a man of his experience, would get up and say that the distinct society clause in the Meech Lake Accord does not mean anything. Would be able to get up here in this House today and say that the distinct society clause does not give Quebec any more legislative power. How can you say that when you have the Premier of Quebec saying, that if he had Meech Lake he would not need a notwithstanding clause, he would override the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And that does not mean power. You can say no to the Supreme Court. You can say no to the anglophones and the minorities of Quebec because of that particular document and the distinct society clause.

As I indicated earlier, I grew up on the Quebec - Labrador border. I grew up when my father and grandfather had to deal with Quebec when they were another country. We had to grow up there with the acknowledgement that there was tariffs on the Quebec - Labrador border, that there were rangers on the Labrador border to protect the other country. That came down and it was a great day for Labrador when that came down. It was a great day for Labradorians and it continued to be a great day for all of the Canadian public including the people of Labrador and the Quebec Northshore.

But I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen that if you had grown up there during that particular time over the last ten or twelve years,

particularly since 1976 when René Lévesque first got elected and the separatists got a real foothold in the legislative jurisdictions of our country, you would have seen what a determined and isolationist perspective from Quebec City would have done to a people. The people in this particular area have undergone a revolution. They have undergone a real rejuvenation, I suppose, in the sense they have had to deal with something so completely new. But when you go up there and now see what they have to do to get employment, see what they have to commit themselves to to get employment in their hospitals and all their public buildings, and through their provincial system, you will see it is not very nice being the minority on the Quebec Northshore. You will see it is not very nice to be told you have to speak French while the rest of the country is attempting to accommodate you.

People have to put this in perspective and people have to draw lines. Because you know, things become intransigent, things come to a point where they will definitely breakdown. Reform is essential. As Machiavelli, one of the great political philosophers of our time pointed out, there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things, for the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order. We are at a point in our history now, ladies and gentlemen, in Newfoundland and Labrador, where we are on the critical step to reform in this country, and let us not be afraid of it. Let us welcome those new ideas, let us welcome that change.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DUMARESQUE:

We are at a point in time, particularly in this Province, where we have the opportunity to have some real significant impact upon the future of this country and certainly nonetheless the future of our own people. We have the opportunity today to be able to say to the rest of the country, that although we have the 'have not' statistics that everybody seems to have pleasure in pointing out, and everybody seems to have pleasure in illustrating that we do not contribute to the national good, we are at a point where nobody can take it from us, that we have ideas, and we are accentuating those ideas to the full unequivocal support of the populace of this country, from one end of the country to the other. People today are recognizing that we have a very critical role to play. We are going to have to obviously put up with a lot of pressure. A lot of people are in this for their own partisan political survival. There is absolutely no doubt about that point. We have seen it exercised in the free trade debate and we are going to see it exercised again I would submit over the next number of weeks.

But we have to, I think, at the end of the day, come to grips with where we are, and say to the rest of the country that yes, we are proud Canadians; yes, we are proud Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; but never ever tell us we are trying to do something that will break down this country. We in Newfoundland and Labrador, and indeed all the country, never told Jean Lesage in 1964 that because he did not sign, he was a traitor

to our country. In 1971, in Victoria when Mr. Bourassa, at a different time, rejected the Victoria formula. The whole country did not come about and say to him that he was a traitor to his country and that he was breaking up the Federation. And today I submit to the hon. Members opposite that you will be doing yourself an incredible injustice to be saying to our Premier and to this Government, that we are ready to sell-out Canada and that we are traitors in this country because nobody has demonstrated the qualities that the past Member just spoke of. What he would like, he said, is for us to rise above the mumbo-jumbo. He said somebody who will show some willingness, some determination, and some resolve. Well I submit to the hon. gentlemen, we do not have to rise above the mumbo-jumbo, just come down to reality and talk the facts. Talk the substance of this particular Accord.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DUMARESQUE:

And I can tell you the political will is here on this side of the House. The political will is alive and well in this country, with the people. The people recognize that this Government has been willing. The people have no doubts about our determination. And the people can be assured that we have the resolve to see this Accord changed, to see our day in Confederation.

To see our minorities protected, to see new provinces enter, to see Newfoundland and Labrador stand proud, and know that at one point in time, there were people here who recognized reform would not be

easy, to change would be demanding. But we recognize that change and reform was absolutely critical, and I can guarantee you without a doubt, that if we continue as we are going, we will get into the History Books as the Watershed Government of this country, as the time when there was brought together, not in partisan political rhetoric, but in concerted and conscientious debate about the reality and the substance of Federalism.

In closing, Ladies and Gentlemen, and hon. Members, I would just like to say, do not submit your conscience for your political stripe. Do not submit the reality of the day for the political spotlight today. Do not have your children stand up to you and say that we disagree with the Supreme Court being recognized as it is, we disagree with the Native people being neglected, we disagree with Aboriginal Rights and minority rights in the Meech Lake Accord, but we are willing to let it go. We are willing to let it go. Yes, and of course, the women of this country have revolted, unequivocally to the lack of concern for those who are in this particular Accord. So, Mr. Speaker, I feel privileged to have had this opportunity to add my bit in this debate. I look forward to the coming months and I am sure, that indeed, many Members will have times when they will consider their own consciences, if they are doing it right. Certainly, I believe that is everybody's obligation, but today, my conscience is clear and I believe we are doing the right thing for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and I urge you to do the same. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank,

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am -

MR. R. AYLWARD:

He thought it was television instead of radio today.

MR. MATTHEWS:

-very privileged and honoured as well, to participate in this particular debate, and in particular to support the Amendment moved by the Leader of this Opposition party and I would like to say to the Member for Eagle River, that I admire his conviction and how he feels about this particular issue and I am sure that most of us, if not all of us in this Chamber, think and feel about this issue with the same degree of conviction, even though we may think differently about whether or not Meech Lake, in its existing form should be passed, or Meech Lake with moderations should be passed, if the McKenna proposal should be given serious consideration or if the premiers, our own Premier's resolution should be given consideration. But it is a very complex issue that is taking a lot of time, not only in the Legislatures across the country, but it is taking a lot of time from people from Vancouver to St. John's. It has been a very widely discussed issue over the last couple of months particularly, and I guess locally within the Province the only item which compares with it from a news coverage point of view has been the Hughes Inquiry. It has not been the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation's announcement on the Petit Forte

Road, it has been the Hughes Inquiry and Meech Lake that are mostly carried by the media of the Province. I am in my District every weekend, seeing anywhere from 3 to 500 people most weekends, and Meech Lake is mentioned fairly often, but these last few weeks, people are telling me they are getting a little fed up with the Meech Lake debate.

When you look at the most important issues in Newfoundland and Labrador for the last fifteen to twenty years in this Province, the most important issue in Newfoundland and Labrador is our high unemployment rate. If you were to do a poll of the Province today, the majority of people will tell you their number one concern in this Province is unemployment. And I would suggest to Members opposite, the second most important issue in this Province today is the current state and the crisis in our fishery. After that, a number of other issues would probably rank very close together, such as amalgamation, depending on what community or group of communities you were in at the time, and Hydro rates, of course. I know what is most important to the people of Grand Bank, Mr. Speaker. If you ask them what is the most important issue to the people of Grand Bank, is it Meech Lake or the fishery, they will very quickly tell you it is the fishery.

DR. KITCHEN:

It is the same issue.

MR. MATTHEWS:

To a degree it is the same issue. Yes, I will get to that later on for the Minister of Finance.

If you ask the people of Belleoram and Gaultois what is the most

important issue, is it the fishery or Meech Lake, and the Member for Fortune - Hermitage, I would think, knows full well that the most important issue and item in Gaultois today is whether they are going to get 10,000 metric tons of redfish - not Meech Lake.

If you ask the people of St. Mary's and Trepassey and Fermeuse and Piccadilly what is the most important issue to them, is it Meech Lake or is it the fishery, they will very quickly tell you it is the supply of fish or a reopening of our fishplant. Now I say that because I have been in all of those communities. I have been there, and I know how the people feel and what they think. That is the most important issue in this Province. Not, after having said that, that Meech Lake is not an important issue. I am not suggesting that. It is an issue and it has the spotlight of not only Newfoundland and Labrador, but the country over the last couple of weeks particularly. If you ask the people in Wedgewood Park what is the most important issue to them, I suspect that they would tell you it is amalgamation because they do not want to be a part of St. John's. If you ask the people of CBS I am sure they will tell you it is amalgamation. If you ask the people of Fortune what is the most important issue, they will tell you it is the state of the fishery because they are concerned about their fishplant, but very closely ranked second would be amalgamation, as I am sure the Commissioners have already informed the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs about just how concerned they are down there about that issue.

I would just like to say to the

Member for Eagle River that I was a little bit confused because he talked about a strong central Government, he talked about being a Federalist. And, of course, that is the same position that the Premier has espoused since he stole the limelight and the spotlight on this issue.

But I would like to say to hon. Members opposite that we, I think, in this Province have experienced the scene well, what a strong central Government has done for Newfoundland and Labrador. We have seen loud and clear what a strong central Government has done for Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly on our fishery. And yet in this very time of crisis the Premier of this Province has not seen fit to talk about the fishery.

Now whether you are pro or con Meech Lake as it exists or pro or con the different amendments or the different resolutions that have been introduced across the country, to me the future of Newfoundland and Labrador rests with our most historic and vital industry. The fishery to me is far more important, and to the people that I represent which are communities from Little St. Lawrence to Garnish, from fourteen communities. The fishery is vital to them. There is no future without the fishery. And that is one reason why I was pleased, very, very satisfied with the Meech Lake Accord, that at least it had a provision on the First Ministers' agenda to discuss roles and responsibilities in relation to the fisheries.

At the time, being a Member of the Government of the Province I thought that was a very significant and major breakthrough

for this Province, to have it on the discussion agenda of First Ministers. With the Premier's proposal, that will no longer be there. With the McKenna proposal he asked to have it on the agenda for one First Ministers Conference for about a year, so they discussed it once and then it is dropped. And that is what I find -

MR. SIMMS:

At least he showed some (inaudible).

MR. MATTHEWS:

Yes, but I find that disturbing because to me he was just making passing reference to the fishery as well. But for a Province like Newfoundland and Labrador without the fishery we will have nothing or very little. Even if the Premier, and I know how strongly he feels about the Meech Lake Accord, but I find it passing strange why he is not so strong and why he is not wrapped up in the fishery more so than he is. But then I reflect on what has happened over the past seven or eight months in this Province, and I reflect on what the Premier of the Province and the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter) has said publicly, what they have said in this House of Assembly. Then I understand why, because the fishery is certainly not on the priority agenda of this particular Government and that is very, very alarming. Yes they want to downsize the fishery and rationalize, close up fish plants and take fishermen out of their boats.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. MATTHEWS:

No, I am not frightening the people. Those are the words of

the Government. That is the official position of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would just like to get back for a moment on the centralist view. On the centralist feeling of this Government and what it should be and why it is important that we have a strong central government.

Our economy is not centered around Government and the country of Canada is not centered around Ottawa. The Meech Lake Accord gives other provinces as well as Newfoundland and Labrador more say on a number of common matters, and we have heard this, I guess a number of times already. It gives provinces say in the Supreme Court appointments. It guarantees annual First Ministers Conferences on the economy, and on constitutional reform, and most importantly for this Province, as I have said earlier, it places fisheries on the constitutional agenda.

Mr. Speaker, what a vote of confidence for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador when you hear the Premier ask what good is power, or more power, if you do not have the ability to exercise it. What a vote of confidence in the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I would like to ask the Members opposite a few questions. Does the federal government determine how much wheat the prairie farmers can plant and harvest every year? The answer is no. And that is the way it should be. Do they determine how many trees the people in British Columbia can plant or cut every year? No they certainly cannot. Do they determine how much ore can be mined in Ontario? No and that is the way it should be. Do they

determine how much fish the people of Newfoundland and Labrador can catch each year? The answer is yes. Should that be? Do Members opposite agree with that? Now I feel very strongly, just as strongly as the Member for Eagle River felt about his concerns and what he wanted to see in the Meech Lake Accord, I feel just as strongly or more strongly on that particular issue.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have depended for centuries upon a number of our resources, but none as great as our fish.

We know the resources and we know them better than anybody else in Canada and as far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, we should be the ones to have a very significant say in the management of these resources. I think it is only sensible that we should do that. Clause 13 of the Accord finely gave us that chance by placing fisheries roles and responsibilities on the second round agenda.

Simply put, without the Meech Lake Accord fisheries is not on the constitutional agenda at all. Members opposite, and on this side as well, have heard a lot of talk as well over the last few months about the Harris Report. Everyone has been complaining and wanted it released. Well, there is a recommendation in the Harris Report that recommends that a permanent federal/provincial board or commission be established for fisheries management, similar to the already existing Offshore Petroleum Board. Again, I feel that is a very important first step in this whole argument over fisheries roles and responsibilities. Looking at the Harris Report, and if the

Provincial Government is going to attach any importance and significance to this particular report, and when you look at the current debate, the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord, I think it is more and more important for this Province, and for the Premier, that he make a move to have fisheries kept on the negotiating agenda for First Ministers.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of talk about flexibility, maneuverability, strong will, and determination over the past number of weeks since this Legislature has opened. People accused the Prime Minister of being inflexible, people accused Premier Bourassa of being inflexible and there are people who have accused our own Premier of being inflexible, which is true, certainly true. If we are going to resolve this very difficult, complex matter, there has to be compromise which this country was really founded on. I hear the Premier over there mumbling about Mulroney and I am sure Mulroney mumbles about the Premier. And I am sure Bourassa mumbles about Wells and Mulroney, and as long as the mumbling goes on there will be no chance of resolving this very difficult and complex issue.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. MATTHEWS:
Adjourn debate?

Is it 5 o'clock?

Mr. Speaker, it being 5:00 p.m., I adjourn the debate.

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

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to announce to Members that the Committee that was scheduled for tonight, Environment and Lands will not be held as originally scheduled.

The plan is for tomorrow, on Tuesday, in the morning in the House, to examine the Estimates of the Department of Finance and at the Colonial Building, to examine the Estimates of the Department of Development.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Same time?

MR. BAKER:

The same time in the morning and at tomorrow, p.m., the Department of Health in the Colonial Building. On Wednesday, according to my schedule, on Wednesday, in the a.m., there is Forestry and Education and p.m., Fisheries. That is the latest that I have. So Mr. Speaker, it being 5:00 p.m., I am not prepared to make the customary motion and I would suggest that Your Honour could leave -

MR. SIMMS:

Are you scheduling tomorrow night on the anticipation that we will have Committee meetings tomorrow night? You do not intend to sit tomorrow night, I take it.

MR. BAKER:
(Inaudible).

AN. HON. MEMBER:
We cannot do both.

Recessed until 7:00 p.m.

U N E D I T E D
(R O U G H C O P Y)

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

It being 7:00 p.m. I would now call on the hon. the Member for Grand Bank who adjourned the debate.

The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I resume debate after adjourning at 5:00 p.m.

I am sure that most hon. Members have had a couple of hours to relax and enjoy a decent meal except for the Fisheries Committee on this side, who have been very busy discussing fisheries matters pertinent to the Province and that ties into the basis of what I had to say before we adjourned at 5:00 p.m. when the thrust of my particular comments were dealing with the Provinces most vital and historic industry - the most important industry of the Province that being our fishery. I guess upon reflection it would seem that we made, we being the Province, a mistake in 1949 when we gave away control of our fishery resource to Ottawa as part of the Terms of Union.

Now I do not know whether the Premier would agree with that or not, because I think we sort of have a different opinion and a different philosophy on what jurisdiction we should have over the fishery and other resources for the Province. But I believe it was a mistake. I think it would have certainly been much better if we had pursued or if we

had been successful in demanding or in achieving, or obtaining some form of a shared responsibility particularly over our fishery. As I have said earlier today what, I guess, was the most alarming point for me of the Meech Lake debate is that the very low priority that the Premier and this Government have attached to the fishery. We have seen that as we have gone through the last few months of the fishery crisis, of a consistent talk of rationalization and downsizing to foregoing an opportunity for this Province to have the fishery on negotiating agenda of First Ministers for the country. I see the Premier shakes his head no. I do not see anything in the Premier's proposal that mentions the fishery. I listen to him quite attentively last Tuesday night, I believe it was in the House, when he introduced this resolution, this proposal to the House, when he spoke for one hour and as has been said before by other speakers, he did not mention the fishery once. That was somewhat disappointing for me particularly as one of Member of this House, but more specifically representing the area of the Province that I represent, the South Coast of the Province, the Burin Peninsula, where we have already been told that the plant in Grand Bank is due for closure in 1991. Having travelled through some nine or ten communities in the Province over the last month talking to people who are being negatively affected by the fishery, looking at what has happened with the proposed or supposed Federal - Provincial Agreement to deal with the fishery when we saw references made in both the Throne Speech and the Budget speech that the Provincial Government was having discussions with the Federal Government and

were willing to participate with the Federal Government financially to the best of the Province's financial capabilities or capacity. Which, of course, I understand that very well we are not flushed with dollars. But, I think, the Budget Speech specifically said that the Province had indicated to the Federal Government very strongly that they were willing to participate financially in a Federal - Provincial Agreement to get us through this very serious fisheries crisis.

Now having heard the Premier today in questions to the Leader of the Opposition and watching him on the news a few minutes before coming here, that it is quite obvious it ties into his whole line of thinking over the last few months. Looking at his approach to our fisheries crisis, looking at his approach to Meech Lake, that he still believes that it is good enough for uncle Ottawa to take care of Newfoundland and Labrador. That was the gist of what I had just watched and heard him say on television. It is quite all right for me if Ottawa comes up with a solution within the next few days or an agreement within the next few day and an announcement within the next few day that, he said that as long as it is big enough then he will accept it.

Well, the question is, what is the Premier and what is the Government doing? Of course, that ties into why in the early 1980s during the constitutional discussions that we as the Government of the day for this Province successfully demanded that fishery jurisdiction be once again placed on the constitutional agenda. In fact, at the time most of the provinces,

most of the governments in Canada supported that request, I think with the possible exception of Nova Scotia, if my memory serves me correctly.

AN HON. MEMBER:
New Brunswick.

MR. MATTHEWS:
New Brunswick, as well. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. But that does not surprise me about Nova Scotia because my recollection of what has happened to Nova Scotia over a number of very big issues, pertinent to Atlantic Canada, and Nova Scotia and this Province on the issue of offshore resources, that I have always found them very wishy-washy, not a lot of backbone and spine when it came to dealing with the Federal Government or taking them on when they should have. So I am not surprised if they were not as adamant as we were as a province in wanting fisheries on the constitutional agenda, the First Ministers negotiating agenda.

MR. TOBIN:
(Inaudible).

MR. MATTHEWS:
Of course, we at that time were not pushing to have exclusive authority over the fisheries, but we wanted at least to have some form of shared responsibility, some shared jurisdiction. And I guess it has been said a number of times before and I have said it myself that if there is ever a time in our history where if we had a better defined role or more say in the running of our fishery, if ever there was a time that we should have it it is now. And even if we overcome the present difficulties within the next five to ten years with the fish

resource problem that we have, then I as one person in this Province will not feel comfortable knowing that we take very, very drastic and severe action for a lot of our communities and thousands of our people within the next number of months in this Province to enable the stocks to rebuild, but even once we accomplish that it will be sort of cold comfort for me to know that we are going to rely on Ottawa to manage that then rebuilt fish resource. Because too often we have seen over our history that we end up in sort of a mess as we are in today, we find our way out of it, and then we are back in the same mess again. And I very firmly believe that if this Province had say in, as has been suggested by a number of people in sort of a joint board, a joint management board then the decisions will not be made in the future that have been made in the past because we as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as I said earlier this afternoon, are most familiar with that resource. We know more about it than anyone else in Canada. And I think we should certainly be partners to making decisions about the future management and allocations and so on of that resource.

And as one Member of the House, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to see reference in the 1989 Speech from the Throne that sort of, I thought at the time the Government was sincere about attempting to achieve a say in the running of our fisheries. And I quote it said 'The Province must have a greater role in the decision-making process in such fisheries matters as the establishment of the total allowable catch in the waters around the Province, allocation of

fishing licences, and other regulatory controls. My Government's objective is to achieve this by working with the Federal Government to establish a joint Canada/Newfoundland Fisheries Board similar to the Offshore Petroleum Board, to develop fishery policy and to manage the fisheries in all of the waters around Newfoundland and Labrador. This would provide effective provincial participation in the management of our basic resource without giving us the additional financial burden that would result from having legislative jurisdiction even if it could be achieved.' That was in the Throne Speech of 1989.

Now I was really encouraged when I listened to that particularly speech that day and looked at the document because to a large degree that is really where I was coming from, as one Member of the Legislature, and a Member and a Minister of the former Government. This is what we were trying for years to achieve. And I thought the Premier and this Government were going to continue that. But when I see what has unfolding in the last few months, particularly as it relates to the Meech Lake debate, that that importance of the 1989 Throne Speech seems to have evaporated. For some reason or other it does not seem to have the same significance and importance with the Premier. Now if I am wrong, and I am sure I will, he will have an occasion to try and point out to me where I am misinterpreting what has happened.

And I think that ties into his lack of priority for the fisheries in his Meech Lake position. I thought, again, Mr. Speaker, as one Member of the Legislature, if

there were ever a golden opportunity for the whole fisheries issue, and to educate Canadians about the importance and the impact of the fishery in this Province, that we had achieved that in the Meech Lake Accord, in that it was placed on the negotiating agenda of First Ministers. I thought that was a major breakthrough and, of course, we, the Government of the day, were quite delighted with that. But, what we thought, at that time, was a breakthrough has vanished. It is gone.

So I would be very interested to hear the Premier when he closes the debate on this issue and other times when he is on his feet discussing this issue in this Assembly.

I would like for him to tell the people of the Province why he has lowered the priority of the Province's most important industry, why he has taken it from that agenda. It is very, very difficult for me to fathom why that would be. It is even more difficult for the people in my area of the Province to understand. As I said earlier today, Mr. Speaker, the most important issue in their lives today is the state of the Province's fishery, and they want to see solutions coming from the Provincial and Federal Governments that will keep them in their communities for the next number of years, working at what they have always worked at and what they do best.

The Premier's priority in the Meech Lake Debate, Mr. Speaker, is based around Senate reform and getting all caught up over the distinct society clause as it pertains to Quebec. Those are the

two main prongs in his platform. And if I could be convinced that what the Premier is suggesting is going to make a big difference to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, then I would be inclined to support his position. But I have listened to the Premier and I have listened to others of his Members as they have debated and discussed Meech Lake, and I am not yet convinced as to how this reformed Senate, whoever lives long enough to see it -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Almost persuaded?

MR. MATTHEWS:

Yes, almost persuaded. No, I am not almost persuaded, because I just cannot understand how a reformed Senate is going to make so much difference to the economic future of Newfoundland and Labrador. If I were convinced that this reformed Senate was going to make life better for people in Lamaline, Lord's Cove, Point May, Point au Gaul, Grand Bank and Fortune and all around the Province, then I would be the first person in this Legislature to stand and support the Premier on this issue. But what are four or five additional Senators going to do for this Province? That is the (inaudible). They talk about economic equality, they talk about economic disparity and regional disparity, but certainly, if Members opposite were to look at what is being said on this issue, they do not believe that four additional Senators in Ottawa is going to secure the economic future of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now, that is the biggest problem I have with the Premier's position. I am not convinced of that and I do not think Newfoundlanders are

convinced of it. I do not think Newfoundlanders are convinced of that either.

PREMIER WELLS:
(Inaudible) change the Senate.

MR. MATTHEWS:
You will change the Senate? So what?

AN HON. MEMBER:
The be-all and end-all.

MR. MATTHEWS:
That is right. The be-all and end-all for Newfoundland and Labrador, certainly, the future of this Province, is not going to be so positively affected by a reformed Senate in Ottawa.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Where are they going to get power?

MR. MATTHEWS:
Where are they going to get power? That is another big question that has been asked a thousand times, but no one has said where they get it. It has been suggested they will get power from the provinces. I do not know if that is going to be the case or not, but if they are going to have more power, they have to get it from somewhere.

AN HON. MEMBER:
They will get it out of Meech Lake.

MR. MATTHEWS:
No, they will not get it out of Meech Lake. Maybe we will get it out of Churchill Falls but we will not get it out of Meech Lake.

So that is the biggest problem I have, Mr. Speaker, with the Meech Lake Debate and that is why I think it is so important for a Select Committee of this House to be struck and go around this

Province for public hearings. People are confused. The majority of people do not understand, and it is just natural that when people do not understand something, they are naturally against it. And I think the more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who become familiar with the Meech Lake issue, as tired as they are of hearing about it, then I think you will see that percentage of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that are opposed to the current Meech Lake Accord, I think that will decrease significantly, so that is why I think, we should have a select committee in this House to go around this Province with public hearings, that is why I support that so very strongly -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. MATTHEWS:
What is that again?

AN HON. MEMBER:
It has to be done properly.

MR. MATTHEWS:
It has to be done properly. Of course, everything has to be done properly. I do not know of anything that has not been done properly yet. But I think it is very important, Mr. Speaker, and I want to go on record as supporting that Resolution, that Amendment to have a select committee of the House and I look forward to other Members debating the issue over the next few days.

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

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker, there are two visions of Canada which are becoming fairly familiar to people today. One vision, is a nation with a

strong central Government, with ten equal provinces of nation with provision for new provinces as territories come of age. A central Government, a Government capable of addressing disparity wherever it occurs within the land. A nation which is capable of delivering national programs, evidenced by the medicare system which we have and various national programs which we have developed over the years. A strong nation which is united from sea to sea. A nation, Mr. Speaker, whose sum total is greater than all of its parts. A nation which has a soul, which has a character, a nation which speaks with one voice around the world. That is one view of the nation of Canada. The other view, is a nation which is balkanized. A nation which has no clear central Government. A nation made up of ten entities, ten unequal provinces, of ten provinces which are in direct competition with each other, a nation which has no direction because it has no central authority and it has no soul. That, Mr. Speaker, is the other vision of Canada. In July of 1988, right here, in this very Legislature, these two visions of Canada came face to face, right here in this House of Assembly, which belongs to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We had a debate, I cannot say it was the usual debate. The previous Administration was bent on forcing it through the House, very little time for those of us in opposition to get up and make our speeches. A lot of the people in the Administration, at that time did not even speak, they did not even address the motion, but when the vote came, the Government in power of the day, who had the majority, the vote was carried and right here in this Assembly, we saw the

death of a nation. We saw the end of Canada as a nation with a strong central Government. Some people in the Chamber on that particular day, knew what had been done. I would suggest that most of us in the Opposition - I would venture to say all of us, in the Opposition knew what had just taken place. I do not believe that all the Government Members of that day knew what they had done, that has become evident as the hon. Opposition House Leader, gets up and shows a clear ignorance of the very motion, the very Bill which was put through, when he was Government House Leader. Now he speaks as one who has just discovered it, as one who has just discovered what was really in that Bill. I do not believe he knew, he does not realize the full impact of what he had done. He reminds me of the pilot who dropped that first atomic bomb. They had no idea whatsoever, they were not aware of the magnitude of their action. On that day, on July 7, 1988, as far as I was concerned it was all over, there would be no more second chance. Mr. Speaker, how often in life do we get a second chance? I would venture to you Your Honour that it is a rare occasion indeed when a people get a second chance to change some action which they did not like. Humpty Dumpty had no second chance. When he fell off the wall it was over. However, occasionally, Mr. Speaker, there is a second chance. I remember in a former existence talking to an old gentleman in Nova Scotia who doctors had pronounced that he had two or three months left to live. He had contracted tuberculosis and that time there was no cure for it, but within these two or three months the miracle drug streptomycin was discovered. The man was called into the hospital,

the drug was tested on him and he had a second chance. He explained to me that it were as if he were dead and became alive again. He had been given a second chance. I suppose if you were to accept a literal translation of the scripture, Mr. Speaker, you would have to admit that Lazarus maybe had a second chance. There are people who give that story a literal translation. Newfoundland and Labrador on April 20, after this event had taken place, when a nation had died inside the walls of this chamber, April 20 the people of the Province went to the polls. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are a very intelligent people when it comes to electing Governments. They listened very closely to the platforms. They listen very closely to what the politicians say when there is an election on. Many people in this Province heard the Liberal Party say, if you will elect us we will do you a favour, we will do our fellow Canadians a favour, and we will rescind the Meech Lake Accord. That was our covenant. That was what Mulroney would call a sacred trust. That was a sacred trust that we made with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Elect us and we will give you a second chance as far as the Meech Lake Accord is concerned. Low and behold what happened? The people of Newfoundland and Labrador believed us and they gave us a second chance and that is why we are here today debating this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I would go far enough to call that some kind of a devine intervention. You know that in both the last

great wars people on both sides of the conflict were saying that there was devine intervention and that somehow the Germans were getting support from some greater power as we were getting some support from some great power, but I would tell hon. Members that at this very minute there are people in Newfoundland and Labrador, as I am sure there are people across the nation, who believe that there was some devine intervention in our being elected to withdraw our consent to this Meech Lake Accord. Not very long ago I had the opportunity to read a letter which came in from a Newfoundlander who lives in Gander. The letter went to the Premier and he was quite explicit in what he said, that he is convinced, Mr. Speaker, that we were elected because of devine intervention and the reason was because we were going to save the nation of Canada and withdraw our support for the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying I subscribe totally to that man's estimation of the April 20th election, but we cannot write off that kind of an opinion because, Mr. Speaker, there are thousands and millions of people in the world who do believe in divine intervention. So, it is quite possible. Far be it from me to deny that there was divine intervention. Whatever the case, whether it was divine intervention, whether it was the plain sensibleness of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, whatever got us to this stage where we are today we are now once again given the chance to undo what was done on July 7, 1987. We are here again, Mr. Speaker, and it is a privilege to be able to stand up and to take part in this debate and to have the opportunity

to save a vision, to save a nation. It is a great privilege. And I believe that it is a credit. I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is a credit - I am going to have to say a credit to the Premier of this Province because he is the one who lead the battle in the last election, but it is also a credit to the Members of the Liberal Caucus. You know we have stuck our necks out a long way in this one, and right to a person in this Caucus, Mr. Speaker, we are supporting this motion. There will be no withdrawals, there will be no one slipping out in the corridor. Every one of us to a person will vote to withdraw to rescind this motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

But not only is it a credit to the Premier, not only is it a credit to the Liberal Caucus, but I believe it is also a credit to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador because they are backing us, Mr. Speaker. Every day we are getting calls. Everywhere I go when I go out - I was back to my district on the weekend and people used to meet me and they used to say, 'Now tell your Premier do not back off on his stand on the Meech Lake Accord. Tell him to hang in there, and we are prepared to stay behind to his back.' So, Mr. Speaker it is a credit to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, we are also getting encouragement from British Columbia right across to Nova Scotia, right across the nation of Canada. There are overwhelming phone calls and letters. And as the hon. -

PREMIER WELLS:

Seven hundred today.

MR. DECKER:

Seven hundred today, Mr. Speaker. Now is it not ironic. These 700 letters recognize that the future of Canada is on a pivot right here in this legislature because, let us face it, how long can Manitoba stand alone to fight against this Meech Lake Accord without our contribution, without Newfoundland and Labrador's contribution to this? It is doubtful that Manitoba could withstand the pressure alone. But how ironic it is that all the nation of Canada is looking to the youngest province of the nation and it is imploring us to save this national dream. It is ironic, Mr. Speaker.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, there are no more Newfie jokes across this nation today because Newfoundlanders have come to realize, Canadians have come to realize that the future of this nation rests on the back of Newfoundland and Labrador. I am proud to be able to tell our fellow Canadians that they need have no fear because we know what we are doing is exactly what the people of this Province want us to do, and that is why we are going to stand firm and we are going to hang in there and all of us have the sense that we are making history, Mr. Speaker. It is very occasional in the life of a person when you have the sense that you are actually making history. And we in this debate, Mr. Speaker, are making history tonight because we are ensuring that a nation will survive.

In the future our speeches, the speeches which we will make in this debate, our speeches will be read and they will be referred. I

would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the speech that the Premier made will be the basis for someone who is doing a thesis in political science. That would be quite acceptable. The Member for Pleasantville (Mr. Noel) I am quite certain that the speech that he made will be used as someone does their research. The Member for Exploits (Mr. Grimes) his speech will be used. The Member for St. John's East Extern (Mr. Parsons), no doubt, his speech will be used as well. Even the most serious play needs some comic relief, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. DECKER:

The speech that is made by the Member for St. John's East (Ms Duff) a speech, Mr. Speaker, that I will never forget, because I do not believe Hansard can pick up the anguish of that internal struggle which is taking place in the conscience of that hon. Member when she made speech. She was caught between her own conscience and the party line. Hansard records words, but the emotion, the anguish, the internal conflict will not be shown in Hansard. So when her speech is being studied at some future date, the students are studying her speech will just write her off, they will assume that she took the same stand as her Leader took and as the rest of her Members took, and it is unfortunate that would happen because I believe that hon. Member, Mr. Speaker, is having a serious struggle. And it would not surprise me in the least if when this vote is finally called, it would not surprise me in the least, if that hon. Member were to stand up and vote with us on this particular motion because I

believe she has a lot of anguish. We are making history right here in this Legislature. We are making history not just for the future of Newfoundland and Labrador, although that is included, but we are making history for the nation of Canada and the future of Canada depends on us.

I want to say to people across the land in the Atlantic region, in Quebec because as the Premier and all of our speakers have pointed out we do have a great concern for Quebec. I want to assure the people in the Prairies, the people in Ontario, British Columbia, I had the fortunate experience, Mr. Speaker, in working in eight provinces of the ten in Canada, I still have friends in most of them, and I want to tell them that we are going to stand firm on this one because we believe we have a mission. But not only to the people from British Columbia to Newfoundland to Cape Race, but also to our own children and our childrens' children and generations who are yet unborn because what we are doing, Mr. Speaker, will have a tremendous impact upon this nation.

Pierre Trudeau when he introduced his book a few weeks ago made this statement he said, 'Canadians have to make up their minds do they want a loose Confederation of Provinces, which exists courtesy of the Provincial Governments or do they want a real country with a real government, a real nation.' Mr. Speaker, I believe that Canadians have made up their minds. I believe that Canadians want a real country, that Canadians want a real nation. And, Mr. Speaker, our message tonight is that we are going to make their dream possible and that

we are going to deliver to our fellow Canadians a real nation and a real country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Green Bay.

MR. HEWLETT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess William Shakespeare would have said something like this, Once more into the Meech dear friends for merry England and St. Clyde. And, to my hon. friend opposite who just finished speaking I say a very eloquent speech but I would remind him that Humpty Dumpty also had a great fall.

Mr. Speaker, I support this amendment to the main motion, the amendment itself requiring that you refer these matters to the House of Assembly before you refer them to the Governor General is only a courtesy and Lord knows, Mr. Speaker, this debate could do with a little courtesy. I remember the day my former boss Brian Peckford resigned and had a news conference downtown. He indicated he no longer had the necessary ruthlessness with which to run the Province. I can assure everybody in this Province that our Premier of today certainly still has that necessary ruthlessness. The events of Friday, Mr. Speaker, show great contempt for the democratic process, a very strong willful desire to push this motion through the House regardless of what people say and regardless of what people think.

Mr. Speaker, it is too bad that we cannot build a fish plant on the shores of Meech Lake because I think Meech Lake is filled with red herring. Some time ago I took occasion to avail of a free time political broadcast on one of our television stations and at the time I indicated that Meech Lake and amalgamation from the point of view of this administration were only smoke screens but I also indicated that where there is smoke there is fire and the fire would be coming from our burning boats. I think once again the Liberals in this Province are advocating that we burn our boats. The economy of this Province is in a crisis and it will certainly be in a greater one as time goes on. The economy of rural Newfoundland, based mostly on the fishery, is in desperate trouble and the ironic thing about it is that if Meech Lake should go through on amended at least the matter of the fishery would be on the constitutional agenda for some time to come. Hopefully, until such time as we got at least a degree of influence over it. When the Meech Lake Accord was originally being negotiated the First Ministers of the day really got together to bring about an Accord that would only bring Quebec into the Confederation family. However, as events progressed the Prairie Provinces basically came to the conference and indicated to the other First Ministers that there was considerable anti-French sentiment in their jurisdictions and there was no way on earth they could go back home with any kind of a constitutional amendment that did not at least reference senate reform. That being the case the Premier of our Province at the time, Brian Peckford, indicated that over his dead body would

Senate reform be listed as being on the next agenda without fisheries being on it as well. And, Mr. Speaker, guess who fought having fisheries on the constitutional agenda? The same provinces that the Premier is getting in bed with these days, the Maritime Provinces. The Maritime Provinces in fisheries matters are natural rivals in Confederation because quite simply, Mr. Speaker, they want our fish. So, as a result of the Western provinces really pushing senate at the time our Premier of the day was able to get fisheries on the constitutional negotiating table. It is no surprise today that in Mr. McKenna's parallel accord he would want to have fisheries to come off the agenda very quickly. Whenever a Mainlander is against something whereafter that tells me one thing, Mr. Speaker, that we are after something good for ourselves. It is passing strange that this administration right now is negotiating an offshore agreement under an umbrella agreement called the Atlantic Accord. For many, many years the Government I worked for fought very hard to obtain such an agreement from the Trudeau administration with absolutely no luck at all. Mr. Trudeau had a very centralist view of the nation. He did not believe in provinces having the power to pull themselves up by their own boot straps. He believed that that the well-being, especially of the outlying hinterland provinces depended on a strong central Government and the largess thereof. Now we have a Provincial Government, strangely enough, which believes in a very strong Central Government and which does not believe the Province has any place at the fishery negotiating table,

or at least any significant place with a guaranteed right to be there. We have a Provincial Government negotiating an offshore agreement under the auspices of just such an agreement. One wonders why this current administration is not pushed to have another clause in the Atlantic Accord taken care of, and that is the enshrinement of the Atlantic Accord in the Constitution. That way, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government, probably under a Prime Minister of centralist tendencies would not be able to tear up the Atlantic Accord. Many hon. Members opposite, I believe are supporters of Mr. Chretien in his fight for the Liberal leadership of Canada. Should Mr. Chretien become Prime Minister in a Federal election, what does that bode for the Atlantic Accord? Mr. Chretien would not give us the Atlantic Accord or any reasonable facsimile thereof. He wanted us to have an off-shore situation where we depended totally on whatever scraps Ottawa was willing to give us, and now we have a man running for Prime Minister, supported by the majority of the people opposite, who would never have given us the Atlantic Accord. The Atlantic Accord is not yet enshrined in the Constitution, Mr. Chretien, and I have heard the Premier, wished to tear up the Meech Lake Accord, what guarantees do we have that they will not tear up the Atlantic Accord. The Federal Government gets stuck for money in a few years time. Why easily tear up the thing, why would it bother to share with Newfoundland, that, for which we fought for ten years. That, which the Liberal Government of Canada would not give us under any circumstances, so I find it passing strange, Mr. Speaker, that

the party opposite would tear up an agreement which gives us at least a foot in the door, on having more influence over our fishery, while at the same time negotiating an off-shore agreement under an umbrella agreement that gives them a foot in the door, that if they move fast enough on it, would be a constitutionalized foot in the door. But, be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, here we are! The people of Triton told me on the weekend that they are worried sick that their fish plant probably will not survive the next round of quota cuts. Meech Lake is not the most important subject on the streets in Triton.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What about Mr. Cashin (inaudible).

MR. HEWLETT:

We met with Mr. Cashin, earlier tonight, too. Yes that is true, and one wonders, what Government, both levels of Government are willing to do about the Newfoundland fishery. What are they willing to do to mitigate the tremendous social costs that are coming out of this. Federal Government appears to have some sort of unilateral plan coming, but my fear is that it will just be retraining, mobility, that sort of thing. I do hope that they will see fit to put money in the fish plants to keep them alive in the interim and until such time that the stocks rebuild. The funny part about it is, that the Provincial Government all along, especially during the last sitting of the House, was more than satisfied with the response of the Federal Government to the fishery crisis and they themselves have done absolutely nothing. It is very convenient now, that they have no jurisdiction over fishery, they threw up their hands and say I

would, if I could, but I cannot. People, Mr. Speaker, feel abandoned. People especially in the fishing communities, because in a place like Newfoundland, the role of the Provincial Government and the role, especially of the Premier is to lead the people of the Province, and so far this Premier has been more content to lead the people of the nation -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) punch line?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Rather than the people of the Province.

MR. HEWLETT:

No. It is not a punch line, it is a tragic line, I am sorry. But here we are Mr. Speaker, with all kinds of serious problems in this Province, especially as it relates to its economy. Jobs are the issues out there on the street. Unemployment is the issue on the street, closed down fish plants are the issues on the street and what are we doing in here? We are talking about the Meech Lake Accord which was done with a couple of years ago, now we are going to try and tear it up and hopefully, from the Premiers point of view, the nation will be better off, because of it. Well, Mr. Speaker, I fear that we are on a dangerous path for this nation and if this nation is on a dangerous path, then I think there are very serious consequences for the Province in which we live. Let me make a few remarks, Mr. Speaker, about the Premier's approach to this particular situation. The Premier, among his colleagues, the First Ministers, might be likened to a group of children playing with a meccano set, where you take various components together, and you screw them together and you

make things, you make constructions. Our Premier is a new kid on the block, among the constitutional premiers and he walks in to the Premiers' conference and he sees a construction called the Meech Lake Accord, mind you it is something that has been in the making for well over 100 years, I suppose, so it is probably not a pretty site full lumps and bumps and irregular shapes but it is the essence of what Canada is all about, and how Canada was constructed. You might say, Mr. Speaker, the construction that the Premier came upon was something of an ugly duckling but at least it was a duckling.

Canada is an experiment, Mr. Speaker, and the results are not in on that experiment. The experiment may fail. Canada was not born of revolution, civil war. The constitution was not imposed upon it through the force of might or by a small elite of the landed gentry as was the case in the United States. Our Constitution came about over a long period of compromise, negotiation, haggling, fighting amongst ourselves, and as a result as I have said, we get the ugly duckling. But our Premier, the new kid on the block comes around and decides to smash the ugly duckling. He is going to build a beautiful construction. But what the Premier fails to realize, Mr. Speaker, is that his beautiful construction has to be made from the same pieces. He is going to find out very soon that he is going to have to fit square pegs into round holes, and short spans are going to have bridge wide distances. It will not fit, Mr. Speaker. A constitution trying to have a grand concept of a constitution, but a constitution has to be practical, a

constitution has to be real, above all else a constitution cannot be imposed upon a nation by one man. Pierre Trudeau found that out and Premier Wells is going to find that out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEWLETT:

Constitutions are not generated in power vacuums where one descend from above and sets up your beautiful construction. Many of the Premier's constitutional proposals and many of these other colleagues will tell you so, and constitutional experts will tell you so, they are not practical in the real world.

Getting to Meech was a painful process but the Premier would have it start all over again, but do we have a guarantee that if we start all over again that Quebec will participate? Do we have any guarantees in what way Quebec will participate? They say, some do, that Quebec may separate. But I can bet you one thing, Mr. Speaker, if Meech fails and assuming that Quebec does not separate, whatever comes of this country afterwards will be a much looser federation than was allowed for in Meech Lake. Because Robert Bourassa cannot give, because if he does then Jacques Parizeau is going to be right in there behind him filling the vacuum that he left. Robert Bourassa has his back to the wall, and for once in my life I am surprised that Liberals are not sticking together. You learn something new everyday, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, whatever comes of it. If the hon. people opposite think that Meech Lake is too loose, it is not a tight enough

confederation whatever comes of it will be loser at a minimum. That is rather ironic because the Premier's view of the nation is a much tighter nation state. The Premier's view is that of Mr. Trudeau's.

Look at a few other points that the Premier is into, the Senate, it is panacea for our position down here in Newfoundland. Number one, his Senate is a pipe dream. It will not come easy and if he thinks he can impose it on the nation he is just going to learn reality the hard way. We look at our neighbours to the South, the United States there is no way that you can convince me that the two Senators from Mississippi are equal to the two Senators from California? Precisely because California has 30 million people, and is rich and prosperous and dynamic. So the theory is one thing, the reality is another. There is no comparison between those two states. And the United States is absolutely rampant with regional disparity. And the only counter to regional disparity they have ever had in the United States is military spending. And now, Mr. Speaker, with peace on the go all over the world regional disparities in the United States are going to grow much greater as the U.S. closes down a lot of its military bases. And if we have our equal Senate I do not think you are going to convince anyone that the two Senators or the five Senators from Newfoundland will be equal to the five from Ontario. That is a theory, but it is not going to work like that in reality.

And there is another factor which really has not been given much voice in this Assembly with regard to the Senate and that is partisan nature of a Senate. If you elect

your Senators then the three major political parties will be involved in that election. And I remember very well when Brian Peckford was fighting Pierre Trudeau looking for an Atlantic type Accord on the Offshore and we had five Liberal Members of the House of Commons in Ottawa, only one of them was in the Liberal Cabinet, the other four were free to vote for their conscience. But how did they vote? They voted with their party. They put their party before their province. And Senators will do the same, Mr. Speaker, and if none of the Senators are in the Federal Cabinet, then they will all vote for their party. So that will diminish considerably the regional counter balancing aspect of any given Senate.

The people pushing the Senate, Mr. Speaker are the West. And the reason they are pushing the Senate is on a lot of major public policy issues. The West thinks alike. The West therefore will have a tendency to vote as a block and that is the reason the West is very keen and do not think that Atlantic Canada will vote as a block because the Maritimes and Newfoundland are worlds apart, Mr. Speaker. They might be a block of three, but we will be a block of one, fail, do not worry.

And as for the limitation on Federal spending powers you talk about red herrings. Nothing in Meech Lake is going to stop ACOA or DREE or any of those things, it only applies to national cost-shared programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction, new programs at that. So, if you want to invent a national day care program it would fit perfectly under that theme, but if the Federal Government wants to come

down here and set up paper clip factories until it is blue in the face, there is nothing in Meech Lake going to stop it. And as for Quebec being a distinct society, that is reality, Mr. Speaker. Ever since the quiet revolution in Quebec the rest of Canada has been trying to come to grips with that reality, with that fact. And you can write all the Constitutions on the face of the earth and you can make everybody as equal as they can be on the face of the earth, but words and paper will not change that reality. They are different. And the distinct society clause in the Constitution will not be dealt with by a court in isolation. The Constitution of Canada recognized the two nations founding this nation, the bilingual nature of the nation. There is a clause in there that says this and that will not derogate from the provinces or from the Federal Government. So the distinct society clause will not be dealt with by a court in isolation. So the rattle changes, the rattle powers that the opposite side say will accrue to Quebec as a result of that clause, I think that is a red herring too. Pink, maybe at the most, but certainly not red.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
(Inaudible).

MR. HEWLETT:
Let us talk about process, Mr. Speaker. A big word. Just like they do in a fishplant. The Premier talked much about how the original Meech Lake Accord was done in your smokey hotel room at 2:00 in the morning with just First Ministers present that sort of thing.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Cigar smoke.

MR. HEWLETT:
Cigar smoke. Mr. Trudeau did not mind the cigar smoke, Mr. Speaker. His little constitution with Brian Peckford playing a major role at the time was put together in your cigar smoke filled room at two o'clock in the morning. Certain mainland Cabinet Ministers would have you think it was done in the hotel kitchen. But everybody puts the best light on their own situation. But the fact of the matter is, that was done privately behind closed doors. It was not referred to provincial legislatures at all. There was minimal debate outside of the House of Commons. Indeed at the beginning Mr. Trudeau tried to ram through his own version of the Constitution and Charter of Rights, without anybody having any say about it. It was going to be done unilaterally.

AN HON. MEMBER:
That is right.

MR. HEWLETT:
And Mr. Trudeau is the Premier's hero. His ideal of how the nation stage should be run. Mr. Trudeau gave us our Charter of Rights, Mr. Speaker, but it was not the Charter of Rights that Mr. Trudeau wanted.

AN HON. MEMBER:
You are being anti-French now.

MR. HEWLETT:
I am not being anti-French.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. HEWLETT:
Well that is the Minister of Finance.

MS DUFF:
Let the man learn.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are dipping into the French wine.

MR. HEWLETT:

If Mr. Trudeau adopted in his Charter of Rights, Mr. Speaker, our denominational school system and many other or our Terms of Union would be thrown out the window during the first court challenge that occurred.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEWLETT:

But it was up to the Premiers of this country to put a stop to that, it was up to the House of Commons of this country to put Mr. Trudeau's constitutional proposals before the court. And they hemmed it in a little bit, toned them down a little bit, so as a result we have a Charter of Rights, but we also have a Charter of Rights which reflects the con Federal nature of this nation.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Confederation. Con (inaudible).

MR. HEWLETT:

This is a Confederation, Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. HEWLETT:

Then you complain that Meech Lake was done behind closed doors, but he is willing to close a blind eye to what Mr. Trudeau did.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes. (Inaudible).

MR. HEWLETT:

Very selective morality we are talking about here, Mr. Speaker. And now the Premier who is in the

inventor of the public hearing process is absolutely mortified of it. In my opening remarks I made reference to what happened here on Friday, it showed that the Premier was absolutely terrified to get this out among the public, to have your ordinary pensioner, like my father whom I spoke to the weekend, realize that you are tinkering with the survival of this nation, and if the nation should fall what happens to your pension?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Fearmongering! Fearmongering!

MR. HEWLETT:

It is not fearmongering, Mr. Speaker, it is realmongering.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEWLETT:

I had to deal with the Council at Triton on the weekend and they were worried sick that their fish plant is closing down. But they would be doubly worried if they realized that the Federal programs that normally come into effect when a one industry town has the legs cut out from under us are no longer there because there is no Federal Government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Fearmongering!

MR. HEWLETT:

That is why the Premier is afraid of an informed public. Everybody I have talked to -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No he is not.

MR. HEWLETT:

- said he sounds good. He is a smooth talker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEWLETT:

But what does he mean?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Tell us more about public hearings.

MS DUFF:

Do not stop now.

MR. HEWLETT:

It is really funny, Mr. Speaker. It would be funny if it was not funny. But we are into very deep trouble in this country. And the hon. crowd opposite think that everything is fine. They can tinker with the constitution. They can tinker with what has already been arrived at. And that Quebec somehow with all the pride and to some extent chauvanism that those with Quebecer, and heaven knows we Newfoundlanders have suffered enough on the wrong end of that to know that that province can, like its Mother country France that still struts around the world like it was the Soviet Union or the United States, still thinks it has got an empire, and it does not. There is a degree of chauvanism has really irritated Newfoundlanders and I understand where they are coming from, but think how people of that ilk will react.

My friend from St. John's East (Ms

Duff) talked about the night of the long knives. We might not think it was the night of the long knives, but the point of the matter is they do.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is right.

MR. HEWLETT:

And I cannot see a Canada without a Quebec in it. And I have a funny feeling that hon. gentleman opposite and ladies opposite think that it is possible to have a Canada without a Quebec. And I think that is fundamentally opposed to the notion of a Canada. But you do not really realize how angry, how upset they are going to feel if Meech dies. It is not going to be a simple thing where we go back to the bargaining table and we are all buddies again and will try to work it out again, because they are not going to put up with that, any more than a Province like Newfoundland would put up with it if someone tore up something we arrived at in good faith.

On the mainland, Mr. Speaker, they talk a lot these days about the faith of this country. Up there, they actually talk about what if down here, people say, 'What odds!' I have constituents, people who supported me. When I talk to them about this, they say, 'Oh, go on! Let them go. Who cares?' That is speaking from your gut and not necessarily from your head. Because up there, they are actually thinking about, in the Province of Quebec, 'What if?' in real terms. They are not pretending. I do not think they are blushing - bluffing, I should say. In the end, we might be the ones who are blushing if we are the ones who give this nation just a little push and send it over the

brink into the abyss.

I spoke to a friend of mine on the weekend. He does not like Quebecers, I suppose for a lot of reasons that a lot of Newfoundlanders have a resentment. But he said, 'I guess we are going to have to give in to them, we have no choice.' Now, it is debatable as to whether or not you are giving in, because it is very debatable as to whether or not the distinct society clause really gives them anything extra special.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They are going to be (inaudible).

MR. NOEL:

How come they will break up Canada over it if there is nothing in it for them?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) Ron Pumphrey.

MR. HEWLETT:

It is a matter of pride. It is not something you can quantify. It is a matter of politics. You have heard of the lemmings, they all get together and run off the cliff in one big bunch, and it does not make sense. It happens. And that is what we are faced with in this country.

Our Premier, as I indicated in the T.V. debate with my friend from Bonavista South (Mr. Gover) on Friday night, we already have two provinces that have a problem with this Accord. Our Premier is adding fuel to the fire. He is trying to push the country forward into something that might turn out to be a disaster.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, when the President of France stood on the balcony in Quebec City and said,

"Vive le Québec libre!" Well, Mr. Speaker, whether he likes it or not, the net effect of our Premier's actions makes his battle cry, "Vive la République de Québec." But my battle cry, Mr. Speaker, is "Vive la Province de Terre-Neuve et Labrador."

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, first into this land which we presently call Canada came people from the West, the Inuit, men and women, who crossed the Bering Strait over the ice and settled the North. Bold, courageous people, they left one land and went to another. Then, came paddling across the South Pacific, the people who founded the Innu nation, and they, too, came from the West and settled throughout North America, including Canada, a very courageous and bold people. And, then, from Western Europe came another group of people who settled in Newfoundland, in St. John's and Harbour Grace and Hermitage and all around. They founded a civilization called Newfoundland, based on the sea, and they developed many skills, a very intellectual, very powerful group of people, people who built houses, who came up with new things and developed a somewhat unique language, a distinct society, Mr. Speaker, if ever there was one!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. KITCHEN:

Newfoundland is and has been a distinct society, the first distinct society of Europeans in the nation that is now called Canada, and they founded it with great courage and determination. At about the same time, slightly afterward, came another group of people from Western Europe and they settled in that part now called Canada which is Quebec, a group of people who developed a culture based, not on the sea, but on the land, who have their own distinct language, society and customs which they developed over the years and they became the second distinct society of European origin. So, Mr. Speaker, we have in this country Innuit, Innu, Newfoundlanders and French Canadians, four basically distinct societies. Then other people came and we have a multi-cultural society but we have basically two distinct societies from Western Europe. That is what we have here, and always courage to leave what was to try something new, to try something different. Mr. Speaker, we had in this place called Newfoundland over the 400 or 500 years of our history good times and bad times. We became a country in 1855, if my memory is correct, and things were good for awhile. Then came the great depression and it devastated the people of this land. Then some coward craven, I think it was a Tory, decided he would give her back to Britain, so Britain came over and we had Commission of Government forever so many years. Thanks be to God, I was born free, born before Commission of Government and there are a few around here who are free. Thanks to be God I was born a free

Newfoundland. Now, Mr. Speaker, we did have trouble during these Commission of Government years. After the war people began to think, this Commission of Government is not the best thing we ever had, let us try to get Responsible Government back again. We are in a better condition now. Some people said, but we are doing very well under Commission of Government, do not rock the boat. Let us keep it like it is. The sky will fall down they said. Oh, no, said the Responsible Government people, let us try Responsible Government. Let us be courageous and try Responsible Government. Another group of people said, let us be courageous and let us join Canada. So, we had two very courageous groups of people, one fighting the other, both determined to change their state, and there were other cravens who said, let us keep Commission of Government where we have no say at all, so, Mr. Speaker, we joined Canada. It was a tremendous fight. It was not even on the ballot paper first. It was not suppose to be on the ballot paper but thanks to the fighting, conniving, and all the other things it got on the ballot paper and most of the people, we think, voted for it. Anyway, we are part of Canada. It was a bold new step, a tremendously bold new step and we did it because what we had was not good enough and we wanted something better, so we voted for Confederation. I remember sitting in the gallery when Captain Uriah Strickland was speaking and he referred to Mr. Smallwood, I cannot remember the occasion, as the modern day Moses who led Newfoundland out of the bondage of Egypt. Confederation was a bold new step. I lived in Quebec from 1945 until about 1950. I remember

Quebec so well and the people who lived there. The second-class citizens in Quebec. At that time they were second-class citizens in their own country. Working in a chartered accounting there was good old George and good old Andre who never, ever would become partners but very good to do the dirty work, second-class citizens in their own country in their own Province dominated by the English merchants, very much like we in Newfoundland were dominated by the British on Water Street. But, things changed in Quebec, and a large amount of that change is due to a person called Pierre Trudeau.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. KITCHEN:

He said I am going over and I am going to patriate the constitution. And so there was a lot of fuss about that, but we now have the constitution patriated. What has happened in Quebec was that the Quebecers by picking up their socks and fighting their own battles changed their whole status in Confederation in their own Province. Who will it say now that Quebecer's are second class in their country. Quebecer's are not second class in Canada any more, they have achieved status by their own determination and guts and a number of people were participating and perhaps the main participant in that was Pierre Trudeau, one of the main people anyway. We have to say that.

But the main point that I want to make is that we do not have to remain in subservience. We can take bold steps just as the French took bold steps, just as Smallwood took bold steps, just as many others have taken bold steps and our ancestors took bold steps. It

is important to do what is right and to take bold steps and not to be coward cravens forever crying the sky will fall down, Quebec will separate, things of that nature, always frightening the people into not doing something.

And now, Mr. Speaker, let us look at Newfoundland in 1990. We have been in confederation for forty-one years. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that to some extent while confederation has conferred certain things upon us it has conferred old age pensions and family allowances and very many other things in a social way, yet, Mr. Speaker, I submit that we are still in the economic wilderness.

Mr. Smallwood might have led us out of Egypt but he did not lead us into Cana. We are somewhere in between. We are still in the wilderness.

Let us look at the fishery. You talked about the fishery, the Federal Government has mismanaged that resource. I do not think they care very much about the fishery to be quite honest with you. It is such a small insignificant thing in the Canadian nation, the fishery is not the main topic of conversation in the House of Commons, it is not the main topic of conversation in Quebec, It is not the main topic of conversation in Bay Street. It is not the main topic. It is not an important in point in Canada. I agree with some friends opposite who made that point. But it has been mismanaged, and it is difficult to do much about it under the present arrangements.

Let me look now at the federal monetary policy. When we presented a budget we spoke about federal monetary policy being

directed towards Ontario and central Canada to try to dampen the industrial fires there. As a result of that Mr. Speaker, we have interest rates in Canada now which are extremely high and they are crippling our fishing industry almost as much as the cod quotas are. Company after company is going up the spout or having to be rescued by the Government because interest rates built on interest rates are preventing them from getting out from under. The problem is that the Federal Government refuses even though the Province want interest rates reduced, we have made our case strongly to the Federal Government time after time, and yet they say we cannot reduce interest rates we fear inflation.

But the problem is that this is the policy of the Federal Government directed at a problem in southern Ontario which is hurting this Province. We are in the economic wilderness, and similarly, with respect to regional development. This has already been touched on at great length and I will not mention it very much more.

The Goods and Services Tax has been mentioned as a new tax brought in to help industries in central Canada, which are large and exporting industries competing in the global market. It will hurt people and not help industries in this Province.

What has happen, Mr. Speaker, is that we are a part of an economic situation. We are in the hinterland, we are still a colony, from a colony of Britain to a colony of central Canada and they are the metropolis. We buy our manufactured goods from them, they do not buy from us. So the

political decisions and the economic decisions are made in the metropolis and they are not made with our power because we have very little. I will give you one example that the infamous power contract which, it did not look infamous when it was signed, but over the years it began to look pretty bad. And the windfall profits that Quebec got from that is enough to pay our - we have a provincial debt now of \$5.2 billion, \$5.4 1/2 million after this year is over, this coming up year. If the windfall profits from the Upper Churchill were devoted to paying off our debt in a half a dozen years it would be paid off, do you know that? And in the sixty years of the power contract we would be ten times paid off. And yet they refuse to negotiate. They refuse to say, boy, you got into a bad deal, like Shylock of Old, they said, 'We want our bond. We want our bond. I want me bond.' So all right that is what they said to us. And when we went to the Federal Government they said the same thing. We are not going to interfere, even though everybody recognizes it is unconscionable. We are stuck, they got us by the short hair on the Upper Churchill. But now I can tell you something else, we got them in the same place on Meech Lake.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. KITCHEN:

The Premier before last, the penultimate Premier, Mr. Peckford, many of us admired the way that he took on Ottawa because it is the same problem that Newfoundland has faced ever since Confederation, his problem, our problem, whoever Frnak Moores problem, it is the same problem. And he thought that

he would do it through the Canadian courts. I will sue the So and Sos. So he brought them to court. He might as well have stayed home. He did not get anywhere with it, did he? So that route, the legal route was not any good to us. There is no point in going to the courts on the Churchill Falls power contract, I guess.

So what do we do? Where are we now? We are in a situation now where we in this economic morass where we can continue to subsist on handouts from Ottawa and live reasonably well without much pride, and continuing to be second class citizens of this nation or we can do something about it. And what I am saying is this, that just as Mr. Smallwood could be compared to the modern day Moses, so we have a Joshua here who will lead us into the promised land.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

DR. KITCHEN:
And he will do so.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

DR. KITCHEN:
Because this is a bold new step, Mr. Speaker. What we need in Canada, it is not the chicken littles where the sky will fall, if you ever question anything. Oh, my, my the sky will fall. Do not say a word against Quebec. They will get angry. They will pull out. We will lose our pension. We will lose the pittance we are getting. I say that we need people of courage in this Canada, and one of the things we have to do and we need more political power, a bit more, and I support what we are doing here for

this reason, I believe that with the Senate, where the provinces are equal, we will have some more political power. We will not have all power, but we will have more than we have now, that is for sure. Here comes Joshua, who will lead us into a new confederation. That is what he is doing - a new confederation, with different rules. Because, Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland may not be able to outvote Canada if we have an equal Senate, and if we all have four Members, or whatever it is, or five or six, our five will still not be able to outvote the other fifty-four. But I can tell you this, that while two provinces can control eight right now, eight provinces will control two from here on in, at least as far as the Senate is concerned, and that is pretty simple mathematics, that is.

And it is not only Newfoundland which does not like the power we have in confederation, British Columbia does not like their power in confederation, Alberta does not like their power in confederation, Saskatchewan does not like it, Manitoba does not like it, Nova Scotia does not like it, New Brunswick does not like it, P.E.I. does not like it, we do not like it, and sometimes Quebec does not like it.

So the power will shift in a significant way with an equal Senate, and I believe this is about our only chance in the foreseeable future for us to gain more political power and more control over our destiny, and that will be a very bold step, similar to all the bold steps that were taken when Mr. Trudeau and the French in Quebec decided they were no longer going to be second-class citizens in their own land, when Smallwood and the others decided

they were going to join Canada, when our ancestors came over here, when the inuit came over. We have a whole history of building a country on determination and courage and faith, and not being the coward cravens who say you cannot do anything, do not rock the boat. We must rock the boat. We must rock the boat! And that is what we are doing now. We are rocking the boat.

Mr. Speaker, I attended a meeting not long ago, when the Ministers of Finance met together, and I could not believe this, because some of the Ministers of Finance, whose Premiers support publicly the Accord, came up to me after and said, tell Clyde to keep her going because we are for him. Our Premiers are a bit chicken. They do not want to offend Ottawa. Now! I could not believe it. I said, you have to be kidding. Do you not back your own Premier? Yes, they said, we do publicly, but we are going to tell you to tell him that.

MR. HEWLETT:

Name them. Who are the Finance Ministers? Name them.

DR. KITCHEN:

You will get them, because what you will do - there is a leak. The man with the leaks will find out.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to take one last chance. The Member for Grand Bank said he was almost persuaded to get up his courage and come and vote with us. I am going to ask the Member for Humber East and the Member Mount Pearl, and all the other Members to stand up when the vote is taken on this and vote with us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I was enthralled listening to the Minister of Finance giving references from the Bible. I think he was a little mixed up in his words, because he was talking about the former Government taking to court our case over the power rights, which we lost, and he stated we lost with some glee. The reason we lost, of course, was because they had a very smart lawyer. The lawyer's name we will not mention, but perhaps we should say instead of a Joshua, somebody who sells out his Province is known by another name, which also begins with J. So maybe we should change the name of the biblical character.

He talked about Commission of Government and how proud he was that he was born before Commission of Government. And then he joins a Government that is governed by commission. Every decision that is made in the Province, everything that is not being done, is being done or attempted by the commission under Dr. House.

The Minister of Health talked about his vision of Canada. I, too, have a vision of Canada, but not the Trudeau vision of a strong centralist government, where the rest of us have absolutely no say. My dream is a dream where all players in the national dream participate, not just the ones in

Ottawa and the rest of us sit back as paid spectators; that has been going on for too long.

The Premier and the present Government, Mr. Speaker, and this is why I support the amendment, have been doing a tremendous job of camouflaging their inability to Govern, to address the real issues in this Province by putting all their eggs in one basket, and that basket is floating upon Meech Lake. Now, one of these days that basket is going to develop a severe leak and the Premier and his Members will be like many of the fishermen today, floundering around trying to keep afloat, and when they look to this Government and they look to the Minister of Finance, who just spoke, for attention, for some assistance to keep them afloat, what does he do? He throws them an anchor. So while Rome is burning, Nero is fiddling, and he is fiddling with the lives of Newfoundlanders.

I attended a fisheries conference last week in Gander. I was there for a couple of days and a couple of nights, also; I was there the night the Minister of Fisheries spoke and embarrassed himself and everyone there, and they called for his resignation the next morning. But at that conference, for the two days and two nights, where you had people from all over the Province, people representing many different organizations, and this can be verified by the Member for Fogo, who was also there - we were the only two politicians there, I might say - not one person ever mentioned Meech Lake. They could not care less about Meech Lake. They were concerned about the real issues of today in Newfoundland, one of them being the fishery.

We have plants closing all around us, people being put out of work, fishermen wondering whether they are going to have markets this year, and the Government turns a blind eye and a deaf ear, and that was evidenced today by the failure to debate the Dr. Harris Report, which only now has become public. This was the first day, the first possible time for debate on the important issues. And if we had a serious situation before today around the Province, the release of that Task Force certainly aggravated any anxiety and concern that was out there in the hearts of these people. So the Government once again has shown that it is more concerned with its own attention it is trying to get on the Meech Lake issue than it is with focusing that attention on the needs of the people around the Province.

The Premier has listed six major concerns about the Meech Lake Accord. He has raised these concerns, even though he was not a participant in the lead-up to the signing of the Accord. In all the preliminary meetings over the past X number of years, the other provinces of Canada and Newfoundland, Newfoundland heavily involved in fact, tried to find a way to accommodate Quebec within the Constitution, and when in all these years, from 1982 up, these Premiers worked time and time again to find a way to bring everybody together to unite once and for all this great nation of ours under our own Constitution, the Premier of Newfoundland today was not around. Then he comes in, after a decision and an agreement has been reached, and, like the spoiled brat that he is, he does not agree and wants to take his ball and go home.

He placed his own interpretation on what went on. And there is nothing wrong with that. We are all entitled to our own interpretations. The unfortunate thing about it is he is now trying to force his interpretation of the Meech Lake Accord on -

AN HON. MEMBER:

He has done a good job.

MR. HEARN:

He has done a good job of forcing it on people opposite. But he is now trying to force on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and people all across Canada, his interpretation of the Meech Lake Accord.

Some of the issues: The Premier talks about the distinct society clause. He feels that it will give the Quebec Legislature and Government a special role to preserve and promote its distinct society and create a special legislative status for one province.

The Premier must remember that Newfoundland is also a distinct society. We do have our own distinct society clause, our own distinct clause enshrined in the Constitution, our denominational rights, rights which a lot of people throughout this Province right now wonder if this present Government is going to stand up for and defend rather than try to have removed. They are very concerned about statements being made by the Minister of Education in that light, by the way, and I am sure he is aware of that.

But Section 2, the distinct society clause, is such it recognizes and confirms an existing role. There is no grant of legislative jurisdiction there,

Mr. Speaker. It works with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and not against it, and it is applied by judges and not by politicians. Meech Lake ensures that courts are sensitive to Canada's linguistic duality, and it is in relation to the linguistic duality that we have the interpretation of distinct society.

Despite what we say about powers that will be given Quebec under the distinct society clause, we must recognize the fact that Quebec can and does now invoke its distinct society in Charter cases. To remove that from the ambit of the society clause would be to take away a right Quebec already has.

Another concern is the constitutional amending formula. The Premier feels that extending the constitutional veto to all provinces as a means of accommodating Quebec's request for a constitutional veto will effectively halt all significant future change. One of his greatest concerns is that it would virtually destroy all hope of Senate reform. He thinks that smaller provinces will have little or no chance of achieving a rightful place in Canada unless we have a Triple E Senate, one that is elected and equal and effective.

Meech Lake does not alter the general amending formula, and the Premier knows that. Unanimity is not a new concept in Canada; there are all kinds of examples where it has been used in the past.

The Premier wants all provinces to be equal in status and rights, yet he supports the present formula for Senate reform, where we have seven out of ten provinces - the present amending formula - or 50

per cent of the electorate. And if we eliminated the number of provinces and used the 50 per cent, two of the provinces, Quebec and Ontario, could make any decision they so wished. Even with the seven provinces, which the Premier presently supports, Newfoundland could be left out in the cold; three of the Atlantic Provinces could be left out in the cold.

If the Territories are welcomed in under the Canadian umbrella, as they hope to be in the future, and I would certainly support them in that, where we would have twelve provinces, what would we have then? Eight out of twelve? Nine out of twelve? Eight out of twelve in the amending formula would mean that all the Atlantic Provinces, including Newfoundland, could be left out of any decision-making at all.

The Premier says the worst flaw in the Meech Lake Accord is the process that resulted in the First Ministers, eleven of them, the Prime Minister and ten Premiers, telling 26,000,000 people how they will be governed. What about one Minister, one Premier telling 600,000 people how they will be governed? Because what we have in Newfoundland at present is complete and utter dictatorship. And if anybody questioned that, and the word has been used over this past year, if anybody ever questioned the fact that Newfoundland was under dictatorship -

AN HON. MEMBER:
Dictator?

MR. HEARN:
Yes. Dictatorship.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Strong language.

MR. HEARN:

And, of course, most of the people who say we are under dictatorship sit over there on the other side of the House.

But if anybody ever questioned that it was not true and they sat in this House on Friday, without a fear they would say, we know what we have been saying right along is factual. Because we saw an example here in this House on Friday of complete and utter dictatorship.

MS VERGE:
What happened?

MR. HEARN:

What happened? We had a Premier, I will not say a Government, I will not say Government Members, I will say a Premier overriding a decision made by the impartial person in this House, the Judge of our Assembly. And then he talks about Senate reform and about electing the Supreme Court and proper selection.

MS VERGE:
Has that ever happened before?

MR. HEARN:

It has never happened before in the life of this Legislature, when a Government overruled the decision of a Speaker to the embarrassment of a very fair, impartial person who made very sound decisions knowing the consequences, decisions which were accepted by some of the Government side, by all on this side, but could not be accepted by the Premier because he knew that if he accepted the ruling, and if people found out more in an open forum about what is going on, then his little charade was about to start

to unravel.

MS VERGE:

Has it happened anywhere else in the world?

MR. HEARN:

From the best research that I have presently, it has never happened anywhere else in the free world where a Government with a majority has overruled a Speaker in the Legislature.

There is one case on record, I believe, where a minority government, of course supported by others, overruled or questioned the ruling of a Speaker, but never once where a Government had a clear majority was it done.

MR. RIDEOUT:

It happened once in Australia and the Speaker resigned.

MR. HEARN:

It happened once in Australia and the Speaker resigned, I am told.

MR. RIDEOUT:

That was the only case we could find.

MS VERGE:

Well, how can the Speaker carry on now?

MR. HEARN:

I have been in this House eight years. I do not get upset very often. I think if you go through all the Hansards in relation to the interjection parts that are in there every now and then, you will seldom if ever find my name. But on Friday it was there. Because I could not believe what I saw happening on Friday. I could not believe that for a selfish purpose somebody could just completely and utterly disregard the workings of the parliamentary system. I just

could not believe it!

You ask why the Premier did not want the resolution as was proposed to stand, and the vote to stand. Because then people would not only get more information about Meech Lake, but they would also question how come we have some discussion going on now, or some hearings, whatever might have happened if Friday's vote had held. And they would learn what happened in this House of Assembly, and they would learn that if the Premier will go to such ends to avoid the truth from coming out, how, then, can we trust a Government that is suppressing such information, how can we trust them in the information they are giving us. Maybe, as people are asking right now, there is another side to Meech Lake, and both physically and in any other way, yes, there is another side to Meech Lake.

As I say, when he complains about the worst flaw being that just eleven people are telling 26,000,000 people how they will be governed - I suggest that is why we elect leaders - then how can he rationalize not only a government but one person telling everyone - he is now telling all Canadians, 26,000,000 people, not only 600,000 Newfoundlanders - what to do?

Another concern is the restriction on federal spending power. The Premier advocates the centralist approach, which is extremely dangerous. All powers should rest in the hands of the almighty centralist Government, as all powers must rest in the hands of the almighty Premier of the Province. Meech Lake does not restrict the spending power of Parliament at all. The Premier is

afraid the provision would restrict and inhibit the use of the spending power, which will gravely influence the Federal Government's ability to establish national programs with minimum national standards, and the provision refers only to new national programs. I have not heard him spell that out.

Cost-shared programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. It does not apply to equalization payments, it does not apply to bilateral initiatives, it does not apply to Hibernia. Speaking of Hibernia, I thought by now that we might have heard something on Hibernia, as we understand all kinds of agreements are reached and are pending; we have pending announcements, if the Premier, once again, would take his finger out of the pie and let them get on with the business. The clause has nothing to do with Hibernia, or with ACOA, or any other of the existing programs. Any provisions refer only to new national cost-shared programs.

The Premier tries to leave the impression that our equalization payments will be affected, when there is no effect on equalization payments. The power of Parliament to make equalization payments and develop bilateral or regional assistance programs will not be affected by the new provision in the Meech Lake Accord.

I was reading something somewhere this evening. In fact, it was a letter to the Prime Minister of this country, a letter to the Prime Minister of this country from the Premier, and I could not believe what he said starting off. Remember a few days ago in this hon. House we questioned the Premier in relation to not raising

Meech Lake during the election campaign. It was not an issue in the campaign at all. It should have been. An issue like this should have been the focus of the provincial campaign - it should have been the focus. Now, we said it was not raised at all. The Premier corrected us and he said, It was raised. In one speech in Corner Brook, or somewhere on the west coast where it was covered by a local Corner Brook paper, there was a passing reference, and I understand there was a reference also in some unique paper which I am sure nobody in Bay d'Espoir, or Trepassey, or anybody else -

MS VERGE:

A Mainland paper.

MR. HEARN:

A Mainland paper, yes - or anybody else read. But in the letter to the Prime Minister the Premier says the following: "During the recent provincial election campaign the Liberal Party's concerns with the Accord were expressed on a number of occasions and these concerns were given significant coverage in the national media and lesser but thorough coverage in the local media." If that is not an exaggeration of the truth, then I do not know what is.

I am beginning to wonder about the credibility of the Premier. And after the performance we saw here on Friday from the House Leader and from the Premier, as I listened to the Premier explaining himself out of the situation on CBC radio I began to wonder, how can you so cleverly evade the truth? That is not what I said to myself, I said he something else. I will not say it here, because it is not parliamentary, but I probably should. I was totally

amazed at how a Premier could misrepresent the facts, could talk about something which did not conform at all to reality in explaining what happened. 'There was such a confusion in the House' he said, 'that my Members could not hear what was going on. They did not know what was going on.'

The Member for Torngat Mountains is sitting well down in the House. I was sitting here and I could hear every word he said. If you check Hansard, you will see there was no disruption at all, the Speaker did not have to all order, there were no real interjections. In fact, during the section where the Member introduced the resolution he was into a flow of debate and automatically went into a resolution. What happened in the House on Friday was that the incompetence of the Premier's team was manifest to the highest degree, and the Premier himself is well aware right now that he cannot let a boy do a man's job. And when he is off on business, and especially when his House Leader is off on business, they should not be leaving junior alone to mind the House, because he made a real mess of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN:
If the Premier had gotten on and admitted that his troops had run out when he disappeared down the corridor, that his troops, as they always when the boss disappears - when the cat goes away the mice play. They were all out in the common room and out behind the curtains paying no attention at all to minding the House and were caught in the act. And instead of facing up to the matter and saying

yes, the Opposition were on their toes, our boys are inexperienced and we will pay the price, he had to go out and twist the truth to try to make up for the lack of awareness and competence of his Members.

However, I am straying from my major points. The Premier is concerned about the appointment -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) before.

MR. HEARN:
Do you want me to continue to stray? Because there are a lot of things about Friday I would like to say. And sometime I will, when the time is right. When the time is right, the true story of Friday might be told.

Appointment of the Supreme Court Judges: The Premier questions if it is desirable to provide a role for the provinces in the nomination of Supreme Court Judges. Of course, these are Supreme Court Judges, so why should we as a Province have any say? Maybe we could suggest to him, because the Supreme Court is the Court of last resort in this country, why not have some say in who is selected for those positions?

The Premier is also concerned about immigration provisions, and I want to refer to a few statements he made. He mentioned that he was certainly prepared to explore acceptable ways to address Quebec's interest in the selection of immigrants, and Quebec being mainly a French speaking Province I can appreciate that, but he is concerned about national standards and objectives, including establishing general classes of immigrants, prescribing classes

that are inadmissible and so on. On the other hand, all provinces can henceforth conclude separate immigration agreements. He is not fussy about having provinces involved in any way in relation to immigration procedures, and what does he have to do a couple of days ago, he has to pick up the telephone, phone the Prime Minister, who does not want to talk to him first when he hears it is the Premier of the Province, but he promises the Prime Minister's aides that he does not want to talk about Meech Lake, so the Prime Minister comes and he talks to him, and he says, 'Mr. Prime Minister, Sir, I wonder if you can help us with our refugee problem, I think you should be able to do this.' So we have a Premier of a Province suggesting to the Prime Minister of Canada, to the National Government, what should be done in relation to immigration, when he is saying that we should have absolutely no say in immigration policies. You cannot have your cake and eat it to.

And then another concern is in relation to First Ministers Conferences. The Premier has a concern, and I only have 4 minutes--

MR. SIMMS:
By leave.

MR. HEARN:

The Premier has a concern about the entrenchment of two annual First Ministers Conferences in the constitution, provided in the Meech Lake Accord. He feels the First Ministers Conference is not the appropriate forum to bring to bear Provincial influence on the exercise of Federal power and national policies, and I ask him, what are First Minister Conferences for if not for the

chance for the Premier of the Province to put some heat on the Prime Minister of the Country. But the Premier says the best forum for putting pressure is the Senate, is the Senate. There is a regular opportunity for cooperation and consultation at First Ministers Conferences and, in fact, those of you who have read the Accord, and I doubt if too many have, you will notice that provision is made that on the first conference to be held following the signing of the Meech Lake Accord, there are two very important topics for Newfoundland, one that concerns the hon. Gentleman, opposite, the Senate, and if they are concerned about the Senate all kinds of opportunities to discuss it, because it is one of the major provisions on the agenda at the first conference to be held after the signing of the Meech Lake Accord.

The other one is one that is there upon the insistence of the former Premier of the Province, who thought more about the people of the Province than he did about himself, and had the fisheries as the topic at the First Ministers Conference. And if there was ever a time in the history of Newfoundland, going right back to what the Minister of Finance said, as the Province involved, and he talked about the second founding Nation going on to Quebec, and let him tell him that one of the history books shows that when Jacques Cartier, one of the first French explorers, sailed up the St. Lawrence River he and his boats stopped at a little fishing village called Renews, where I presently live, to take on water. So we were there before him. So the Premier is concerned with Senate reform. If we are going to

have a Triple E Senate, elected, yes by all means, if we are going to have a Senate I agree, it should be an elected Senate.

And I said if we are going to have a Senate, maybe the question we should be asking is, do we need a Senate. Maybe the suggestion to eliminate concerns about the Senate will be to abolish the Senate. Nobody has mentioned that one. And see what acceptance it gets across the Province and across the Country. But if we have to have a Senate, just elect it, I have no problems with that. Equal and effective, equal by having equal representation, and I wish the Premier luck in convincing his friends in Ontario and Quebec that we will have an equal Senate. Effective: a Senate can be effective only if the Senate has power, the powers of the Senate at present are not enough to make the Senate effective. They must get powers from somewhere. Consequently power will have to come from one source or other, either from Ottawa or from the provinces. And I leave you to answer the question where the power will come from.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. gentleman's time is up.

MR. HEARN:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a lot to say, but there is another day and another story to tell.

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, I used to think that the hon. Member for St. Mary's - The Capes had quite a bit of depth about him. And I used to think that he had a pretty broad understanding of concepts. When I listened to that speech, you have to say that, Mr. Speaker, deep down it was a pretty shallow speech. Mr. Speaker, when you listen to - I cannot understand how somebody could spend thirty full minutes saying nothing. I mean the existentialists would have a great bit of fun with that. Thirty minutes of nothingness.

Now, what he did say was three things that I gleaned from his speech that I jotted a little note about. The first one was that Newfoundland is a distinct society. That was the first thing he said. Now hon. Members will recall that in 1988 I moved an amendment and that amendment called for Newfoundland to be given the same rights under Meech Lake that Quebec was being given. And we did that, Mr. Speaker, to displace the resolution to have it thrown out. And what was the response of every single Member that sat on the Government's side? The Member for St. Mary's - The Capes, Harbour Main, Grand Falls, Grand Bank, Kilbride, Mount Pearl, Terra Nova, Burin - Placentia West, they voted against Newfoundland as being a distinct society. You cannot have it both ways. So, Mr. Speaker, that is the first thing. That is the first fallacy that has to be dealt with, that the hon. Member says Newfoundland is a distinct society when he votes against a distinct society.

The second thing he said, Mr. Speaker, was that fishermen in this province do not care about

Meech Lake. And what he was really doing was condemning the intelligence of fishermen all around this province, Mr. Speaker, and fisherpersons. Because what he was really implying is that they do not understand, they cannot comprehend what this Meech Lake is all about. Shame on him, Mr. Speaker, fishermen do know. There were fishermen in the Premier's office this morning from the southwest coast who were very deeply troubled about the fishery. And they brought their concerns to the Premier and to the Government and we are deeply concerned about the fishery and the fishermen's problems. And I ask, Mr. Speaker, that you listen to the quote that they left as they left the Premier's office. They said, 'Mr. Wells, stay firm on Meech Lake. Please protect our future.'

Now, Mr. Speaker, there was something else that the hon. Member said. The first thing he said was the distinct society, that has been blown out of the water. We have talked about his simplistic view of fishermen and their intelligence. That has been literally blown out of the water because the Premier proved that this morning.

The third thing he said is that the distinct society really has no consequence in law. It will not give any effect to law, to the Constitution. Now, let me just quote from Premier Bourassa, June 23, 1987 shortly after he had obtained these rights under Meech Lake as he spoke to the Quebec National Assembly, and I quote the verbatim. He said, 'Mr. Speaker, if we look into this in greater detail we see first of all that with the recognition of our distinct society we have achieved

a major gain, and one that is not nearly symbolic because the Constitution of our country must now be interpreted in accordance with this recognition of Quebec as a distinct society. Now, Mr. Speaker, what is wrong with that? It does give effect in law according to the Premier of the province that negotiated Meech Lake which blows that argument completely out of the water.

Mr. Speaker, when I think back in my time as a Member sitting where the hon. Member for St. John's East currently sits, and I recall at that time that the resolution was brought forward to the House of this Chamber by Premier Peckford. If my memory serves me correct - here is how important it was to the Government of the day - nine Members of the thirty-five that sat along these benches on the Government side, only nine spoke about this great and important and historic Resolution. In the Opposition, as I recall, the worry ran so deep, the concern was so great, that fourteen out of fifteen opposition Members rose in their places and Member after Member condemned the Government for trying to ram this Resolution through along with the two NDP Members. Mr. Speaker, that leaves me to conclude one of three things: That Premier Peckford and his Government in 1988, passed the Resolution on Meech Lake, by either being devious or by not understanding the contents of Meech Lake or by being innocent lambs. One of those three. That is all it can be. By being devious or by not understanding the Resolution, they now ask, two years later for that which they themselves would not give. They are asking for public hearings, they would not give them when we asked for them. As I

recall, the Member for Gander asked -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. FUREY:

You want to know who asked? Let me just quote from the May 1988, Evening Telegram, and I quote: 'Mr. Baker said, the Government should hold public hearings around the Province so the people can have an opportunity to understand and discuss the Meech Lake Accord and its implications, but, in response to that Fisheries Minister, Tom Rideout, who spoke briefly in the debate, before the House adjourned for the day made fun of Mr. Baker's idea and said that people all over the Province were calling for public hearings and he could not stop his telephone from ringing. He used sarcasm to put down what the Member for Gander asked for that the Government of the day snidely said no about. So, Mr. Speaker -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) public hearings now.

MR. FUREY:

We do not mind having public hearings. You have to clear the garbage out first (inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

We will have public hearings when you stand up and rescind, stand up in your place and have the courage to wipe the table clean and when a new Resolution and a new agreement is struck, this Government will have public hearings. So, Mr. Speaker, if you think back to 1988, and what I said about deviousness, what I said about lack of understanding, you can

only logically conclude one of two things. Either, a) The Members who were in the Government blindly passed the Resolution totally void of any understanding of it, of its future ramifications on this Province and on this country. You conclude either that which is really ignorance or you can conclude that they passed the Resolution in an eleven or fourteen or fifteen hour debate, knowing its future ramifications on this Province, but not wanting the people to know.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Pick your choice (inaudible).

MR. FUREY:

So, if you choose A, shame on them for being ignorant, for not finding out about this Resolution and looking into it in more detail, and if you choose B, the deviousness, then shame falls on the faces of the cowardly, Mr. Speaker. The shame falls on the faces of the cowardly, but I reserve another option and that is the option, the category that I reserve for probably a few, who sat on the Government side, and that is: I say that they understood, they probably saw the ramifications, but peer pressure drove them innocently to vote with the Government. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is either deviousness, which we cannot accept. It is either ignorance, which is no excuse or it is innocence and they have a chance to correct that now. They have a chance to correct that now. Mr. Speaker, I know, I know that there are Members who sat on this side, I know because they told me so. They told me out there behind the curtain, not many of them, just a handful, a few, that they did not understand what they were getting into. They did not understand Meech Lake but what

can you do, boy? Peckford wants us to vote for it so we have to vote for it, so they voted for it. I dare say that the hon. Member for St. John's East (Ms Duff) has deep reservations about Meech Lake because how on the one hand can you say, why are you cutting fundings for the women's centres when they are cutting the ultimate in Meech Lake which is the equality provision for women in this country? You cannot have it both ways.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

I laugh at the hon. Member for St. John's East parading all of this around, and the member for Humber East (Ms Verge), so we have a woman on the East Coast and a woman on the West Coast and you wonder where their principles really are. You have to question those principles. You may write it off to one flew east and one flew west and they both flew over the cuckoo's nest. Maybe that is what you can write it off to, but you have to question their principles. You cannot on the one hand complain about one little small piece of the Budget which was detrimental to this Province and a dispicable sham by the Federal Government and inexcusable by Mr. Mulroney and his counterparts. You cannot say that, and on the other hand wonder, not speak about, not even mention it in your speech, what happens to women's rights and that famous equality provision that Mr. Trudeau entrenched in the Charter which now has a different effect under Meech Lake because there is an imbalance. You have to question that and I wonder out loud why neither, neither the Member for Humber East nor the

Member from St. John's East spoke, mentioned, or even talked about women's rights in this Legislature on that amendment to this motion. Maybe when we come back to it you will have the courage to talk about it.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this. Here is an interesting article I would like to quote from in the newspaper this weekend. It is from Professor Peter Boswell, that famous professor who taught the hon. Opposition House Leader a couple of months in political science when he took his classes at the University. When they ask who supports the Premier I think Peter Boswell has it pretty dead on and I will quote from him. He says, it is regrettable that the Opposition has chosen to obstruct the passage of this Bill, particularly since it seems clear from public opinion polls, from open line radio shows across the Province, letters to the Editor in newspaper editorials, that the vast majority of the Province's population supports and stands behind the Premier's position. He is right. You just have to go out there and talk to ordinary people and not degrade them by saying that they do not have the intelligence to understand Meech Lake. They understand when they are not equal and that is what it comes down to. He went on to say that it is worth reiterating that thoughtful to the Meech Lake Accord should not be construed as being anti-Quebec and it is to be hoped that Tom Rideout and his Conservative Opposition will not adopt the despicable tactics of doom mongering or following Joe Clark's inane and inflammatory remarks about the FLQ crisis. It is important to understand that. The article gives in a synopsis form, he talks a little bit about

how Mr. Mulroney's public hearings on Meech prior to -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. FUREY:
- its being approved. What a sham that was because nobody wants to move an inch. There was a wonderful cartoon in the paper the other day by Mike Carnell. It showed an old car wreck; Buy it now, Mulroney said, I will fix it for you later, and he expects Canadians to believe that. Well, Newfoundlanders are not stupid and they are not going to buy that. They also asked us what kind of comments we are getting from the letters that are coming in bag loads to the Premier's office every day. The Premier mentioned to me, just before I spoke, that he received over 700 letters today from across the country. Here is an example of one: Dear Premier Wells, I wish to compliment you on your wise and principled counter proposals to the Meech Lake Accord. Personally, I am strongly opposed to any agreement which does not include Senate reform as opposed to the pious promises that we hear. Recognition of the native population and of their rights, and protection against the possibility of any Province being able to veto the territories from ever becoming full fledged provinces.

As far as I am concerned, Mr. Premier, you are my Premier and are the only one who is really speaking for me. Most of the rest of them are either out of touch with the grass roots, something like the Opposition, or are too cowardly to take a principled

stand. Or, they are blinded by the commitment to bring Quebec into the Constitution at all costs. As it stands, Mr. Premier, the price is too high. If Bourassa want to arrogantly pout and threatened to take his bat and ball and go home, ask him to take Mr. Mulroney with him. These sentiments do not come from a redneck or a racist. They come from a federalist an ultratolerant Ph.D. who thinks of himself as a red Tory, whose children have always studied French where it was offered with two of them having been in immersion since kindergarten, and who teaches sociology at the University level, none of the above however, blinds me to recognizing arrogance when I see it. And telling the bullies to stuff it. Keep up the good work Premier. From British Columbia.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:
Here is somebody from another Province wishing that Premier Wells could only be his Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to table that. Here is another letter.

Dear Mr. Premier: I recently shared the privilege along with six hundred other Manitobians from all walks of life of listening to you, Clyde Wells, explain the reasons for your Government's rejection of the Meech Lake Accord. Mr. Wells you received several lengthy standing ovations as you made the case for all of us lesser populated Provinces. You came to Winnipeg to promote an understanding of and support for Newfoundland's vision of Canadian nation building. You succeeded.

Indeed, you are rapidly becoming the most compelling and eloquent ambassador that Newfoundland has ever produced.

The people of Canada have now become aware that a new national star is in the ascendancy, rising in the outer most east. Your self-evident logic, sincerity and courage in the face of a central Canadian intimidation, threats and bullying puts shame to the majority of Canadian political leaders. Newfoundland is fortunate to have your leadership. You may well be nurturing the Prime Minister's job in this country in the not too distant future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

Manitoba.

AN HON. MEMBER:

One more, come on.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting when you look back at the history of the patriation of the Constitution in 1982, when Mr. Trudeau and the Liberal Government - and I tell you that the country is really looking at this Trudeau - Wells one, two punch. They are really waking up to what is happening on Meech Lake. I will tell you as one Member standing in this Legislature, and I said it anytime and anywhere in Newfoundland when I was in Opposition, I was one Member who was very, very proud of Pierre Elliott Trudeau and the fifteen years that he gave unselfishly to this country under very stressful times both in family and public, he gave quite a lot personally to this country and he has made this country awfully strong. I think

that Canadians from coast to coast recognize now after a cooling off period just what a great Leader he was. It comes down fundamentally to one of two situations, you either buy the Joe Clark philosophy which Mr. Mulroney is mouthing now the community of communities, the supermarket concept of Canada, roll your cart up the aisle and pick and choose. Or, the central Government's strong Canadian Federalist policy brought forward by Mr. Trudeau. But it is interesting at that time when Mr. Trudeau tried and the Liberal Government, and as the Premier rightfully points out there were a number of high profile French Canadians sitting in that Cabinet of that day, when they brought home the constitution. So you cannot really say that Quebec was left out. There were seventy-one or seventy-three French Canadians sitting in the Parliament of Canada at that time that voted for The Constitution Act as we know it, 1982.

PREMIER WELLS:

Of the total Provincial and Federal, 109 for and 78 against.

AN HON. MEMBER:

A division.

MR. FUREY:

One hundred and nine for, and seventy-eight against, if you consider all of it within Quebec.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. FUREY:

And it is interesting if you look at it at that time there was a group known as the Gang of Eight, and those were the eight Premiers who said 'No, Mr. Trudeau, you cannot bring home Canada's

fundamental law, the constitution that binds us all, which give effect to our rights, you cannot bring that home unless you bring it home on our terms. And Trudeau said to him, and in effect it is quoted very well in a book by Ron Graham, called One Eyed Kings which discusses the four past Prime Ministers. He said, 'If you do not want to do it on those terms, I will go over the heads of the Premiers of this country and go directly to the people in a plebiscite, in a national referendum and ask the people of Canada from coast to coast do you want your fundamental laws patriated and brought back home to Canada?' And Mr. Peckford and the Gang of Eight ducked for cover. They huddled into the back room for fifteen minutes, came running out and said, 'You cannot do that.' Why did they say that? Because they knew, because the people from coast to coast would have said yes, Mr. Trudeau. We probably do not vote for you, but, yes, Mr. Trudeau bring home our constitution. Bring it back to Canada. Let us have our own landmark constitution, The Constitution Act of 1982.

And I think that is what the Premier of this Province is saying now too and saying it to the country. He is saying it to the Province. He is saying we have been hoodwinked. We have been had. We said it in Opposition, and, in fact, if I can quote the Premier, as Leader of the Opposition from May 17, 1988, just so that everybody knows, and the Province knows and anybody that is listening knows, that clearly he put it in the record and put all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on notice, he said, Mr. Speaker, 'The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador will give the people

of this Province an opportunity to express their opinion fully on Meech Lake after the next election. Because if the proclamation is not made by that time we would use the provisions of Section 46 and put in a resolution to revoke the existing resolution and give them an opportunity to decide whether they do indeed want Meech Lake. And whether it is, in fact, in the best interest of the Province, 1988.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

And for those who talk about Quebec being left out when we think of it, a French Canadian in the most senior position in the country, his chief Lieutenant Mr. Lalonde, Quebec, Mr. Chretien, Quebec; Mr. Roulette, Quebec; and the list goes on. And here is an interest letter that the Government House Leader just passed me, from a former employee in the Quebec Government? He said, 'Dear Premier', March 26 of this year, 'You are quite right in contradicting Prime Minister Mulroney's statement about Quebec's stand on the constitution issue of 1981-1982. They were not left out. They kept themselves by previous decision. I was working for the Government of Quebec at the time with the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs on June 9, 1981 the Minister Claude Morin, convened all of his officials in the big auditorium of the complex, and he announced to them that whatever the proposals in Ottawa, no matter what they are Quebec would not accept anything.'

Now that is a government employee with the Ministry of Departmental Affairs in the Government of

Quebec. And why should they accept anything? They were a Separatist Government, Parti Quebecois it stood for separatism. They are not going to join something when they are trying to get out of it. How ridiculous would that be? But the people who were sent to Ottawa from Quebec, the seventy-three MPs, voted for The Constitution Act of 1982.

MR. SIMMS:

You can sit down if you like.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Your time is up.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, let me just say a few more things. Something else that they rejected and which really bothered me as a Member from Newfoundland. Premier Peckford at the time rejected a constitution that had in its preamble, We, the people of Canada proclaim that we are, and shall always be, with the help of God, free and self-governing people. Born of a meeting of the French and English presence on North American soil which had long been the home of our Native peoples, and enshrined by the contributions of millions of people from the four corners of the earth we, the people have chosen to create a life together which transcends the differences of blood relationship, language and religion. We willingly accept the experience of sharing our wealth and cultures while respecting our diversity. We have chosen to live together in one Sovereign country, a true confederation built on a constitutional monarchy and founded on democratic principle

faithful to our history. They rejected We, the people of Canada, the 'Gang of Eight', those Premiers. They could not see that in the preamble, because it drew away, by implication, power from the province. They chose a concept of Canada that weakened the heartland, that weakened the central core, and what would that do to the weaker provinces? The weaker the Central Government, the weaker the little provinces, because the Central Government has to stand up for the weaker provinces. That is where the whole concept of transfer payments and equalization and sharing the wealth of this country came from, from a strong Central Government, willing to share. You want to take away that sharing; you want to break down that sharing; you want to carve it all up into ten communities, ten little countries in a bony-thin nation called Canada. That is not good enough. That is just not acceptable. It is certainly not acceptable to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, when we hear hon. Members talk about what the Senate would do, we have to take into consideration that if they really wanted Senate reform - and I have heard some of them say they wanted Senate reform - you have to ask yourself, not just Premier Peckford, if it was so important to him; but Premier Getty, who claimed it was so important to him, and other Premiers, why did they not hold out until they got Senate reform if it was that important? Why did they bend, in the long wee hours of the night, in Longvin Block, to the will of

Mr. Mulroney? Because that is essentially what they did.

We talked earlier about Members who sat on this side, in the Government, voting for Mr. Mulroney, bending their will, and I said it happened because of one of three things, deviousness, ignorance or innocence. And I think some of them were innocent, although ignorance is no reason to accept it.

Mr. Speaker, we said that we wanted a Triple "E" Senate and it was important to us.

MS VERGE:

(Inaudible) West Virginia.

MR. FUREY:

Well, I will talk about West Virginia. The hon. the Member for Humber East, from the West, who flew over the cuckoo's nest, I will tell her about that now in a second. We said that it is important to have a strong Senate and it is important to have an elected, effective and equal Senate. And she asked about the United States. Well, I did a little bit of homework about the United States. I pulled eight small states. Let us talk about them. All of these little states -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Name them.

MR. FUREY:

I will name them. I will table them. I will even read them for the hon. Member if he wants me to.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. FUREY:

Okay, I will read them, because if I table them, he may have trouble deciphering. These little states

have two senators each. They go in to their Federal Government with equal say; they go in and they are effective; and they go in and they are elected. So the three components of the Senate that we see under this resolution, the United States has. Now, let us look at some of them. The Member for Humber East asked me to talk about some of them.

Maine: one million people; gross domestic product last year, \$17 billion; unemployment rate, 4 per cent.

New Hampshire: one million people; gross domestic product last year, \$18.5 billion; unemployment rate, 2 per cent.

Vermont: 550,000 people - Does that sound familiar? -; gross domestic product last year, \$8.6 billion; unemployment rate, 3.6 per cent. Two senators, equal, effective, elected.

It mirrors Newfoundland, does it not - Vermont?

Rhode Island: 990,000 people; gross domestic product last year, \$15.2 billion; unemployment rate, 3.8 per cent.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. FUREY:

They cannot stand it.

North Dakota: 670,000 people; gross domestic product last year, \$10.7 billion; unemployment rate, 5 per cent.

South Dakota: 700,000 people, 9.8 gross domestic product, 4 per cent unemployment. Montana, 800,000 people, 12.1 billion in gross domestic product goods and

services produced. Unemployment rate, 7 per cent. Idaho, she asked about Idaho, 1 million people, 13.2 billion gross domestic product, 8 per cent unemployment. Look at all these little states. 4 per cent unemployment, 2 per cent unemployment, 3 per cent unemployment, 3 per cent unemployment, 5 per cent, 4 per cent, 7 per cent and 8 per cent. Out of all of those I have listed, the national average in the United States is 6.5 per cent. All but two are well under the national unemployment rate. Mr. Speaker, if there was ever reason for a triple E Senate, there is a good reason for a triple E Senate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. gentleman's time is up.

MR. FUREY:

Can I just conclude. Everybody had a minute. Mr. Speaker, can I just have a minute to conclude? The House Leader agrees.

MR. SPEAKER:

I am sorry, the hon. Minister of Development does not have leave of the House.

MR. FUREY:

I tried.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. HYNES:

Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Trinity North.

MR. HYNES:

Mr. Speaker, probably after I am finished they will want to give me leave to continue.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand in this hon. House and debate the amendment to the resolution to revoke the Meech Lake Accord. A resolution that was approved by this House on July 7, 1988.

Mr. Speaker, not being a Constitutional expert as Premier Wells claims himself to be, I like the Member for St. John's East had to do a lot of reading before I felt confident enough to be able to stand in this House to debate this most important issue. Probably, Mr. Speaker, the single most important issue to face this Province since we joined Canada 41 years ago. I took it upon myself to see the pros and the cons. I wanted to see both sides of the argument and I wanted to make myself as fully aware of the resolution as I possibly could before I voted on it in this House. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, I have perused Manitoba's task force on Meech Lake. I have read a commentary on the statement of the 1987 Constitutional Accord by Gordon Robinson. I have read Meech Lake, Setting The Record Straight sponsored by Canadians for a unifying Constitution. And some of the signatories on this little booklet, Mr. Speaker, they are not Constitutional experts, they are ordinary Canadians who want to understand this issue just as much as I do. Peter Hogg, Monique Begin, Gerald Bouey, Douglas Fisher, Francois Fox, Roy McMurtry, Jean-Luc Pépin, Jack Pickersgill, Beryl Plumtree just

to name a few. I have read Meech Lake, setting the record straight. I read the Meech Lake material that the Premier tabled in this House on Wednesday, March 28th, during debate on the pro Canada Resolution introduced by the Leader of the Opposition. I have read all of that and I have read a proposal for a revised constitutional Accord dated March 22nd, 1990 and tabled in this House by the Premier. Mr. Speaker, after reading all of this material, as well as trying to keep myself abreast with all the articles in the newspapers, the letters to the editors and so on, I was beginning to think that perhaps there really was something in this Meech Lake Accord of which we should be leery. I began to think that perhaps that the First Ministers did bow to the pressures of Quebec in 1987. I began to think that perhaps, perhaps, our Premier really did know something of which he was speaking. Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps! Well, Mr. Speaker, my perhapses and if that is a new word, I will join the leader of the Opposition in creating one, but my perhapses have now turned to stark realities. What happened in this hon. House on Friday past, has convinced me that a Premier who does not know the rules of simple Parliamentary procedure, certainly is not qualified to judge himself as a constitutional expert. If he knows nothing about the rules and procedures of this hon. House, then how in the name of heavens can he try to convince me or anybody else that he knows everything of what is wrong with the Meech Lake Accord and that he has all the answers as to how it should be fixed. Mr. Speaker, on Friday past, the slate of democracy was wiped clean by a Premier and his puppets, who, as

far as I am concerned are bent on destroying this nation. They have destroyed the rules of Parliament under which we operate and I am now convinced that they are out to destroy this nation of Canada. If the Premier could embarrass one of his own men, one of his own followers, to further his own selfish ego, then he is prepared to sacrifice this country of ours, and I say to the Gentleman opposite, that a cat toys with a mouse before he destroys it, and the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is toying with Canada as a nation. He is toying with it by attempting to rescind the Meech Lake Accord and eventually he will destroy it. Let me move on to some aspects of the Accord itself as seen from a lay man's perspective, and there are more lay men out there trying to understand this issue than there are constitutional experts. Polls suggest, Mr. Speaker, that a majority of Canadians are opposed to the Meech Lake Accord, but I believe they are opposed to it because they do not understand it, and it is human nature to oppose something that you do not understand, that is why, the official opposition, whom I support on this issue, wants this Government to hold public hearings around this Province to let the people become better informed of the issue. We were successful on Friday past, in having just that done, until the Premier, as I said before, threw democracy out the window and over turned the Speaker's ruling. Mr. Speaker, the Constitution is the single most important document in the life of our country. It is a set of fundamental rules, about the relationship between citizens and its Governments, and in a Federation, it is about the relationship between the Federal

and Provincial Governments. It is essential therefore, Mr. Speaker, that such a document be willingly and positively accepted by all participants in the constitutional process. Mr. Speaker, The Constitution Act of 1982 made the constitution a truly Canadian document. But it had one profound flaw, it had been passed over without the consent and over strong objections by the Government of Quebec and all of the major political parties at that time.. The Meech Lake Accord, Mr. Speaker, is designed to fill that gaping hole and it responds to the most moderate position taken by any Quebec Government in the last 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this Province has stated both in the House and in public that the Accord was concocted behind closed doors within a matter of hours without much thought or foresight by its proponents, who happened to be the First Ministers at that time. But in reality, Mr. Speaker, virtually everything that is in the Meech Lake Accord has been extensively discussed in constitutional debates through the 1960s and the 1970s. The First Ministers back in 1987 were building on a record of public debate, they were not starting from scratch. Meech Lake is a careful compromise and there is no consensus within Canada today on how it can be changed. If it is not ratified, Mr. Speaker, we will be throwing away all that it has achieved, and Mr. Speaker, we will be throwing it away without a clear substitute.

The resulting constitutional uncertainty would be devastating for all Canadians. Mr. Speaker, let me comment briefly on just a couple of the items in the Accord

which does not sit well with our Premier. First the distinct society clause; the Premier, Mr. Speaker, somehow thinks Quebec's Legislature would have more power than any other Legislature in Canada if it is allowed to promote it's distinct society. But even The British North America Act back in 1867 recognized the distinctiveness of Quebec in certain issues, such as education and civil law and minority language rights. We in this country have always been willing to accommodate some of the concerns of our diverse communities.

Even in Newfoundland we have enshrined in our constitution our separate school systems. We are a distinct society in that regard. Quebec is a distinct society, Mr. Speaker, it's distinct from all other Provinces of Canada. Over 80 per cent of its population speak French, and therefore Meech Lake is correct when it says Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society. However I fail to see, I do not believe there is any fear from giving the Legislature and the Government of Quebec a roll to preserve and promote it's distinct society. We have a sub-section enshrined in the Meech Lake Accord sub-section 24 of section (1) of the Accord explicitly states, and I will quote it, 'Nothing in this section derogates from the powers, rights or privileges of Parliament or of the Government of Canada, or of the Legislatures or Governments of the Provinces, including any powers, rights or privileges relating to language.' I fail to see, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier is so upset about with regard to the distinct society clause in the Accord.

Senate reform, Mr. Speaker, and the Triple "E" Senate. Again the Premier has travelled throughout this country from one end to the other, and again he is saying that if the Accord is passed as is, Senate reform will be impossible.

Mr. Speaker, historical records show that unanimity on amendments is possible. Nobody says it is easy, but they are possible, unanimity is possible. Unanimity was achieved when we brought in our unemployment insurance program. It was achieved when we brought in our old age pensions and the supplementary benefits. Thank God the Premier was not around in those days because we would not have any unemployment insurance or old age pensions. Unanimity, Mr. Speaker, was acquired in 1940, 1951 and in 1964, and it can be achieved again, Mr. Speaker, if everybody was willing. Senate reform may not be easy with Meech Lake, but I can assure you of one thing, Mr. Speaker, it is impossible without it. And besides, the Meech Lake Accord already provides two significant steps toward Senate reform. There are two steps in the Accord already. The first one says that Senators will be appointed by the Prime Minister by the list submitted by the Provinces rather than the Prime Minister choosing the Senators as he is doing right now. And second, Mr. Speaker, the Accord specifically identifies Senate reform as the first item on the agenda for subsequent constitutional conferences. And just think for a minute, Mr. Speaker, with something as fundamental as Senate reform, unanimity or something close to it would be a requirement anyway. You would have to have unanimity. Meech Lake does not entail a

change of any great consequence in that regard.

As I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, nobody says that reforming the Senate would be easy under Meech Lake, but it would be impossible to do it without it. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, Meech Lake opens the door to further renewal of other Constitutional initiatives, and it does so by ensuring that Quebec becomes a part of our Confederation. Without Meech Lake, Quebec will not be at the table and all future progress would be stymied.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitutional straightjacket that critics like our Premier claim would flow from the Meech Lake Accord does loom large, and it does loom as a possibility, but not from the Accord itself, Mr. Speaker. The Constitutional straitjacket that the Premier refers to would loom if we do not approve the Accord. Therefore I, as one Member of this hon. House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I plead with the Premier and his Government to stop toying with the future of my country and my Province. Newfoundland in a precarious situation anyway. It is now. And if Meech Lake is not ratified, Mr. Premier, my gut feeling is telling me that Newfoundland will forever wallow in the ocean of despair. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PENNEY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Lewisporte.

MR. PENNEY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, I am very pleased tonight to be able to stand in this hon. House and join the debate on the Meech Lake. We have been told by Members on the opposite side of the House that the average individual in Newfoundland does not understand what the Meech Lake Accord is all about. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am no constitutional expert, I am not a lawyer, I do not profess to understand as well as Eugene Forsey or as well as any of the other dozens of experts that have been quoted here. I do not profess to understand it as well as some of the other people in this hon. House.

MS VERGE:

You would be good for the select committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PENNEY:

But as did the hon. Member for St. John's East (Ms Duff) I have attempted to do my homework. I have read what I can find. I have asked questions. I have studied the documents. I have listened to the experts, and -

MS DUFF:

I know you were diligent. You act like you (inaudible).

MR. PENNEY:

And as the hon. Member says, I did it very diligently. Yes, that is correct.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PENNEY:

I sent a questionnaire to my District in December and I am very pleased to report to the House that I have - one of the questions on the flyer said: How do you

feel about the stand that our Government has taken on Meech Lake? Ninety-six point three per cent of them said we agree with the stand you have taken.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PENNEY:

My presentation tonight, Mr. Speaker, -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. PENNEY:

- is based on my understanding of the Meech Lake Accord, on the constitution, and the changes of it and how it impacts on the average Newfoundlander. If Members opposite can consider that my understanding as I presented is not correct, I am sure they will be pleased to correct me when they speak after I am finished.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. PENNEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by looking at what a constitution actually is. In politics a constitution is the fundamental system of law written or unwritten of a sovereign state established or accepted as a guide for governing the state. A constitution fixes the limits and defines the relations of the legislature, judicial and executive powers of the state thus setting up the basis for government. What is implicit in the notice of constitutionalism at least in the Western democracies is the basic principle of the rule of law. For Canada and other

Western nations a constitutional is one of the means of achieving the goal of a system where law is supreme. The principle of rule of law in the British and Canadian tradition a search that any interference with the freedom of any individual must be performed only according to the legal process and carried out by legitimate authorities.

No one, Mr. Speaker, is exempt from the law neither citizens nor officials of the Government. And no one can interfere with the rights of any individual except through the legal process.

Finally, the principal of the rule of law means as well equality before the law, for all Members of the political community.

This principle was clearly entrenched in the Constitution of Canada through the 1982 Charter of Rights of Rights and Freedoms. Whose preamble states that Canada was founded upon the rule of law. The function of the rule of law is briefly to protect us from the arbitrary interference of Government or Government officials in our every day lives. Also, in order to prevent unjust laws from being passed and to guard against the unjust or unequitable application of laws a constitution must go beyond the mere recognition of the rule of law. It must also set limits on the kinds of laws that can be made. The Canadian constitution also defines the structure of the political system and the relationship between the parts of the system.

A constitution should be source of pride and a unifying influence within a political community. Sometimes we may take our system

of Government for granted. I think all too often we do that Mr. Speaker. Maybe we have become too complacent with our system. We just do not realize the protection that we have in this country. But if we want to regain an appreciation of how great a country in which live we need only to look at the pride and emotion of people expressed from all over the world who have come to this country to live. I think this year, more than ever we look at the number of people who are just lining up at the airport in Gander to get into Canada. They do not do that because it is a place to get away from. They do that because this a place to come to live with pride.

Having given this information about what a constitution is, and why it is so important, I would now go on to look at the background leading up to the present situation with the Meech Lake Accord.

As we have seen a Constitution can be both written and unwritten. The Canadian constitution consists of a number of formal written documents. The core written document was the British North American Act of 1867. It established the basic rules for our federal structure such as the division of legislative powers between the Federal and Provincial Governments. The BNA Act was basically a constitution developed for a colony and was intended to be read against a whole backdrop of British Constitutional history.

The British North America Act remained a simple statute at the British Parliament. No Canadian constitutional amending formula was negotiated and until the bringing home of the Constitution

all the amendments of the Act over the years had to be enacted by the British Parliament. Attempts were made to bring the Constitution home, as we stated, from time to time, but for various reasons these attempts failed until 1982. Now, I believe that was when we had a fine Liberal Government in Ottawa under Prime Minister Trudeau. In 1982 the Canadian Constitution was patriated including a domestic amendment formula. It also included a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and an amendment enhancing provincial legislative power over natural resources.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. Member would like to call it 10 o'clock to give him a chance to gain his thoughts, or whatever, because he is going to have to stop in a few minutes anyway, rather than fool him up.

MR. PENNEY:

I will stop in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker.

However, the Quebec national assembly voted against the Constitution Act in 1982. The Separatist Government argued in general that the reforms unacceptably reduced powers of the Quebec Government. A clear majority of Federal Members of Parliament from the country, and from Quebec, voted in favour of the constitutional reforms. To protect the 1982 reforms the Quebec Government brought a court challenge before the Supreme Court of Canada arguing that the reforms were invalid without Quebec's consent. The Supreme Court ruled without a doubt that Quebec was wrong and that it was fully bound by the Constitution Act of 1982

notwithstanding the decision of the Government of Quebec not to support the Act. The Parti Quebecois was defeated in the December 1985 election and a new Liberal Government came to power in Quebec headed by Premier Bourassa. This new Government in Quebec put forward five demands to the Federal Government regarding the Constitution. Now, these are the five demands that we have heard repeated here in the House several times, Mr. Speaker. They wanted explicit recognition of Quebec as a distinct society; the recognition of rights of veto for Quebec on Constitutional amendments; limitations on the Federal spending power; Quebec's participation in appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada; and they wanted a greater provincial role in immigration. Now, the Meech Lake Accord was intended to accommodate these demands, and this is where we come in. In June, 1987, all eleven First Ministers signed the Accord, the Prime Minister and the ten Premiers of the day. This signing of the Accord set in motion the process that we are here debating tonight. The Constitution provides that all Governments must assert to certain types of amendments within three years from the initiation of the procedure, so, in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, it is June, 1990.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is the part of my presentation that I am sure Opposition Members are waiting for, the position that the new Liberal Government of this Province has taken.

MR. SIMMS:
(Inaudible).

MR. PENNEY:
I thought the hon. Member for

Grand Falls might like to hear some of it tonight, Mr. Speaker, so he could think about it overnight.

To begin with, it is important to emphasize that Newfoundland's position, like most opponents of the Accord, is not anti-Quebec. It is not anti-French, Mr. Speaker. Contrary to what has been suggested by Members opposite, we are not anti-Quebec, we are not anti-French, we are not anti-anything except anti-inequality.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PENNEY:

There is no denying that Quebec is different from all other provinces. We do not deny that. We have two official languages in Canada. Ninety per cent of one of those languages is spoken in one province, in Quebec. We do not deny that. They have a distinct culture, as well, and a distinct legal system. We accept that.

It is also undeniable that every province in Canada is different from every other province. Certainly, Newfoundland and Labrador is distinctly different from all other provinces. One of our Members here tonight spoke very eloquently on that fact.

In an attempt to satisfy Quebec and to promote its distinct identity, the Meech Lake Accord forgets to promote and protect Canada's distinct identity, and that is the fundamental flaw.

The Meech Lake Accord is not a simple constitutional accommodation of Quebec. It involves major constitutional change that affects all Canadians,

not just for today, not just for this year, but for decades to come.

The Newfoundland Government is seeking better ways to accommodate Quebec's concerns, but to accommodate them in a way that would be acceptable to the majority of Canadians as well, this Province is insisting that the Canadian people be given a meaningful opportunity to influence the constitutional changes. During the recent Provincial elections campaign, contrary to what Members opposite would say, the Liberal Party's concern with the Accord were expressed in a number of occasions, the news media knew it, the voters in my district knew it, the voters in every other district in the Province knew it. The position of the Liberal party was clearly spelled out during the campaign, Mr. Speaker, but the opposing parties did not make the matter an issue at all. They were afraid of it, so they ignored it, so the only people who spoke about it were the Liberals and the voters. Mr. Speaker, it being two minutes before the hour of ten, I adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have already announced the Estimates Committees for the next two days. I would like to point out that the Private Members motion for Wednesday will be the motion by the Member for Pleasantville, about the GST.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Government House Leader can inform me whether or not for certain, the Estimates Committees will be meeting tomorrow night, or is that something that still a matter of further negotiation or discussion or what.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, the presence or absence of the Estimates Committee tomorrow evening depends, I believe on whether the House is sitting or not. It is very difficult to run an Estimates Committee while the House is sitting and can only be done by negotiation or by leave from, or just by agreement of both sides of the House. So, if we have agreement from both sides of the House, we can run an Estimates Committee tomorrow night, if not, then we can say, forget about the Estimates Committee tomorrow night, assuming that we may be sitting. Now, in the event that we are not sitting, then we have a vacancy tomorrow night, and that is something we can only determine tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I can help the Government House Leader, probably, if he wants to make a determination early, so that Members can properly plan what they are going to be doing. We will not be agreeing to holding simultaneous Estimates Committee with the House, so, if the Government intends to sit tomorrow night, then there will not be any Estimates Committee, if that is what he is saying. Can I just conclude, since it has been a long

day, with just a little levity, if I might, Mr. Speaker, be permitted. A couple of short poems drafted by the ever witty Member for St. Mary's - The Capes, and it is related to, I think you will find it a bit humourous, some of you will. I assure you it is humourous. One is entitled 'Fateful Friday', talking about past Friday: 'The boy stood on the burning deck/rocked with indecision/He called a point of order/when he should have called Division.' Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt who that one is about.

This one is even clearer. It is entitled 'Meech Friday' and, again, it is from St. Mary's - The Capes: 'The Leader rushed in angry/His group had lost the vote/The Deputy Speaker paid the price/But Furey was the goat.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe there may be some debate as to whether that is witty or half witty.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

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

MR. SIMMS:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A point of order.

MR. SIMMS:
If there is anything half witty it is coming from the other side because you do not need a motion to adjourn it is already in order.

MR. SPEAKER:
This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.