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(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Wednesday

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):
Order, please!

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, On March 30th, of this past week, my Federal counterpart, the hon. Bernard Valcourt, released the final report of the Harris Review Panel on Northern Cod. This Report, which was anxiously awaited by the fishing industry at large, addressed a whole range of issues surrounding the management of the largest groundfish stock in waters adjacent to our Province on which our fishing industry and economy are critically dependent. Over the past several years, there have been major concerns raised over the health of the Northern cod stock. It was in this context that the Harris Panel was given a broad mandate by the Government of Canada to address a wide range of issues relating to the management of this resource. Obviously, conservation concerns must be the overriding factor in the management of any given fish stock. In this context, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador had taken a special interest in the work of the Harris Panel and holds the view that the Panel's final report provides a solid framework in which Governments, the fishing industry and the public at large can focus on those critical issues relating to the management of the Northern cod stock. The conclusions contained in the final report of the Harris Panel provide

convincing evidence that major public policy decisions must be taken to safeguard the prudent management of the Northern cod resource. Indeed, one of the strongest conclusions in the Report is that "failure to take appropriate steps to reduce current levels of fishing mortality will most probably lead to a significant continuing decline in the spawning biomass."

The panel further recommends, in the strongest possible terms, that the guiding principle must be the imperative necessity for an increase in the size of the spawning population. By implication, Mr. Speaker, acceptance of the Panel's key recommendation that, as a matter of urgency, the fishing mortality be reduced to a fishing mortality level of at least 0.30 immediately and to the level of 0.20 at the earliest feasible date, means further reductions in the Northern cod quota from its existing level of 190,260 tons.

The report provides convincing evidence that a reduction in the fishing mortality is critical and that continuing to fish at current levels will not lead to the desired goal of increasing the size of the spawning biomass. Mr. Speaker, the Report in question confirms many of the conservation and fisheries management concerns which the Province has raised relative to the Northern cod stock. In this context, the Province believes that it would be totally inappropriate for both orders of Government to ignore the strong conservation message which is conveyed in the Harris Report.

There is little doubt, Mr. Speaker, that further quota reductions, which would flow from

acceptance of the key recommendations of the Report, will have a major social and economic impact on the Province's economy over the foreseeable future. However, in the absence of these conservation measures, we run the risk of contributing to a significant decline in the exploitable and spawning biomass of Northern cod which would clearly not be in the longer term interest of our economy, our fishing industry, our people, and the resource itself. It is in this light, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is particularly concerned over a principal conclusion in the Report that "the population, the biomass, the spawning population and the spawning biomass of Northern cod are currently in decline and that the fishing mortality rate is currently at the level of 0.45 or higher."

Government's initial inclination is that all 29 recommendations of the Harris Panel Report should be accepted in their entirety. I will repeat, Mr. Speaker, Government's initial inclination is that all 29 recommendations of the Harris Panel Report should be accepted in their entirety. However, Government is cognizant of the fact that all interest groups should be given the opportunity to review the report in detail and make their views known before the Federal Government proceeds with implementation of the Report's recommendations. It is for this reason that the Province has asked that the Newfoundland and Labrador Fisheries Advisory Council meet at the earliest possible date and present its views to Government on the final report of the Harris Panel. The Council is made up of a cross-section of the Province's

fishing industry and the Council's advice will be given every consideration by the Province in formulating its formal response to the Harris Report.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I wish to indicate that the Report of the Harris Review Panel will have major implications for this Province and its fishing industry in the years ahead. I, therefore, call upon this hon. House to congratulate Dr. Leslie Harris and his Panel on the completion of a solid, conservation-oriented report.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all let me thank the Minister on behalf of the Members on this side of the House for providing us with a copy of the statement a few minutes before he read it in the House.

Let me begin, Mr. Speaker, by repeating the line that the Minister repeated twice on page three. 'Government's initial inclination is that all 29 recommendations of the Harris Report should be accepted in their entirety.' Now, Mr. Speaker, that is the Government's inclination. It is not yet the Government's position, it is not yet the Government's firm position. I do hope that it will be. I can understand that there should obviously be consultation. This is a very important document for the future of thousands of Newfoundlanders and hundreds of communities in this Province, Mr.

Speaker.

Let us be clear exactly what we are talking about, Mr. Speaker. To reduce the fishing mortality immediately to 0.30 as Dr. Harris recommends we do immediately, it means that we immediately move from a TAC (total allowable catch) of 199,260 tons, as is the case today, to a total allowable catch of 178,000 tons immediately. That is what 0.30 means. And to move to Dr. Harris's recommended level at the earliest feasible date, as he puts it in his report, of 0.20 means that we as quickly as possible move to a total allowable catch of 125,000 tons. So it must be clearly understood, Mr. Speaker, just in case 0.30 is not or 0.20 is not that what it actually means is immediately going from 199,000 tons to 178,000 tons, and then as quickly as possible thereafter to a TAC of 125,000 tons in the effort to save this stock so that the biomass will regenerate and rebuild and hopefully get back to levels, I believe as Dr. Harris says, where we can have sustainable total allowable catches of about 300,000 tons or so a year which has been, you know, with some variance the figure that most people believe can be sustained.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other very significant recommendations in the Harris Report that the Minister has not chosen to respond to yet. He certainly did not in this statement. For example, the very important recommendation that there be a significant increase in the financial resources allocated to the scientific effort and to the surveillance effort.

I believe it will be absolutely necessary that the scientific

effort be dramatically improved and increased, and at the same time it will be absolutely necessary that surveillance be increased as well. Something has to be done to respond to the problem of seals. The announcement made by the Minister of assistance for harvesting, both Ministers, I guess, is a welcome announcement but there has to be something more than that and hopefully it will be a positive approach in the sense that there will be economic reality to the harvesting of the seal herd and bringing it into proportion with the rest of the ecosystem.

Jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, is addressed in the Harris Report. Dr. Harris makes some very specific recommendations about what Canada must do to ensure that Canada, as quickly as possible, obtains the ability to be able to manage the trans boundary stock, particularly as it relates to the Nose and Tail of the Bank. One other area, Mr. Speaker, in the Harris Report that must be addressed, not only by the Government of Canada, but must be addressed on an urgent basis by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and that, Mr. Speaker, is harvesting technology. Dr. Harris, as the Minister knows and as the Government knows, has made some significant recommendations as to mesh size, harvesting technology, a better conservation oriented technology, so there are still a lot of areas, very, very important areas, of the Harris Report, Mr. Speaker, that this Government must take a position on, and I think it will be incumbent on this Government to do it early and do it as quickly as possible so that the Government of Canada understands the seriousness of the resolve of this Government

to have the Harris Report implemented in its entirety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the Premier, in Hansard December 5, 1989, was making reference to the recommendations of Judge Mahoney in dealing with the allegations surrounding the Minister of Social Services. The Premier commented on Judge Mahoney's observations that certain actions taken by the Minister of Social Services on behalf of his brother, to quote Judge Mahoney, 'may have been ill-advised or imprudent'. The Premier made this particular comment in response to that, Mr. Speaker. He said, 'I have no hesitation in dealing with it and saying that such actions do not conform to a standard of behavior for Ministers that is acceptable to this Administration.'

Now, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier said the position taken by the Minister of Finance in the House on Tuesday night in debate on the resolution to rescind our approval for the Meech Lake Accord, was silly, that it was an embarrassment to the Government. Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that such positions taken by Ministers, the Minister of Social Services in the past and the Minister of Finance yesterday, is

silly or an embarrassment to the Government or cannot be tolerated in this Administration, will the Premier do the right thing and begin to fling Ministers who break his code of ethics and his code of conduct out of the Cabinet?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

The hon. the Minister of Finance did not breach any code of ethics, did not breach any code of conduct. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation in saying that in my judgement the Minister of Finance is the best Minister of Finance this Province has seen since Confederation, no hesitation whatsoever.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Now I ask the Minister to restrain his modesty and not argue with me for the time being about that opinion.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister in the full flight of political debate here made a statement that was ill-advised, was totally contrary to Government policy on an issue and everybody knows it. The Minister, with complete integrity and competence and honesty and understanding of the position, acknowledged that and apologized. In those circumstances, this phrase of flinging people out, I am not going to fling anybody anywhere. I am going to expect and will require an appropriate level of performance, but I am not going to fling anybody anywhere. What the Minister did in apologizing is entirely acceptable and appropriate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, it is not a laughing matter, I can assure the Premier. Others will comment later in the day on the competence of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier in commenting further on Judge Mahoney's Report said in the House, 'However, he and all other Ministers are fairly warned that such actions are totally unacceptable and in future will result in a request for an immediate resignation.'

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier again, in view of such categoric statements by the Premier, how can he continue to keep the Minister of Finance in the Cabinet?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

With complete confidence in his ability, with complete confidence in his integrity, with complete confidence in what he is doing.

There is no comparison between the two statements. I do not know how or on what basis the Leader of the Opposition is trying to show some kind of a connection. If he thinks the people of this Province are going to fall for that kind of a totally unfounded suggestion and expect that the Minister of Finance should be asked to resign, I can assure him that the people of the Province are much smarter than he gives them credit for. They understand what the Minister of Finance said. They do not accept it any more than I accept

it or the people generally in this House accept it, but they are quite prepared to recognize the circumstances in which it was said, to recognize the sincerity of the apology of the Minister of Finance, as Premier Bourassa did when I spoke with him about it. He said, 'Do not worry about it Clyde, I understand. People in different circumstances may make that kind of a statement in the heat of debate at any time. I perfectly understand it.' Now if Premier Bourassa can understand it, I am having grave difficulty understanding what is behind the Leader of the Opposition's position. Does he just want to create difficulty or trouble? It is difficult enough, he does not have to add to the difficulty for the Province in what he is doing.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, my job in life at the moment is not to make life pleasant for the Premier, so he should not question why we ask questions.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance took a public verbal lambasting from the Premier yesterday in this House, publicly, live too, by the way, the likes of which I have never seen a Premier or a Leader of a Government do before. There have been some good ones done in the House in the past, particularly prior to 1972, but I do not think the likes of it was ever done to a Minister sitting in his seat and taking it, as was done by the Premier to the Minister of Finance yesterday. Now, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Finance tell the House, whether or not he intends

to voluntarily offer his resignation to the Premier since the Premier does not have the intestinal fortitude to seek it?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of resigning on this issue. If some matter comes up where we have a very serious disagreement of opinion, that may be the case. But this is not the case. I fully support the Premier in my chastisement: I deserved it. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chastisement is a nice little boy's word. Mr. Speaker, The Minister of Finance was publicly humiliated and publicly scorned by the Premier in this House yesterday. Would the Minister tell the House, how he can continue to be effective as a Minister, particularly as a Finance Minister, when the Premier has publicly declared his lack of confidence in the judgment of the Minister of Finance? How can the Minister continue to be effective in that Government?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, in the same way as I have been effective in the post in the past eleven months.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Premier. The Premier has admitted himself in this House that the Minister of Finance has been an embarrassment to his Government and to the people of this Province. He has made silly statements on his Meech Lake position, but not only that, I remind the Premier, he has bungled his Budget. The people in the Province are totally confused over the payroll tax issue in particular, and he refuses time after time to answer questions in this House. Many of his statements in the past have been declared to be unacceptable - his Budget statements of last year I recall, and on and on it goes, so my question to the Premier is, how long is the Premier going to tolerate this? And if he will not ask for the Minister's resignation because of his position on Meech Lake, what about all the other things: his bungling of the Budget and his other unacceptable positions? When is the Premier going to ask for the Minister's resignation?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Let me correct the misstatement the hon. Member used as his foundation, that I said the Minister of Finance was an embarrassment to me. I never said any such thing. I did say the comment, the inappropriate, unfortunate comment, the Minister made in the full flight of rhetoric in this House was an embarrassment to the Government. The Minister acknowledges it. Not

only will I not ask for the Minister's resignation, I would not accept it if he tendered it. Because, Mr. Speaker, he is too valuable and too competent a Member of this Government, and this Province needs his talents and ability too seriously to consider for one moment accepting his resignation.

And as for the comments of the hon. the Member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms) about his bungled Budget, he is the only one, or a few opposite, who think it is bungled. This entire Province is confident that the Minister had a splendid performance in his Budget, and did what was right. And he is talking about the payroll tax he mentioned in his question.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister and the Government with that payroll tax did the greatest kindness to the people of this Province that we could ever do in managing our financial affairs. In the end, it will be clearly seen to be as such. Now I know the hon. Members opposite are very concerned that the Government has scored a great many points in terms of its administration and its political achievement with the Budget, and they greatly regret it. I am sorry about that. We did not mean to do them so much harm, but we had to put the interests of the people first.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of the old song 'Oh Lord It Is Hard To Be Humble.' That is what the Premier sounds like to me.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier in his

response talked about how competent his Minister of Finance really is. Well let us see how competent he is. My supplementary question goes to the Minister of Finance. Twenty days have passed now since the Minister of Finance brought down this great Budget and his Budget Speech, on March 15. Groups and organizations around this Province, I say to the Minister, and businesses, are totally confused with his statements. After twenty days, I want to ask this question: Has he figured out yet who has to pay the payroll tax?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, we have figured out and we have announced in the past the general principles underlying this tax. I will be making a statement shortly in the House to clarify a few little points which are yet to be made.

MR. RIDEOUT:

You said that three weeks ago.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If ever evidence is needed with respect to the competence of the Minister of Finance, we just heard it I believe. Let me ask this, a supplementary to the Minister of Finance. Were any of the following, school boards, municipalities, hospital boards or Crown corporations included in the Minister's calculations of \$15 million revenue this year from his payroll tax? A simple question: Were any of those included in his calculations?

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, when I make the statement, all will be revealed.

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker,

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

MS VERGE:
My question is for the Minister of Finance, as well. Here we are, eighteen days after the Minister delivered his Budget Speech, we are four days into the new fiscal year, and the Minister has been unable or unwilling to explain to employers in this Province, public sector and private sector employers, whether or not they will have to pay the payroll tax. How does the Minister expect these employers to plan? How does he expect these employers to budget?

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, I have no further comment to make on this matter until my statement is made in the House.

MR. SIMMS:
How incompetent! How incompetent!

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

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance admit what is obvious to any informed analyst of his Budget, that his revenue figure for receipts from the new payroll tax include levies on school

boards, on colleges, institutes, Memorial University, hospital boards, senior citizens' homes and all Provincial Crown corporations? Will he confirm that?

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, the other night I mentioned about the fearmongering that goes on opposite, and I am sure the Member opposite is merely promoting fear amongst the people in the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

DR. KITCHEN:
Businesses, Mr. Speaker, know what the tax is, and for other organizations, this will be cleared up shortly.

MR. RIDEOUT:
You have had three weeks to get your answers straight, boy! What is wrong with you?

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker, this is outrageous!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:
This is the Minister of Finance who delivered the Budget Speech, who is personally responsible for revenue raising -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

I ask the hon. Member to get to the question. It is a supplementary.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I call on the Minister of Finance to answer this question. Will he eliminate the realistic fears of public sector employers, of school boards, of the School Trustees Association, of colleges, institutes, Memorial University, hospitals boards, senior citizens' homes and administrators of other Crown corporations that they will have to pay the payroll tax? Will he eliminate those fears here and now?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, I have had no call from any school board, university, municipality or any of these the Member mentions. I do not know where she is manufacturing these things. There is a manufacturing industry going on over there, one of the best ones they have ever created.

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear the answers to questions which were previously refused by the Minister of Finance the Minister still does not know. He is trying to find a way around the fact that he bungled the Budget, that we caught him off guard in trying to broaden the RST base. We exposed him on his Budget leak and he has not yet found a way to find \$15 million without taxing institutions, because he did not know he was doing it.

Can the Minister tell us, since he has tried to sneak \$5 million of fee and licence increase in the Budget, what items these fees and licences are, where those are applied in the Budget?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Mr. Speaker, the fees and licences are pretty well known now. We do not know for sure -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh my, oh my, oh my!

DR. KITCHEN:

We know how much the Department of Justice is going to be giving us, but what has not been worked out is how much the speeding tickets are going to be increased and things of that nature. They are being worked out, and I am not going to announce here now, Mr. Speaker, how much these things are going to be increased. What we have agreed to is an assessment in fees from these various Departments.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has just admitted that he put into the Budget an additional tax of \$5 million on the people of this Province and he does not even know how he is going to apply it. He just admitted that in the House. I have never seen such incompetence.

In view of that fact, Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Finance this: In view of the fact that he does not know which fees and licences are going to increase, he

clearly does not understand his payroll tax, in view of the fact that the Province of Manitoba is now repealing that tax because they found it was a disincentive to business and industry, and in view of all the sneaky things the Minister tried to do, like increasing prices on liquor, like personal income tax going up by \$20 million and gasoline taxes going up by \$4 million, will the Minister now admit that he is incompetent and resign?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to respond to this question about Manitoba. Manitoba has not repealed the tax. What happened was there was a change of government in Manitoba and when the Tory Government half got in in Manitoba, what they decided to do was to increase the exemption. There was a \$100,000 exemption, and so they moved it up to \$300,000, and in the second year of their mandate they went up to \$600,000, and now, I believe, they either propose or have brought it up to \$1.2 million. But they have not repealed the tax. When the Member opposite says they have repealed it or are going to repeal it, he is misleading the House.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier. I have heard the Premier in his vehement emotional denials of the comments of the Minister of Finance, his short and

curly comments, which I am sure will live in infamy when the Meech Lake is ultimately decided in this country. I want to ask the Premier if he concurs with some other comments made by the Minister of Finance in his speaking here on Monday night. Does the Premier agree with the Comments of the Minister of Finance when he says that as far as Newfoundland is concerned we are still a colony, we have gone from being a colony of Britain to a colony of central Canada? The Minister of Finance went on to say that we need a new confederation with new rules. I would like to ask the Premier, does he agree with those comments of the Minister of Finance?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Taken out of context, no. In the context in which they were given and with the explanations, as I understand them, and I will go back and read Hansard and see if it is otherwise, but my recollection of what I saw in Hansard is that the Minister was explaining that having ceased to be a colony administered by Britain, we became a Province of Canada only to find ourselves in such economic circumstances that we are effectively an economic colony, having to settle for such equalization and transfers as the two huge provinces, with 60 per cent of the Members of the House of Commons, will agree to let us have. Now that, as I understood it, was the thrust of the comments of the Minister of Finance.

Now, I have not used economic colony in quite the same words, but I understand the metaphor the Minister was using, and I

appreciate that those are the circumstances in which it is used. But in principle it is not at all unlike the concerns I have addressed, that Newfoundland and the smaller provinces of Canada cannot effectively address our economic disparity because we do not have the means of impacting on the exercise of national legislative and economic decision-making power. That, I understand, is what the Minister was saying. If that was is it is, then I agree with him.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary just on that point. I mean, if the Minister of Finance says that we are, and I suppose the Premier has the same problem I have. I read Hansard, I read what the Minister said in his speech, and I can only assume that what he said is what he meant, and he said that we have gone from being a colony of England, Great Britain, to being a colony of Canada.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. gentleman is on a supplementary and should get to the question immediately.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, the question is, quite simply, if we are still a colony of somebody, whomever it happens to be, is the Minister of Finance's and the Government's position today that we made a lot of bad mistakes, and that we did a very poor job of negotiating being part of the Confederation of Canada in 1949?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

The answer is no, Mr. Speaker. When we negotiated the Terms of Union in 1948 and 1949, we could not alter then the Canadian Constitution. That was the Constitution of the whole of Canada. Now we are in the process where we can cause changes to be made, and any Government in this Province worth its salt would make sure that any changes in the Constitution will not keep us forever in that economic colonial status. And that is what this Government is doing.

There was nothing we could have done in 1949 in negotiating the Terms of Union to alter the Senate structure of Canada, or Newfoundland's position in the Senate. Newfoundland's position in the Senate was provided in the BNA Act in 1867, when four seats were provided for, and in the change in 1915, I think it was, when it was increased from four seats to six seats.

Now there was nothing we could do with that in 1949, it was provided for in the BNA Act and we could not negotiate that kind of an amendment. But we can now, Mr. Speaker, and that is exactly what the Government is doing.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the Premier say that, and I am glad to see that this whole process of the Minister of Finance is not simply a rectifying of a Liberal mistake in 1949, and other Liberal mistakes in 1967 or 1968, when we did Upper Churchill.

Let me say to the Premier, and ask him this question, quite simply. If we are to build a new process in Canada, if we are going through the process of having a new confederation with new rules and with new regulations, will the Premier please tell me if the Minister of Finance, although he apologized, still means what he said? And I gathered from the applause the Minister received after his comments that there is a large number of the Liberal caucus who believe it. How can you build a new Canada if it is going to be based on vindictiveness, spitefulness, revenge and the process of getting even? - I got you, you got me. You got me by the short and curlies before, now I have you. How do you build a new Canada with that set of rules, Mr. Premier?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
The answer is self-evident to most people who would look at it, but for the hon. Member I will explain again. The answer is you cannot, and that is why I expressed the opinion I did about the Minister's comments. That is why the Minister explained. That is why I spoke to Premier Bourassa. So we are not proposing to build it on that basis, just the opposite. However, it does not suit the Member's political purpose at the moment to have it understood in that way, and I regret that. And I regret that he keeps trying to make it this difficult and make it appear that way when it is, in fact, not the case. I cannot accept responsibility for the irresponsible comments and actions of the Member.

MR. POWER:

One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Ferryland on a final supplementary.

MR. POWER:
Mr. Speaker, it is not my comments which are irresponsible, it was the Minister speaking in debate in this Legislature on behalf of the Liberal Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. POWER:
I will ask the Premier one more time, if he wants to send a message to all French and English speaking people in Quebec, and all the rest of the people in Canada, will he send them a clear message, a distinct message, a final message that he does not agree with the Minister of Finance, and ask the Minister of Finance to resign?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, I do not know of any more effective way to send a clear message than what I have done. Now, hon. Members opposite want to see some blood upon the floor. I understand their normal political bloodlusts, but let me tell them they are not going to see that kind of blood on the floor, because there is no justification for it.

The Minister of Finance has, with great integrity, great honesty and great understanding stood and said 'I was wrong. I was properly chastised. I accept the chastisement. I apologize.' Now

hon. Members opposite somehow want to see him hung, drawn and quartered. Well I, Mr. Speaker, am not a butcher. I am a political leader, not a butcher.

MR. WINSOR:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WINSOR:
Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. Traditionally, over the past number of years, several fish plants in this Province have received Government guaranteed loans to get them through the season. The Minister has already announced that some plants will not receive guaranteed loans. Can the Minister inform this House if any loans have been approved, and is he now ready to table the list of guaranteed loans to fish plants?

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am not going to table here now things which are under negotiation with the Government. We have tabled here recently the list of payouts we made. Almost all of them were guaranteed loans advanced by people opposite, under very dubious circumstances, I might add, very dubious.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

DR. KITCHEN:
Well, we had to pay \$40 million last year for bad debts which these people set up in their political crassness. Let me say one more thing, Mr. Speaker, in

answering this question. We had the estimates of the Finance Committee yesterday morning and there was one Member from the Opposition who was there, Mr. Windsor, who asked some questions. Another Member was there from the Opposition who never opened his mouth. That was the proper time to examine the Minister of Finance on his Estimates and his Budget and they did not show up. What a sham, Mr. Speaker. What a sham!

MR. RIDEOUT:
This is the proper time for you to write your resignation.

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

MR. WINSOR:
The Minister gets a little bit excited and carried away once in awhile.

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister. The Fogo Island Co-op has requested a loan for quite some time now. I have questioned the Minister outside the House on, I think, three occasions. Can the Minister tell us the status of that loan, and is it in any way tied to a request made by a plant in the area, in Twillingate, which we understand has had their request turned down? Was the Fogo Island Co-op request for a loan tied to that in any way?

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, I will not be discussing the affairs of plants at this stage.

AN HON. MEMBER:
They are the affairs of the

Province, boy.

MS DUFF:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MS DUFF:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the Minister of Finance. Now that he has perhaps had a little time to consider my question of yesterday, which was answered by the Minister of Social Services, or unanswered by the Minister of Social Services, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he is able to tell us what the net cost benefit to the Province is of the influx of refugees who have arrived in recent months. Not the cost, but the net cost benefit to the Province.

MR. RIDEOUT:

You have had twenty-four hours to get the answer. Do you have it?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to table this response.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MS DUFF:

I appreciate having the response. When I read it, I may have some further questions.

Does that mean that the Minister has, in fact, done, or had already done some of the calculations that would give us that answer? Is the

Minister saying now that this does answer my question, and that the calculations have been done on the net cost benefit?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:

I will say yes, Mr. Speaker, because I did not really hear the question. If she wants me to say yes, I will say yes.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MS DUFF:

I would have to say that was not only incompetent, but arrogant and ignorant as well, when a speaker is asking a question.

Assuming the answer is yes, and that the answer will indicate that certainly if there is any net cost to the Province it will be considerably less than the figures which have been publicly stated again last night, I would like to ask the Minister is any effort being made to encourage any of these highly qualified refugees to stay in this Province so that the Province can reap the benefits of their contribution as fully participating Canadian citizens, because I know the statement has been made that part of our problem is that we only have them as transients and we cannot reap that long-term benefit.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, in all our meetings with Federal immigration officials here in St. John's, the one clear message we have set forth as a

Government, and as a Department and Minister of Social Services, is that we do not want anybody, any refugee claimant coming into Newfoundland to leave Newfoundland under pressure. They all have the opportunity to stay in Newfoundland as long as they wish. We are providing them with the opportunity, if they so desire, to stay in Newfoundland or to move to any province they wish in Canada. Nobody is being forced to do anything against their will or their wishes.

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance on this year's Budget. I waited to ask this question after the estimates were done, because I know the Minister would have been briefed fairly well and up-to-date on the Estimates in this year's Budget.

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Minister would look at Statement ii, Roman numeral Page II, under Provincial Taxation, he will see that Retail Sales Tax has been increased by \$35 million, personal income tax by \$20 million, gasoline tax by \$2 million, corporate income tax by \$9 million, tobacco tax has a \$1 million increase, mining tax and royalties \$2.3 million, and the new health and post-secondary education tax is increased by \$15 million.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

Does the hon. Member plan to read the Budget?

MR. R. AYLWARD:
I am just trying to point out the increases in this Budget, Mr. Speaker. These increases I just read out, it has been explained what they are for. But there is also a Heading in this part of the Budget which is 'other' and increases taxes by \$3.2 million under the Heading, 'other.' Would the hon. Minister tell us what taxes he is taking from the people and trying to hide away in this Heading?

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, had the Member been at the Estimates hearings yesterday he would have been able to answer all these questions. Let me just say, since he was not there, that these items have increased for various reasons, the main reason being that we expect some inflation this year. As you know, the Retail Sales Tax increases as inflation increases, and so do the other questions as well, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
Question Period has expired.

Notices of Motion

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

Order, please!

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I will on tomorrow move, pursuant to Standing Order 50, that the debate or further consideration on motion No. 12, the Constitutional resolution

standing in the name of the hon. the Premier and any amendments of that motion, shall not be further adjourned and that further consideration of any resolutions, amendments, clauses, sections, preambles, schedules, titles relating to motion No. 12 shall not be further postponed.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

Petitions

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

MR. PENNEY:
Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of 240 residents of the town of Horwood. Mr. Speaker, I will read the prayer of the petition: to the hon. David S. Gilbert, the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation. The petition of the undersigned residents of the town of Horwood:

WHEREAS the Government of the Province of Newfoundland has seen fit to pave the road between Roger's Cove and Boyd's Cove; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland saw fit to pave the road through the community of Horwood; and

WHEREAS the dirt road has deteriorate, a hindrance to tourism as well as the good health of the people of the community;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Newfoundland Government pave the 3.3 kilometers of road on route 331-10 to the intersection of route 331.

Mr. Speaker, this 3.3 kilometer stretch of road has deteriorated to the point that the original bedding of the road is now protruding through the surface. I have met with the local service committee, and in the opinion of the committee, the signatures of whom appear on the top of page one, the road has deteriorated to the point that the average damage to privately owned motor vehicles using the road can be considerably higher than the Provincial average. And in there opinion, this is resulting in a reduction of the number of vehicles that are, in fact, using the road to get to the community of Horwood. They conclude, therefore, that the condition of the road is a hindrance to tourism and an hindrance to the development of that particular area.

Mr. Speaker, I realize the financial condition this Province is in, and I realize the deficit that we inherited. only twelve months ago of somewhere in the area of \$5 billion.

I realize that as a result of the fiscal restraints that we have had to impose, not all of the road work that we would like to see done in this Province can be done. I am sure all Members of the House of Assembly would like to see every stretch of road in Newfoundland paved. That is just not possible.

However, Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the concerns of the residents of Horwood. I can assure you their concerns are genuine and they are very real. I therefore with no hesitation add my signature to the petition, to the other 240. I would ask the hon. Minister if he would have his officials look into this matter.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I hesitated because I was giving the Members on the other side the opportunity to speak first and I would close the debate on it. So if you would like to speak -

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible).

MR. GILBERT:

No, you may speak now.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, as I speak to close this debate by view of the fact that the Opposition chose not to support this petition, -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. GILBERT:

You were given the opportunity to stand.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I would just like to remind the hon. Minister there is no order in petitions. The hon. Minister can now speak and that does not rule out somebody from the Opposition speaking later. He might be confusing it with another debate.

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

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, we will put it this way, custom dictates that we would deliver a petition and then someone speaks on the Opposite side and then it closes. That has been the custom in the six years that I have been here.

However, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to speak in support of my colleague the Member for Lewisporte (Mr. Penney) and the petition from the people of Horwood.

No doubt they have concerns about their road as do many people in Newfoundland because we have somewhere in the vicinity of 2600 kilometers of gravel road in this Province which we inherited when we took over the Government from the previous Government that had been there for seventeen years.

No wonder Members opposite would feel embarrassed and would not want to get up to support this petition because they had seventeen years to do something about it but they did not. So that is the reason I was waiting. I was expecting them to get up and at least support the petition but they were too embarrassed and I can understand why. When you get a situation where the roads were left in the condition they were in this Province by the previous Government, I can understand why they would be embarrassed to speak to transportation issues or speak to petitions from people anywhere in this Province.

And the people of Horwood have taken advantage I suppose of the oldest form of getting the attention of Government by petitioning it. The oldest form in the world, people have been petitioning Government for centuries. So I can recognize their concerns. I know that the

current Member has worked very hard on behalf of the people in his District and is very concerned with the roads throughout the District.

As he also alluded to in the petition he realizes the financial restraints that we are under in this Government after the seventeen years of misrule that we have been subjected to. You will hear Members opposite talk about political patronage when the roads budget is announced. And we tell them we have tried to initiate fairness and balance in the two years that we have here to do away with the unfair treatment that the people of this Province were subjected to under the seventeen years, in other words, votes for roads. So this is the sort of thing we hear the Members say when the roads budget was announced this year. And I point out to him that the reason the \$30 million is not more for local roads is the fact that his colleagues and friends in Ottawa, the fellows who wear the same jacket, the blue jackets in Ottawa, have cut back on the Federal transfers to this Province by something like \$100 million in the last four years. So with that in mind that is why the money is not available to pave the 2,600 kilometers of gravel road we have in the Province. So I will certainly take the petition from your constituents in Horwood under consideration and ask my officials to place it on a high priority when they are establishing the capital roads project budget for next year.

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker,

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

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I had every intention of speaking to this petition presented so fairly ably by the Member for Lewisporte (Mr. Ramsay), Mr. Speaker, and I am glad to be here to support him and to support his constituents in the Town of Horwood on this road, Mr. Speaker. I just want to give a little bit of advice to the new Member for Lewisporte, when he gets up to present a petition, Mr. Speaker, his constituents expect him to get up and fight for their rights where they want their road paved, not to get up and try to make excuses for the Government, who for some reason did not do it this year in their Budget.

Mr. Speaker, for the hon. Member's own advice, and when I get a copy from his constituents they will know also, if they do not already know, Mr. Speaker, this road was announced to be paved during the last election. It was not a promise it was money committed in the last election, Mr. Speaker, to pave this road and the Minister who just criticized me and the former Government for not doing this work, cancelled your money for your constituents when he prepared his Budget last year, Mr. Speaker. That is the reason why the road for Horwood is not done, and when I get a copy of that petition, Mr. Speaker, they will have transcripts of this Hansard to know exactly why the road is not paved and why the road is deteriorating so bad, Mr. Speaker.

I also wish to suggest to the Member that when he is presenting petitions, and do not be afraid, do not be shy to criticize the Cabinet Minister in your Government, Mr. Speaker, it is

your job as the Member for Lewisporte to work on behalf of your constituents and come out strong, full blast against the Minister who had cancelled the funding for the paving of the road to Horwood which was already announced two years ago.

Mr. Speaker, there have been two different budgets prepared under the Ministership of the present Minister of Works, Services and Transportation. He had two opportunities to provide the funding that was already announced and already put in place in the Department of Transportation some two years ago, yet he refused to include this in his budget.

Mr. Speaker, this is a result of the present Government reducing the former Government's capital works program for the Department of Transportation from \$50 million a year, which we had, to \$30 million a year, which is not adequate to keep up with the needs of the improvement of highways in this Province. The funding should be higher, the \$10 million surplus that the Premier has now should be used, Mr. Speaker, for maintenance on the highways and capital money should be put into new projects and new paving of roads throughout this Province.

And I do wish to support the hon. Member for Lewisporte, Mr. Speaker, I support him very strongly and I support his petition very much so. And I will let them know, Mr. Speaker, that the money was in a budget and it was taken away by the present Minister of Transportation.

MR. SPEAKER:

Before proceeding with calling the Orders of the Day, the Chair would like to make a ruling on a point

of privilege that was raised by the hon. Member for Ferryland on the closing moments of the sitting on Friday, March 30, 1990.

I must say I was quite concerned when the Member raised this point of privilege, and understanding the highly charged situation at the time, I expect the Member had every right to raise the point of privilege. I have examined Hansard and read carefully all of the matters and decisions related thereto, because every hon. Member knows in such matters of privilege, all authorities emphasize that the word of hon. Members must be accepted in such matters.

The Deputy Chairman explained his circumstances at the time and the Premier commented that he had made no representations to the Speaker. And I can categorically and emphatically state that I was not approached, or received in any way, shape, or form, any representation from any Member in this House on the day in question or any other day - and particularly that day - respecting to the decisions that were made concerning the motion to move the resolution to Committee or the matter of Division.

In conclusion, allow me to say that procedures for dealing with these matters are clearly laid out in our Standing Orders and past practices, as well as those of the House of Commons, and are to be dealt with in this House, in these chambers. That is where representations are made, and that is where they are discussed - and nowhere else. And I want to emphasize and accentuate the fact that in my attempt to maintain the dignity and respect for the Speaker's office and its

impartiality, no other procedures or practices will be tolerated or acceptable.

I am therefore satisfied that no prima facie case of privilege has been established and in accordance with Beauchesne paragraph 31, section one, page 13, and I quote, "A dispute arising between Members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfill the conditions of parliamentary privilege."

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Just for a moment, let me thank the Speaker and say that I concur with the Speaker's ruling. I am satisfied that things were done properly, and my intention was not in any way to demean the Chair or the offices of the Chair, but to make sure that things were done properly so that the Chair could do its job, which is very important to the process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

I thank the Member.

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I adjourned the debate, I guess, I -

MR. SPEAKER:

Let me just call for the Orders of the Day first.

Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Motion 12, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Motion 12. The Member for Burin - Placentia West adjourned the debate, but before the Member begins, I wonder if he would mind if I checked with the Table to find out his time. Maybe the hon. Member knows.

MR. TOBIN:

I think I have about a half hour left, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things I want to say in the few moments that I have left - I think it is approximately twelve minutes - as we debate this, Mr. Speaker. But I think what has happened here today is something that has been a great insult to democracy as we have known it in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, just a few moments ago the Government House Leader stood in this Chamber and after five short days of debate on this resolution, he has now introduced a motion for closure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is shameful. The actions of the Government House Leader today is shameful. After five days of debate in this Legislature on something that is going to change the structure of this country. Something that could probably see Newfoundland no longer being part of Canada and part of the United States of America as the Premier has suggested, after five days of debate, for the Government House Leader to stand in this House today and invoke closure, Mr. Speaker, to deny the Members of this Legislature the right to debate something as vital and as important to us as the country of Canada as we now know it,

something, Mr. Speaker, that could see Canada changed drastically. And for the President of Treasury Board to stand in this House today and to bring in closure is unbelievable - heavy handedness like we have never seen before, total disrespect, Mr. Speaker, for democracy.

It is funny, Mr. Speaker, when you see the countries in Eastern Europe making such progress that the Minister, the President of Council, or the Government House Leader would today make such a regressive step in democracy in this country as we have known it.

Mr. Speaker, why does the President of Treasury Board, why does the Government House Leader not want to come here next week? What is the rush? What is the rush, Mr. Speaker? Why, after only five days of debate, on something as important to this nation, to this country. Mr. Speaker, we could conceivably be the Province that will destroy Canada, that will never see Canada again as we have known it. This is the Legislature that will make the ultimate decision as it relates to Canada. The President of Treasury Board today, Mr. Speaker, has brought in something that they have been fighting for in Eastern Europe and have obtained in the last few years.

Why does the President of Treasury Board not want to debate this, say on Monday of next week? Why does the President of Treasury Board want to rush through and not get into next week and debate it, Mr. Speaker? I am sure we could have very hot and heated debate in this Legislature next week. The President of Treasury Board could have a very hot and heated debate in this Legislature next week, Mr.

Speaker, if he wanted to debate this issue. But instead of that he has decided to bring in closure.

He has decided, Mr. Speaker, to mug the Legislature the place that will make the ultimate decision as to whether or not Canada stays together as we know it. As to whether or not, Mr. Speaker, we are a part of Canada. As to whether or not we as Canadians, Newfoundlanders living in Canada, will be entitled to the same type of benefits. Whether or not we will be entitled to the same type of revenues from Ottawa over the next number of years. Whether our social programs will stay in tact, Mr. Speaker. Whether people will be able to qualify for UIC. Whether there will be such a program as family allowances and old age pensions, Mr. Speaker. That is what the Minister of Treasury Board is trying to muzzle here today. That is what the President of Treasury Board is trying to muzzle here, because without a Canada there will be no social programs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

Without a Canada, there will be no Mr. Valcourt and Mr. Crosbie and these coming to Newfoundland, as the media indicated today, to make a major announcement on funding for the fishing industry.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

Pardon?

Well, I do not know probably it is.

But the bottom line is that without a Canada we will not be

able to do it. If we are not part of Canada we will not be part of their programs, we will not be part of medicare, we will not be part of the social programs that we have known. Your constituents who are getting laid off in St. John's South will not be entitled to any unemployment insurance if they are not part of Canada. That is what is being debated here today. The fundamental structure of this country as we have known it.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
Pardon?

Mr. Speaker, it is fact. If there is no Canada your constituents will not get social programs. That is a fact, Mr. Speaker. That is what you have to consider, whether you want your constituents to continue to get social programs or not. Whether you want the Government of Canada to be able to put something like 60 per cent of our revenue into this Province. That is what we are talking about here, Mr. Speaker. Whether or not there will be a Canada Assistance Plan, which is cost-shared 50-50, that is the issue that is at stake in this Province today. Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a Government which has refused to put the Meech Lake Accord to the people of this Province.

Now we have a Government, Mr. Speaker, who would like to muzzle the Opposition, want to muzzle the people who want to stand in their places and defend the rights of Newfoundlanders to speak on behalf of our constituents. After five days, Mr. Speaker, something that will be deciding the future of Canada has now been covered by a

blanket. We have been muzzled. The Government House Leader, Mr. Speaker, has tried to muzzle us, tried to make sure that we do not debate it. It is absolutely shameful to see closure brought in on this issue after five days of debate. When we debated it, Mr. Speaker, in the previous Government it was on the agenda for three months. For three months we had the ability as legislators to debate the Meech Lake Accord and now after five days we have the President of Treasury Board standing in his place invoking closure.

AN. HON. MEMBER:
You want public hearings.

MR. TOBIN:
Yes we want public hearings on the Meech Lake Accord. That is what we want. Is that what you want? We want public hearings on the Meech Lake Accord and we want the rights of Newfoundlanders to be defended, Mr. Speaker. We do not want to be muzzled. My constituents did not send me here to be muzzled by the President of Treasury Board and I doubt very much if the Member for St. John's South's (Mr. Murphy) constituents sent him here to be muzzled.

MR. MURPHY:
We are not muzzled, boy.

MR. TOBIN:
You were muzzled on the fishery because you never opened your mouth. We had to fight the battle for the St. John's fish plant. You were muzzled on the fisheries, Mr. Speaker. The people of St. John's South were wondering where you were. It was the Member for Grand Bank (Mr. Matthews) who carried the day for the St. John's fish plant. That is who carried the day, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Member for Bell Island (Mr. Walsh) want to be muzzled on the Meech Lake Accord?

MR. WALSH:

I will talk to you in three minutes.

MR. TOBIN:

He is going to speak in three minutes. He will let us know then if he agrees with closure. It is a very important issue and why the President of Treasury Board, the Government House Leader, why he wants to get clear of the heat of the debate in this Legislature is beyond me. Why can we not debate it for the rest of the week and come back again next week and debate it, up until Wednesday or Thursday?

Will the President of Treasury Board forget about closure and say to us that he will come back next and debate this resolution? Will he let the House come back next week and debate this resolution? As I said I can assure the President of Treasury Board that there will be lots of heat in this Legislature next week to debate this resolution. The debate will be hot. We will ensure that the debate is hot, heavy and heatful. What we have seen today is an attempt to muzzle outright the Members of this legislature in bringing in closure. Let me say to the newer Members, to the Members in the backbenches, I hope in all sincerity that you realize the actions of the President of Treasury Board. I hope you realize that what he has just done is asked this Legislature to invoke closure. After five days he has invoked closure in this Legislature, denying me and you, and all other Members, the right to participate in a debate on an issue that will decide the future

of Canada.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. gentleman's time is up.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, by leave.

In closing let me say I hope the President of Treasury Board will withdraw his decision to invoke closure and let us debate. I will ask him to consider it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island.

MR. WALSH:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Contrary to the fears and innuendoes and everything else that have been conjured up by my friends, I suppose, I was going to say learned, but that would not be correct - my friends in the opposition. Allow me to assure all of you that on June 24th, when the sun comes up over Signal Hill, there will be a Canada, there will be a strong Canada made up of Canadians who care!

It is hard to believe, Mr. Speaker, that people would come to speak in this Chamber, knowing full well that the fabric of this country is made up of people from all lands. Asians are as welcome here as they have been for the last 100 years. Italians are welcome here as they have been for a 100 years, as are the Russians, as are the Irish, as are the Scottish and as are the French! We are all Canadians, first and foremost. The only problem we have today is with the proponents and those who have to, in any way they can, defend Meech Lake. Whether they are defending Meech Lake because they believe in it or

if they are toeing a political line, I can assure you that all thirty-one on this side of the House support it because we believe in it, not because someone in Ottawa is telling us what to say and when to say it.

All thirty-one on this side of the House believe it and are willing to defend it, not because we have to, or because someone in Ottawa is telling us to do it. Mr. Speaker, one of the major concerns I have with the Meech Lake Accord is not as much with the Accord, as it is with proponents of the Meech Lake Accord. These are the people who have a moral obligation to present the facts to this country and to the people of this country and defend the Accord on its merits and its justification - why the Accord should take place.

The problem with it, Mr. Speaker, is that they cannot defend it on those merits or justification. They have to create unfounded fears just as we heard in the last few minutes from the hon. Member who was speaking. It is the proponents of Meech Lake who are creating the fearmongering and concerns in this country. The Toronto Star, on January 14th, probably summed it up best, when it said: 'But in its excesses, Meech Lake contained the seeds of its own demise. It forced Canadians to take a final stand against the dismantling of Federalism. Sadly, the Accord has also generated fresh discord in Quebec, where politicians have come to view it as a litmus test for federalism, and that is where the problem lies.'

For them the fact of rejecting the Meech Lake Accord, a document, for them spells the rejection of Quebec, and they warn against the

Province's humiliation. Mr. Speaker, there is no one in this country who is trying to do that. There is no one in this country who does not believe, not only in the province of Quebec, but in the people of Quebec. We all do and we all support them. In fact, The Toronto Star goes on to say: 'The most knowledgeable critics of the Accord are just that - Critics of the Accord - Not of the people of Quebec, not of the Province of Quebec, a document, The Accord, that is what the critics are speaking about'. They do not reject Quebec nor do they reject its five original demands, they simply reject Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's muddled reformulization of Quebec's aspirations into a pact that would eviscerate Federalism forever. Mr. Speaker, no one in this Province, no one in this House, on this side is rejecting the people of Quebec.

MS DUFF:
Tell them that.

MR. WALSH:
And that is exactly what I am doing, the hon. Member for St. John's East, I am telling them that. We do not reject them as a people. It is the fears and comments like that, that is creating the fears!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:
What about women's rights?

MR. WALSH:
We will come to women's rights and then maybe we will get quiet from the hon. Member. Mr. Speaker, one of the other problems that we face, of course, is the distinct society clause. The fact that that clause is in the body of the

Constitution rather than in the preamble. There is only one reason why that would be there. It is because this distinct society clause, is not a mere recognition of the historical rights or historical facts dealing with Quebec, but rather a clause that is to have a real impact on the division of powers and the Canadian Charter Of Rights.

Mr. Speaker, Quebec will gain substantially new powers under that distinct society clause, and those new powers will tilt the scales in Quebec's favour. We have heard, Mr. Speaker, in this House about the Senate. And I have listened to Members on the opposite side of the House refer to the fact that we should abolish the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, we have discussed in the last number of days and a number of my colleagues have covered the facts very well, and we have wondered aloud whether or not they truly understand the powers of the Senate. And, Mr. Speaker, for their sake once again I will remind them that the Senate has the identical powers as the elected House of Commons except - now listen closely all of you that are either there or in your common room - one; money bills must originate in the Commons, second; it can only hold up a constitutional amendment for 180 days and it cannot veto them.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud on behalf of other Newfoundlanders and other Canadians in the labour force and people who are in deprived areas that the Senate was willing to stand and hold up Bill C-21 as long as it did. No one in the labour force spoke out against the Senate because it was carrying out exactly what it was permitted to

do. Only Brian Mulroney got mad with them for that.

Mr. Speaker, I also hope that when the GST Bill arrives in the Senate that the Senate will have the courage to take the exact same stand and hold it up as long as it can as well. Mr. Speaker, we saw the same thing happen with the free trade debate. And at that time I think the Prime Minister of this country did a grave disservice to all of us when he stated that the Senate was a bunch of nominated people highjacking the most fundamental right of the House of Commons. The Prime Minister admitted it was constitutionally okay but undemocratic. Mr. Speaker, that is like saying mixed emotions, watching someone go over a cliff in your new Cadillac and not sure how to react. It makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of this country has sent a message loud and clear to all Canadians. It will either be exactly what he wants, it will be exactly what he presents or it will be nothing at all. Mr. Speaker, that is not the leadership that this country requires at this time. It requires someone who is willing to speak not for one part of Canada, but for all Canadians, and he is not doing that. If our Prime Minister could only find a way to get himself back on the highroad, this country would be in much better shape than it is today. And it is his kinds of comments that are causing us our problems.

Mr. Speaker, the proponents of Meech Lake are also the same people who reluctantly, as I have heard my colleagues on the opposite side, they are also the apologists for Meech Lake. They look at us and they say you cannot

expect perfection. Well, Mr. Speaker, the critics of Meech Lake know as well as anyone else that we know and they know that we cannot have perfection. We merely expect that constitutional reform will not do serious and irreparable damage to this nation of ours. Mr. Speaker, that is what we are after.

Mr. Speaker, they say we agree that Meech Lake is seriously flawed, but let us pass it now and we can fix it up later. Mr. Speaker, that makes absolutely no sense. I trust that the proponents and the apologists who put that forward are not used car salesmen. That sounds like someone who is willing to sell you a vehicle without brakes and say, well not to worry, you will be all right, either before the accident or after. The same logic. It is stupid logic.

MR. TOBIN:

How many votes did you get the last time?

MR. WALSH:

Almost enough.

The changes in Meech Lake, Mr. Speaker, will be irreversible. Meech did not address, for example, the concerns of women, they did not address the concerns of women.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What does the Member for St. John's East think of that?

MR. WALSH:

We are afraid to ask the Member for St. John's East (Ms Duff) what her thoughts are on that, but we will certainly see her down in the line ups watching her friends being towed off to jail because of the lack of funding, but we have

not yet heard her speak on what her thoughts are on the lack of concerns for women in the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Speaker, also native groups. Native groups have also been left out. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not correct. These are the people who helped build this country as well. These are the people who were here to greet us when we arrived. Mr. Speaker, now they are being left out and that is just not correct. Their concerns and their needs must be addressed. They have to be addressed. The native groups, Mr. Speaker, are our founding families.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to deal with the myths as well. The myths of Meech Lake are very simple. The first myth is the fact that Quebec was left out of the Constitution in 1982. That Mr. Speaker, was one of the biggest myths that had been put forward by none other than the Prime Minister of our country.

The statement, Mr. Speaker, says that we have denied the people of Quebec their rights. The people of Quebec are still a part of this nation and will continue to be a part of this nation. Our Federal Government speaks for the Quebec people as well as for the Quebec Provincial Government, not the Government alone, they speak for the people. Mr. Speaker, these proponents and apologists for Meech Lake seem afraid to admit, I suppose publicly, that Canada at that point in time tried very hard, the people of Canada and the Government of Canada tried very hard to bring Quebec into the Constitution. Mr. Speaker, in 1982 Quebec was lead by a separatist Government and that is something that they forget to tell

us.

One of the amazing things about the 1982 pact that was tried to be created: Mr. Levesque at that time was able to complain about only three things in the 1982 package. Three major complaints. His first complain was that it included mobility rights. Something that is indigenous I guess to any nation. Any nation that is free will allow its people to go from one province to another or from one state to another in order to find work, or in order to live. That was one of Mr. Levesque's main complaints. That was one of the items that helped keep Quebec out of the 1982 agreement. His second objection, and this was probably the most unbelievable one of all, was that it guaranteed minority language rights to anglophones. It guaranteed minority language rights to anglophones. Those in his own Province, some of whom may have even voted for him, and he objected to that.

Mr. Speaker, what has come from that, of course, is one of the major problems that we have in terms of the fear and in terms of the problems that have been created by the Premier of Quebec and by the Prime Minister of this country, and that of course, Mr. Speaker, was Bill 178. The Bill that said no more anglophone or English signs to be placed in the Province. That, Mr. Speaker, polarized the nation behind the fact there may be more in Meech Lake than we are fully aware of.

There was a third objection as well, Mr. Speaker, and the third objection was it did not allow Quebec compensation when it opted out of any amendment transferring power to the Federal Government

and that was his third major concern, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How many votes did you get last night.

MR. WALSH:

Not quite enough, for the hon. Members.

Mr. Speaker, there is some references and heckling to the fact that I may not have received enough votes in a particular campaign I was involved in last night. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform every one that the residents of my own District voted for me overwhelmingly but, unfortunately, I was rejected by some people from other Districts.

Now, Mr. Speaker, coming back to the more serious matter at hand, and I welcome the light-heartedness from the other side. Coming back, Mr. Speaker -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

(Inaudible).

MR. WALSH:

Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate some comments about Mr. Chretien or someone else from the other side, but I am amazed at some of the people it is coming from.

Mr. Speaker, the Quebec people are not outcasts in this country at this point in time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I am having difficulty hearing the speaker.

MR. WALSH:

Mr. Speaker, they are not outcasts in this country. In 1982 they received rights over their natural

resources, they received a guarantee of equalization payments. There are many, many items that the Quebec Government and the Quebec people received in the 1982 agreement. The sad part at that point in our history was that a Separatist Government lead that province. And the people of Canada cannot be asked today to atone for the sins, failures or inequities of a Government that sat in that province at that time, and that is what Meech Lake is asking us to do. And, Mr. Speaker, that is simply not fair and not being honest.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Accord Mr. Bourassa truly believes, and he said this often enough in word and in action, that for him it will be all or nothing. Mr. Speaker, as Canadians we must reject this approach. We must reject this approach on behalf of all Canadians including those that live within his own province, we have to, Mr. Speaker.

As my colleague for Lewisporte said so well the other day, we have to avoid the possibilities of reacting to fear. We have to avoid the fact that people believe we will not have a Canada on June 24th. But, Mr. Speaker, we will have a Canada on June 24th, and the fearmongering that is being created by the Opposition here and by the Government through the Prime Minister is just not being fair and honest with the people of Canada. He said last night, Mr. Speaker, that there is nothing wrong with negotiation, there is nothing wrong with talk, but as he said in the words of John Kennedy, let us never negotiate out of fear, but never let us fear to negotiate.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the Prime Minister of this country to be willing to call a First Minister's Conference. I asked him to be willing to bring the Premiers of this country together whether it is in an open session or in a closed session, but take the initiative, take the leadership, move back to the high road and try to help solve impasses that now exist. I call upon the Prime Minister to do that for the sake of all Canadians. And, Mr. Speaker, it is my prayer that he will do just that.

Mr. Speaker, all of us in this great country of ours must be willing to begin from a level playing field. That is what we have to come back to, Mr. Speaker. We have to come back to a level playing field where we can all, once and for all, grasp and truly understand, not what the Meech Lake Accord is putting forward, but I suppose grasp and understand and put on paper what is fair and just in order to meet the needs of all Canadians in this country. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not being done at this point and time in our history. And instead of clearing the waters, the Meech Lake Accord, as it exists, only muddies those waters even further.

Mr. Speaker, when you look across Canada at the number of people who have come forward and expressed their concerns about Meech Lake, I think the Premier referred the other day to the fact that there were some 700 letters received on one given day.

Mr. Speaker, I have some excerpts here, from some of those letters. From a lady in Montreal, Mr. Speaker, who refers to the Premier and his stand on behalf of this

Province and on behalf of 78 per cent of Canadians who are having a problem with Meech Lake. A lady from Montreal says, 'I was very impressed, like so many others, by your tough and brilliant stand against the Accord. I hope, thanks to you for standing up for Canada, Prime Minister Mulroney and Premier Bourassa will be guided to come to a better understanding of the needs of every province and not show favoritism to one or two, but keep Canada strong.' Mr. Speaker, for the sake of the House I will table these afterwards.

A second one, Mr. Speaker, and I do not know if I should read this because it might be more flattering than the Premier would want at this time. Another one from Montreal says, 'once every twenty-five years or so we see a leader emerge,' and he goes on to list some of the leaders such as Kennedy and Churchill, and he also says, 'I believe you will see your name in the Canadian history books of the future because of your positions today.' Another one, Mr. Speaker, from Ontario. 'On November 10 I listened to an hour long radio phone-in show program originating in Toronto and the question was, do you approve or disapprove of Mr. Well's stand on Meech Lake? Of the forty or fifty callers only one disapproved and all others were strongly supportive.' Those, Mr. Speaker, are the kinds of reactions, the kinds of speeches, and the kinds of letters that are coming in to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, let us go forward and try to cement once and for all a situation in this country that allows Quebec to be a full and equal partner. There is no one in this Province who does not want

that goal, there is no Canadian that does not support that goal, we all want to have that. Our problem, Mr. Speaker, is that in the directions we are currently travelling, that cannot, or will not happen. We have to take a strong and powerful stand.

As a Canadian, and as a born Canadian: some of my colleagues on the other side, contrary to popular belief, I was born a Canadian. In this Province my roots are strong. My struggle has been long and therefore my age is showing but allow me to assure all hon. colleagues that on September 14, 1949 in Corner Brook I came into this world as a Canadian but one whose roots are deep in this Province.

I have been lucky, Mr. Speaker, unlike some other people who have had to go somewhere else to find employment because of the economic conditions of this Province. I have been lucky to have been able to make a choice. When offers were made to leave Newfoundland I was lucky and fortunate enough that I did not have to. I thank the people I have been associated with over the last twenty or twenty-two years of my work-life that I was lucky enough to make that choice, to be able to stay here.

Mr. Speaker, to me being a Canadian is more than just being a resident of any one particular province. To me being a Canadian means that wherever I travel in this country, not only will I be welcome, but I have an opportunity to work with and feel comfortable with the laws of this country. Unfortunately, not French speaking, I have trouble with the language in Quebec, needless to say, but not with the language and

the fact that they speak French but with my own inadequacies in that I do not speak French. Being a Canadian to me is also something that I am proud of, proud by the fact that my children will be able to enjoy the fruits of this country. We have many, many institutions in this country that we are proud of. MCP, Mr. Speaker, is probably one of the best. It is at times when you are sick you are glad you are not living somewhere else, either in the continental United States, in Europe, or any other part of this world.

It is at times like that, Mr. Speaker, when you could have had a lifetime of resources built up and lose them over sickness over a period of one or two years. It is being part of that kind of country that is important to me as well.

Mr. Speaker, on June 24 those institutions will still be there, just as when the sun rises over this Signal Hill Canada will still be here.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other most important things about this country and about being a citizen of this country is the fact that we are all equal. It does not matter where we came from, Mr. Speaker. It does not matter whether we have a French background, an English, an Irish, Scottish, Asian, European. It does not matter. This country, Mr. Speaker, is made up of all of us, all of us who wish and all of us who believe that this was the place for immigrants to come to live, but also the place for us to stay.

Mr. Speaker, I have a few minutes left, but I will just advise the next speaker, I do not intend to

go into overtime or to stand and speak for the sake of filling my time but, Mr. Speaker, I leave the House with this thought: Mr. Speaker, this country belongs to all of us. This Canada is made up of residents of every province of this country, the Northwest Territories included. Mr. Speaker, this is our Canada. We are Canadians, all of us, in this Province, in Quebec, in P.E.I., in Ontario and in British Columbia and, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a part of this country.

I will end with the same statement I opened with, Mr. Speaker: Let us not live in fear and let us not promote fear. Let us not leave the impression in anyone's mind, not just in this country, but in other parts of the world, let us not leave a thought that we have to make rash decisions based on fear.

Mr. Speaker, let all of us remember, as I said in my opening statement, on June 24th when the sun rises over Signal Hill, it will be the beginning of the sun that will cross this entire country. Canada will still be here, we, as Canadians, will still be here and this country will still be strong and still be proud and still be united.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for Port au Port.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. HODDER:
Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a

very few words on this resolution, more to show my support for the Meech Lake Accord. Most things have been said, I think. I doubt very much that there will be agreement on this issue on both sides of this House but I truly believe, Mr. Speaker, that history will prove we, over here, are right. I truly believe that Members on that side of the House are walking out of step with the rest of Canada.

Many of the speeches I have heard in this House over the past week, I really cannot take as being always sincere and from the heart. I did sit in this House when many Members who spoke, spoke another way on this particular issue. I cannot accuse all Members of flip-flopping on this issue, but I can accuse some Members on that side of the House.

I do not know how many times closure has been invoked in this House since 1949 but I would say, Mr. Speaker, that it has not been invoked more than ten or fifteen times since Confederation. In my recollection, since 1975, I can only recollect closure being brought into the House on a couple of occasions and I am surprised that the Premier, on an issue which is so dear to his heart, would bring in closure after five days of debate.

Mr. Speaker, I actually suspected that perhaps we would sit throughout the Easter holidays.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. HODDER:
Mr. Speaker, Members will laugh.

Yes, I have a ticket in my pocket and I leave shortly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. HODDER:
But I am not going to Florida, to start with. Members on that side of the House should know that in our deliberations we suspected, that is all I am saying, that the Premier might go on through. We did not want to, in the sense that many Members on that side and this side had made arrangements. But none of us suspected the Premier would bring in closure at this early date. About a week ago, when we were deliberating this particular issue, no one - no one - on our side suspected that closure would be brought in, no one suspected that the Premier would bring in closure this early in the debate. We thought he may bring in closure perhaps in June sometime, or at the end of May, but nobody suspected that he would do this.

DR. KITCHEN:
(Inaudible).

MR. HODDER:
Mr. Speaker, I sat here and listened to every one of the debates, and the Minister of Finance who very rarely ever speaks, has the gall to heckle. I have listened to that gentleman and have never said a word in this House of Assembly, so I will ask to be heard in silence.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House feel that public hearings should have been held throughout the Province before this motion was rescinded. What we are seeing now is closure, that the Government will use its brute force to push this resolution

through and the people of this Province will never have had input as to what is happening, and what the Meech Lake resolution is all about. That has been said many, many times, but I think it is even more important to say now in light of closure. Mr. Speaker, the process should be public hearings first and then a debate on the resolution afterwards. Why should we consider pushing this resolution through before we have heard from the people of this Province?

Just to tell you what I know about this particular issue and perhaps to talk a little bit about the history of it, after the Quebec referendum campaign, which I think many of us remember - I remember where I was when I heard the vote and the answer in the referendum campaign. I think for many of us in this House, and many Newfoundlanders and Canadians, it was one of those times where everybody remembers where they were at that particular time. But, Mr. Speaker, the Premier at that time, Rene Levesque, said if they rejected Levesque's call, the Government of the day would pursue constitutional reform aimed at ensuring that Quebec's needs would be met in a united Canada. And that was one of the promises held out to the people of Quebec to vote against sovereignty association.

Mr. Speaker, two years later, in 1982, after the First Ministers' meetings, the patriation practice had left Quebec out in the cold. There was only one reform in that 1982 Accord that was aimed in any way at Quebec. That was that the Charter specifically gave English language rights to the Anglophone minority.

So, Mr. Speaker, what you had was a Quebec referendum, you had a promise by the Prime Minister of the day, Pierre Elliot Trudeau that if Quebec rejected the call for sovereignty association, that the Government of the day, which was the Liberal Government in Ottawa, would pursue constitutional reform aimed at ensuring that Quebec's needs and aspirations would be met within a united Canada.

Mr. Speaker, two years later the concerns of the Quebecers had been forgotten. The Province of Quebec was humiliated, and in a sense Quebec was left out of Canada. It had been signed without Quebec's participation. Now I do not think anybody on that side of the House would disagree with what I have said so far.

But, Mr. Speaker, what was the reaction of Quebec after 1982? They felt they had been betrayed. They withdrew from federal/provincial negotiations; they were not involved in federal/provincial negotiations right up until the time of the Meech Lake Accord. They boycotted the constitutional conferences, and they invoked the override clause to insulate its legislation from the Charter of Rights.

Mr. Speaker, if hon. Members would think one bit further, the feeling of betrayal after 1982 was not limited to the Party Québécois, it was limited to Quebec nationalists and provincial Liberals. Everybody felt betrayed. Mr. Speaker, if you look at the vote the Conservatives - remember, Quebec was a Liberal province federally - got in Quebec and the total reversal that happened in Quebec because of the 1982 Accord, you can see, somewhat, how the

people in Quebec will react to what we are doing here in this House of Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I say that what we are embarking on here is a very serious matter. Mr. Speaker, it is there for us to see. We see what the reaction was. Quebec withdrew from federal/provincial negotiations, she withdrew; she boycotted the Constitutional conferences, and she threw out the people who had betrayed her, the federal Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, the Accord is not a free-standing constitutional initiative, it is an effort to undo the damage that was done in 1982 and it tries to fulfill the promise of 1980. And this is what the Prime Minister of the time, Pierre Trudeau, said: Quebecers will not be satisfied with crumbs from the table, because they want a brand new constitution. Those were the brave words at another time, ten years ago. Now, Mr. Speaker, ten years later, we are about to do the same thing. They voted to stay in Canada. We promised them a say within Canada. Mr. Speaker, I do not think we can break a second commitment to the people of Quebec, and that is what the Meech Lake Accord was. That is why all the emotion about the Meech Lake Accord today. It is the second commitment to the people of Quebec. It has been signed and it has been held out as a symbol of reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, the demise of the Accord will have catastrophic consequences for the people of Canada, the people of Quebec and the people of Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, what will happen, and it looks very bad now,

particularly what is happening in this House, what will happen once the Accord is broken, once the Accord is not ratified? Will Quebec disassociate itself as they did in 1982?

I say that the break now would be much deeper and much more divisive and much more irreversible than it was in 1982. Mr. Speaker, intergovernmental affairs will be paralyzed, constitutional reform stymied and we will be back to a situation where any further reconciliation would become more remote, and I think that would lead to the break up of Canada.

The Premier said in this House that his proposals would put bread on the tables of Newfoundlanders. I say the course on which we have embarked will take bread from us. I say that from what I have seen. I spent some time in Ontario just a few weeks ago when the Sault controversy was on, when towns in Ontario were voting to become unilingual, which was a slap in the face to Quebecers. Anybody who follows the national scene will understand that this is the game we are playing here. As one of my colleagues said the other day, it is a very high game. The Premier says it is not a game. Perhaps it is not a game, perhaps that is an unfair way to phrase it, but, Mr. Speaker, there are high stakes in what we do here today.

I believe that we on this side are right, and I believe that we on this side will be shown to be right. I believe Members on the Government's side of this House at this present time, some day will hang their heads in shame. Many thought the Quebec Government of today, the Bourassa Government, would demand more. Few believed

they would take as little as there is in the Accord. Mr. Speaker, some people have said that because of the distinct society clause Quebec is on a fast track to sovereignty association. But, Mr. Speaker, Quebec is the only province which has in Canada, one of our founding peoples, a Francophone majority, a dominant French culture and, sometimes we forget, the Civil law. Its system of law is not the same as the British common law. If that is not distinct, what is? And how can we not acknowledge such a truth, an obvious truth? It is more likely that national unity will be affected if we fail to acknowledge these facts.

In the preamble of the Accord there is an acknowledgement, a companion clause which recognizes the presence of English speaking Canadians in Quebec as part of Canada's fundamental characteristic, and ultimately the interpretation rests in the courts, in the Supreme Court of Canada. And I do not have to remind hon. Gentlemen that six of the Supreme Court of Canada will come from outside Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, as has been said again and again, over and over, the course already take into account Quebec's distinct nature in constitutional interpretation, so all the Accord says is what was already there, and what the Courts are already interpreting the law on the basis of.

The other thing that has not been mentioned a lot in these debates, and it is another point that is a sore point with me, is when Members opposite say that we are not able to handle our own resources, that we are not able to handle our own fishery. Nobody

ever asked that we have a jurisdiction over the 200 mile limit.

Mr. Speaker, if you live in western Newfoundland and you are part of the Gulf region, and you see that you are being administered from the Mainland by people who are not aware, in terms of that, Mr. Speaker, I think we can better handle aspects of the fishery than the Federal Government. There are many aspects of the fishery that can be handled better. There are people in Ottawa, there are people in the Federal Government right now, and people in the Department of Fisheries, who do not have any idea about the fishery crisis that is going on in Newfoundland, not the least idea of the situation in this Province, and they never will. So I think the inclusion of the fisheries in the Constitution, so that annual constitutional conferences would be held in which fisheries reform would be discussed until a resolution was found, I think that was a clause that reflects determination and could lead to real reform.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing in this debate I am surprised at is the Premier's proposal which the Premier of P.E.I. said was like something from Mars, and which no Premier in Canada, including the Premier of Manitoba, agrees with. It is surprising to me that the people of Newfoundland have not - I have not seen it. I do not know if The Evening Telegram has printed it. I think they should. But the people of Newfoundland are not aware of what it says or why it says it, and I am surprised that in this whole debate some of the things that are being said have not gotten out. I feel passionately about this and I have

talked to people here in St. John's and in my district. And when you start talking about the Meech Lake Accord, the reaction that comes back is sometimes a bigoted reaction, but more often a reaction like the Minister of Finance's reaction: They got us, we got them. I do not even want to say the words, but that type of reaction is the type of reaction which was articulated by the Minister of Finance in this House of Assembly, it is the type of reaction that I get very often from Newfoundlanders who are supporting the Premier. And the foolish thing about it, Mr. Speaker, is they are also against bilingualism, and they do not know the Premier is for bilingualism.

Mr. Speaker, it is like shadowboxing in the dark when you try to argue Meech Lake with somebody on the street, because they say, 'We support Wells.' The last conversation I had went: 'I support the Premier. I think somebody they knew applied to be a stewardess on Air Atlantic and did not get to be a stewardess on Air Atlantic, and it was a bilingual problem they had.' I said, the Premier is for bilingualism. Mr. Speaker, I do not think bilingualism will work in this province.

I should say the Francophones of the Province, whom I represent, do not support the Premier's stand, and they support the Meech Lake Accord. The few times the Premier has talked to them, he kept talking about bilingualism. But they are something like the French in Quebec, they want to preserve their language and culture here, and bilingualism does not help that. Most of them are bilingual; they want to learn to read and they want their children to learn

to speak. And if you can realize what a minority in a majority situation is, then, Mr. Speaker, you perhaps can sympathize with the Francophones of Newfoundland who are a minority amongst us, and the French in Canada, who are a minority amongst Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I did hear one of my colleagues stand up and name off, and I will not do that, a list of people who oppose the Premier, and the list goes on and on, including most of the Premiers, all of the Premiers, as far as his proposal is concerned. I will not go on and on, but even some of the leadership candidates in the federal leadership race today. But when you look at that and you realize the political situation and what a hot game we are playing here, and when you realize that Quebec's Gross Domestic Product is larger than that of Denmark, as I read the other day in The Globe and Mail, and if you look at what is happening in Eastern Europe with minorities, Mr. Speaker, that is something else. If you look at a solution to some of the problems in Russia today, the Meech Lake Accord type of constitutional framework would be better for Russia than a strong central Government, and Mr. Speaker, that is how they may end up.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if Quebec leaves Canada, there will not be nine provinces, it will not be long before we will find ourselves out in the cold. And, Mr. Speaker, look at the attitudes in the different provinces. I do not agree with what Prime Minister Bourassa said about Newfoundland the other day anymore than the Members on the other side, but if you look at the attitude Ontario has, it is not much different. Then you have the west which keeps

saying, let the eastern whatever's, freeze in the dark. And everytime I talk to a westerner and I say I am from down east, Oh, we do not mean you. But when you look at the problems in Canada, you will see that this is a situation which can have various grievous consequences.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have said enough. However, I will say that we can talk here on this side until we are blue in the face. I suppose because of the fact that this Premier is the only Premier who is in step, and all the others are out of step, and most constitutional experts, I am wasting my time trying to convince Members on the other side that they are wrong. But, Mr. Speaker, they are wrong and history will prove them wrong.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for -

I will read the - does he want to speak?

MS DUFF:
Mr. Speaker.

The hon. the Member for St. John's East already spoke in the debate.

MS DUFF:
No, I have not.

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

She has not spoken on the resolution. I am just wondering if Your Honour recognized the Member for Fogo (Mr. S. Winsor). That is all we are asking?

MR. SPEAKER:

Yes.

MR. SIMMS:
You did.

You have to speak, Sam.

MR. WINSOR:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak in this House on the motion put forth by the Premier and amended by Mr. Rideout, the Leader of the Opposition. In 1987, Meech Lake, a constitutional amendment that would change the focus of Canada forever, was ratified by ten Premiers of all political stripes and the Federal Parliament. All three parties, the Liberal Party, the NDP, and the Conservative Party, all agreed that Meech Lake was perhaps the most moderate proposal that had ever been put together in the past thirty years.

Mr. Speaker, this House ratified that Meech Lake Accord, and the Premier introduced his amendment to change it. What is most unique about it is contrary to what the Premier has said. He was certainly the only one in his party who campaigned during the last election saying that Meech Lake would be rather changed if he was elected. I noted yesterday the Minister of Justice, in proclaiming and singing the praises of the Accord, said that only condition one which he would run for election would be if the Premier would change Meech Lake. What a farce? Everyone knows the only reason why the Minister of Justice ran was that he, as everyone in the Province, fully knew the Premier would be defeated in Humber East, and he thought he would be the Leader of the Party.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WINSOR:
I think the Minister of Justice had a crack at it in 1982. I think he even ran for President of the Party at one time, and now he has the audacity to come in this House and say the reason he ran was because of his strong belief in Meech Lake. What hypocrisy! Then, yesterday in this House, the Minister of Finance did the completely unspeakable, he told the people the real reason why the Premier and this Party oppose Meech Lake - the real reason why the Premier and the Party oppose Meech Lake. It slipped out of the bag. In the heat of debate, they like to say, it slipped out of the bag.

I can remember on television some time ago, when the Premier made his famous speech in Ottawa, when he took on the Prime Minister and won the admiration of all Newfoundland because he was bucking the federal system, the little guy taking on the big guy, the man who was sitting right next to the Premier, just one seat back, was none other than the Minister of Finance. The Premier said yesterday in trying to chastise him and, I think, take a little bit of pressure off, the Minister of Finance is a great finance man but he is a poor constitutional advisor. According to the last two Budgets, and his defence of them, the Minister is not a great Finance Minister either.

MR. FLIGHT:
Oh, he is.

MR. WINSOR:
According to the questions he answered today, the old Krazy Glue

was in place, but on his tongue.

MR. EFFORD:
How about the next time you come and ask for -

MR. WINSOR:
You will take care of it.

The Premier feels somehow, and he has convinced his people with him, that Senate reform will be the be-all, the end-all, it is going to be the panacea that will cure all the ills of this country. He told them that; he has convinced them.

MR. NOEL:
We have said otherwise. Do not make things up.

MR. WINSOR:
You have said otherwise. He has convinced them that the Senate is going to be the one thing, if we do not have Senate reform we will have regional economic disparity forever, it will enshrine it, entrench it. I remember back in 1967, when another Liberal burst into this Province, and one of the big platforms in his election, it too, actually, was a just society and the elimination of regional economic disparity. I wonder who that was? Does anybody remember? Pierre Elliott Trudeau, his mentor.

AN HON. MEMBER:
The last good Prime Minister in this country.

MR. WINSOR:
The last good Prime Minister in this country, was he? I wonder if it is a coincidence that he resurfaced again with his book while the debate on Meech Lake is in place and the Premier just got elected? I wonder if there is any connection between the two?

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is worried about the distinct society clause as it pertains to Quebec. He says the distinct society clause would enshrine forever in legislation that Quebec has special legislative rights. The only thing, though, is that no one else in the country, except for the Premier and a group of people he calls constitutional experts, maintains this belief. The majority of people in this Province say that no legislative powers are taken away from the Federal Government. It also goes on to say that he is concerned that the Federal Government might interfere in our school systems. For example, in the protection of separate schools in Newfoundland, Quebec, and Ontario, special guarantees for English language electoral ridings, Quebec, the recognition of New Brunswick as a bilingual province, and so on. So it is already there, special status.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why do they need more if it is already there?

MR. WINSOR:

In terms of federal programs, the Premier says we should not have the right to opt out of national cost-shared programs.

MR. GRIMES:

Who wrote that stuff for you?

MR. WINSOR:

You, when you were President of the NTA.

Federal programs, cost-shared programs, he says, the Province should have a right to follow the national program, even if it is not in the best interests of the Province. The Premier knows and knows full well that things like

ACOA, equalization and so on, are left intact and there will be no deterrent to this country, to this Province, to this Legislature, if it is put in place.

What the Premier is really doing with all of this is trying to deflect from the real issues that face this Province. The Harris Report, perhaps the most significant document that is going to be in Newfoundland's political history for the next number of years, in this Session of the House, I think it got five minutes today, a maximum of five minutes. The most significant report to ever come before this House got five minutes, and we have spent the last three weeks discussing Meech Lake and not five Newfoundlanders outside the political arena have one bit of interest in it.

I visited a longliner down on the waterfront yesterday.

MR. NOEL:

And you got all wet.

MR. EFFORD:

From Port de Grave?

MR. WINSOR:

No, not from Port de Grave, from Fogo. It brought in 1,200 seals. Do you think they asked me, How are you getting on with Meech Lake? Do you know what their concerns were?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

What?

MR. WINSOR:

The price of pelts. The price of pelts just jumped from six dollars to nine dollars, but that is not viable if you have to go a hundred and fifty miles to get them.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They dropped.

MR. WINSOR:

Six to nine.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Six to nine is not a drop.

MR. WINSOR:

No, the drop was from seventeen dollars last year down to nine; now, they have just gone from six to nine. The Minister of Social Services says you cannot make any money at it.

MR. EFFORD:

You should never have let Greenpeace into the Province.

MR. WINSOR:

Well, maybe that is the case.

So, these people were not concerned about Meech Lake.

To the average Newfoundlander on the street, Meech Lake is some kind of thing that people talk about and argue about, but it has no real meaning. The Premier knows the average Newfoundlander is not concerned about Meech Lake. That is why he is going to rescind Meech Lake approval without having hearings.

MR. SIMMS:

To cover up all the problems.

MR. WINSOR:

To cover up all the Province's problems.

MR. FUREY:

Did you turn down splitting the resolution?

MR. WINSOR:

All the problems in this Province, the fishery in crisis, the forestry and the Minister, too, I

suspect, in crisis, a crumbling economy and then, of course, the incompetent Finance Minister we discovered; and then the cure-all, the one that was going to solve all the problems, the Economic Recovery Team.

There is a list.

MR. SIMMS:

Just run through them.

Okay. Increases in unemployment, tax increases, gasoline tax, catastrophe in our fishery, increases in electricity rates, forced amalgamation, Beaton Tulk - I wonder who that is; Bill 53 -

AN HON. MEMBER:

You took care of that.

MR. WINSOR:

I took care of Beaton Tulk, yes.

AN HON. MEMBER:

And 'John' took care of him after.

MR. WINSOR:

John took care of him after.

- promise of improved labour relations; What was it NAPE said today? I think it was 'Next time it will be a big strike, because everyone will go out the one time,' was it not? Promise to cut out political patronage. Who was just appointed to the new corporation out in Gander, I wonder?

- promise never to tolerate conflict of interest, promise to bring home every mother's son, promise to eliminate pork barrelling, and the list goes on and on and on. I am glad the Minister asked these questions, because we have some idea of the problems facing this Province.

The Economic Recovery Commission, what a farce!

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) your district got.

MR. FLIGHT:
What about your District?

MR. WINSOR:
Yes. The Member seemed to make a lot of that, what our District got in the last year. Let me tell you a little bit about the District.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The Chair is having difficulty in hearing the speaker.

MR. WINSOR:
Let me tell you about the District. Since 1972, on the straight shore section we had 10 miles of unpaved road left in the District. The rest of it all paved by a Conservative Administration. My friend from St. John's West, from Lumsden, will recall quite vividly having to drive gravel roads from Lumsden on around the loop to Gander - paved during the PC Administration.

MR. SIMMS:
I wonder why they did not mention that?

MR. WINSOR:
No, they did not mention that.

Water and sewer they think. I seem to recall, and my friend from Lumsden will tell you, that during the PC Administration the community of Lumsden -

MR. SIMMS:
In a Liberal District?

MR. WINSOR:
Yes. And not only that, votes Liberal solidly, too. And the Tory Government did a complete water and sewer job, one of the best in the Province, a model for the Province. The Town of Carmanville, numerous -

AN HON. MEMBER:
Had a good Member then.

MR. WINSOR:
Who was that, Captain Earl Winsor? That was when the disaster struck, in 1979. The disaster happened in in 1979.

MR. FUREY:
One term.

MR. WINSOR:
What was that, one term?

MR. FUREY:
Enjoy it.

MR. WINSOR:
Do not worry about it. I will take care of that.

Musgrave Harbour, Carmanville, Tilting, water and sewer. An \$11 million ferry for Fogo Island. The ferry did not work out, but everyone was delighted with it at the time. The Minister has just now announced the \$25 million to \$28 million ferry. We are still not sure it is going to work, because of heavy ice conditions. We are still not sure.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. WINSOR:
What was that?

No, no. We do not know the ice conditions in the Sound. Very extreme ice conditions on times, and we are still not sure if it is

going to provide reliable transportation. Members opposite like to flick across at us all the time, Look what we are doing for Fogo District, as if nothing had ever been done for it.

MS DUFF:

That is why they voted Tory.

MR. WINSOR:

In fact, my friend from St. John's East says, that is why they voted Tory, they recognize that the Tories had given them something. It was the previous Member who could not deliver anything.

What the Premier has now done is set up this Province against the rest of Canada. The body of people out there, for the most part, think that the difficult times Newfoundland is experiencing is because of the strained relationship that exists between Ottawa and this Province. We heard the Premier two days ago moaning and groaning that Ottawa had excluded him from talks on the fishery, that the response program the Federal Government had announced, the Province was not consulted on it. He made a great issue of it. Only a week ago we saw the three Premiers from the rest of Atlantic Canada at a meeting with the Premier, and then they walked away and had their own meeting to decide what would be the fate of the Atlantic Provinces if there was no Canada.

What did they do with our Premier? They told him to go home, go back to St. John's, they were having a meeting all by themselves, despite the fact, by the way, that he was the host. I think he invited them to Corner Brook, and following the meeting with the Premier they had their own meeting, I suppose to try to

make some sense out of what the Premier had, and I am sure they did not get much out of it. But the real reason the Premier is doing this, as I said earlier, is to deflect from what is going on in the economy around him.

The unfortunate thing is that in Newfoundland one the easiest ways to evoke public response, get public sympathy on your side, is to say something about Quebec. Most Newfoundlanders, for some reason or another from past experiences, have developed this sense that Quebec somehow has given Newfoundland a rough time. Now what we have to remember is that when that infamous power deal was signed -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. WINSOR:

No, no. I am not the only one saying it. It is all across the Province, everywhere.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. WINSOR:

If you will recall, my friend for St. John's East read out a letter a constituent had written. I have had numerous people talk to me and complain about the French Newfoundland problem. You have heard it before, we have all heard it, that there is a problem with it. The Premier has capitalized on that to create great popularity for his cause, and the real reason came out yesterday when the Minister of Finance spoke. He told the House yesterday.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. WINSOR:

Oh, no, you might vote against this resolution of the Premier's. It is quite possible that you might vote against it. Then the Premier likes to get in the House and read out all those nice letters that come to him with roses and flowers and twenty dollar cheques. There was a good one in the paper today, though, if I can find it. Today's Telegram had a real good letter. It says: "The hon. Clyde K. Wells, Eighth Floor:

Dear Mr. Wells:

Some things simply must be said.

When it comes to insufferable gall and conceit, you take the cake like no other. Most in this country see through your charade. Whatever you may think, be it understood that your grandstanding arrogance deeply offends most thinking Canadians who clearly perceive that you are putting your own ambitions and self-interests ahead of those of this country. Your transparent nit-picking against Meech Lake fools no one. It is a cover for your own personal aggrandizement and, I assure you, it will not work.

MR. WALSH:

That is the extent of your research.

MR. WINSOR:

"This is a great and generous land. It has been built on political consensus - not mean-spirited confrontation. Clearly you are out of touch with this spirit.

Yes, thanks to you, there may be a divorce in the country.

However, it will not be Quebec that leaves. It will be

Newfoundland. For this, Canadians will sorrow. But hesitate not. Our sadness will vanish, so long as Newfoundland takes you with it. Hopefully the United States, with a more generous nature than yours, will warm to you. Be their guest. Please." From Vancouver.

Now, this is one of the letters that the Premier failed to -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Signed, the President of the P.C. Association.

MR. WINSOR:

No, Michael Murphy, I would say, 721 -1125 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. I do not know if it was on the same -

MR. MURPHY:

(Inaudible) misguided letter.

MR. WINSOR:

It is not your brother, I do not suppose, is it? You would not have anyone who would do that?

MR. MURPHY:

No.

MR. WINSOR:

And in the middle of all this, with the economy falling down around our ears, the Minister of Development should get involved and see if we can get something in place with the Minister of Energy to see what we can do with Churchill Falls. To expect the Premier of Quebec to negotiate after the Minister of Finance made his infamous remarks yesterday, I am sure they will be delighted to sit down to give Newfoundland a sweetheart deal, a contract we signed in 1967 and we want to improve. There is no question -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. WINSOR:
What was that? You said the Liberals signed it? Is that what you said?

AN HON. MEMBER:
No.

MR. WINSOR:
I thought you said the Liberals signed it in 1967.

AN HON. MEMBER:
How is the ice situation?

MR. WINSOR:
The ice situation is terrible.

DR. KITCHEN:
Are you looking after my ferry?

MR. WINSOR:
No, Sir.

MR. WALSH:
Are you looking after the Beaumont Hamel?

MR. WINSOR:
The Beaumont Hamel? You can have the Beaumont Hamel any day at all now.

AN HON. MEMBER:
It is a good vessel.

MR. WINSOR:
It is a good vessel. I told you that earlier. I told you the Beaumont Hamel was a good vessel, and you suggested what we should do was take the old Hamilton Sound, the vessel that was worn out thirty years ago, put a new gear box and a new transmission in it and use that for the Fogo Island run. If that is the kind of ferry this Member is going to design for the Bell Island run, then the Marystown Shipyard need not fear work, because he will be around this Province buying up all the junk there is. There is

another one up in Toronto, an old tug boat sixty-four years old. You can have that one, too; it was in Lifestyle yesterday. If you are looking for a good boats -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Give it to him.

MR. WINSOR:
I was out in the Common Room listening to him speak, and one of the Members said, what is that? Is someone out preaching? The Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island, sounded like a great preacher.

I think the Minister of Development should certainly sit down with the Minister responsible for Hydro. The first thing you have to do, of course, is get the Minister of Finance, slip him out the backdoor somewhere, say he was a mistake, but we did not have anyone else to put in Cabinet; we are rid of him now, and we will get on with developing this great Province as we should. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MS DUFF:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and hon. Members.

As we wind up debate on this rather innocuous amendment to Motion 12, the Motion to rescind the previous legislative approval of this House of Assembly to the Meech Lake Accord, I am moved to reflect, having listened very carefully over the last few days, on how fragile our sense of nation-hood is in Canada. I think it is ironic and sad that the 1987 constitutional amendment, the Meech Lake Accord, which was entered into and agreed to by ten

Premiers, the Prime Minister and all political parties, which was hailed nationally as a major step forward in Canada's constitutional maturity, is now a subject of a debate which is opening up old wounds and throwing into high relief all the things that frustrate and divide the Canadian family.

The Meech Lake Accord was an attempt to restore the constitutional unity of Canada, which was left with a gaping hole by the exclusion of Quebec from the 1982 process. Now, Members opposite have referred to the fact that it is a myth that Quebec was excluded, and to some extent this is true. Because I believe that Rene Levesque, the separatist Premier of the day, did not want to be included. But the times have changed, and by 1987 we had a Liberal Premier of Quebec, a federal Premier of Quebec, who wanted to be included. And regardless of what the intentions of Rene Levesque may have been, the political reality for the people of Quebec was that they believed they had been knifed in the back, and I use the phrase *la nuit des longues couteaux*, because that is the phrase that is on the lips of the people of Quebec, the average ordinary man in the street. They believe they were knifed in the back. Their Premier took tremendous risks in coming back to that table with demands that moved way back from the demands laid on the table by Levesque, with very minimal demands, the least he could ask to get his province into the Constitution, and through a process of negotiation that took two years, not one night in the Langevin Block these compromises were accepted, a covenant was made, and now this Province

prepares to break its covenant with Quebec and is going to expect the people of Quebec to understand.

We say piously and wring out hands that we really love Quebec and we do not want to be anti-Quebec, and, at the same time, we are prepared to slap them in the face and make it politically impossible to move toward further agreement.

In this entire debate I have heard Members on both sides of the House wrap themselves in the Canadian flag. And that is ironic, too. We all seem to be saying the same thing, we all seem to be claiming how dearly we love the country, our strong faith that whatever we do the country will survive, that we are concerned about the interests of Newfoundland within a strong and united Canada. But I have to ask you to seriously think about the scenario in which that is most likely to happen. I am asking myself, very honestly, why is this process so divisive when all Members, men and women of good will, seem to want the same end?

I hear from the other side that they are very concerned about the omissions in Meech Lake. I would have to say that in any process that tries to make a compromise in a nation as regionally different and with groups as regionally disparate as Canada, everything cannot be put in one document. The Meech Lake Accord was called to deal with the Quebec question, and if the Quebec question seems to have been given an over-emphasis, it is because other things were dealt with: other concerns of other regions, of other groups, including women, including language minorities were dealt with in 1982. The question I am asking myself now is can the concerns that have been expressed,

and they are legitimate, about the omissions of Meech Lake, can they be dealt with in a companion accord? Can they be dealt with through a consensus on the other issues through the ongoing process of a First Minister's Conference, or must the Accord die and the process be debated all over again? Is Meech Lake, in fact, the ten commandments that freezes out all other possibility of future change, or is it a step in a process? And can that process be started again as a constructive dialogue if Meech Lake fails?

The closure motion we have heard brought in today I think is a very serious move and a very great pity for this Province and for Canada. Last night, we heard a fraudulent hint of public hearings as a direct response to the pressure that has been put on by the Opposition and public opinion that is beginning to realize that there is not enough knowledge about this Accord. But we see now our Premier, through a closure motion, rushing to be the self-appointed lord high executioner of Meech Lake, because that is all that decision will do. The decision to rescind is so important and the impact is so serious for the possibility of any resolution of this Constitutional crisis, that it is not the Premier's proposals, it is not Meech Lake itself that needs to go to a public hearing, it is the decision to rescind. Because once that is done, it can never be taken back. And it is a time that we need sober second thought.

We are embarked on a dangerous, unprecedented and unnecessary course of action here. It is like killing your Grandmother and then calling the family together to see how you can give her a decent

burial. That is what I consider this movement to rescind and then have public hearings. The public hearings should be held first, because the decision to rescind is very serious.

So, I have to ask myself why are we in this unseemly haste? Why do we have to rush through a motion of closure? Why do we have to stifle debate? I will tell you why. Because the Premier, who has a fantastic public relations outfit up there - it allowed him to put through that con job of a budget, and is also allowing him to con the public on the intent of the Meech Lake debate - realizes that national public opinion is turning against him, that he is no longer the white haired boy of Canada. He is still getting hate Canada literature in his mail, but responsible columnists right across Canada this week are referring to it as Clyde Wells dangerous fantasies.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Read some to them.

MS DUFF:

I will read you a paragraph from Bruce Hutchingson in the Vancouver Sun, one of the western provinces to whom Senate reform is very important. It says: 'According to Canadian Press, Premier Clyde Wells thinks that annexation with the U.S. is a possible choice for Newfoundland. In fact, he says we may well be a good deal better off in that circumstance than to be a province of Canada with the regional economic disparities that exist entrenched in the Constitution with no way of correcting it.' You have to read this with sarcasm: 'Mr. Wells knows how to correct the Constitution, we must start by denying the obvious fact that

Quebec is a distinct society. It was so recognized in the Quebec Act of 1774, the Constitution Act of 1791, and the British North America Act of 1767. And when Newfoundland entered Confederation in 1949, its distinct needs were recognized, not in political speeches, but in the Constitution, yet we would deny Quebec the same recognition.'

This is from the Toronto Globe and Mail of April 2nd editorial: 'Premier Clyde Wells of Newfoundland has made it equally clear that some of Quebec's demands as reflected in Meech Lake are unacceptable to his Government. If there is no accommodation possible before June 23rd despite the best efforts of Mr. McKenna and others, it is difficult to imagine on what grounds negotiation might continue afterwards. More probably, Quebec would boycott constitutional talks and the Federal Government would agree to no significant change in Quebec's absence. Critics of the Meech Lake Accord, such as Mr. Wells, fault it in part because it would require unanimous consent for changes to the Senate and make reform more difficult, but as Mr. Getty noted it, however, defeating Meech Lake will not make it easier. How many people really believe you can get a Senate Reform without Quebec being a willing partner to the Constitution, and I think that is a very important question because this whole debate is centered on trying to blackmail the rest of Canada into Senate Reform with that lever, that we will not accept this Accord unless we get Senate Reform. If we kill the Accord our chances of getting Senate Reform go right down the drain, so I am not going to waste my time reading, but there are

other articles in other national papers and even Chretien today, even that staunch anti Meech man has said, that the Accord can be ratified before it is amended. That is from Chretien today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:

He got all the votes from St. John's, too, last night, did he not.

MS DUFF:

I think that what we are into right now, is in fact, that our Premier is running scared and he is afraid to death that he is going to be painted into a constitutional corner and he wants to go out and get his road show on the road and get public opinion behind him, quickly, and at the moment we have an uninformed public opinion, so that when he finds himself in that constitutional corner, he can say, I did what my people want, but in fact, he is the person who has created public opinion by a constant preaching of his interpretations of Meech Lake, which are certainly not the only case, and I think are more flawed than the case that has been put forward for Meech Lake itself.

Now nobody can tell me that public opinion in Newfoundland at the moment has the slightest clue about the potential consequences of this action to rescind, or of the consequences of this action on the future of Newfoundland within a strong and united Canada, which is what we have all stood up here and said we want. There has been no discussion of possible scenarios after Meech Lake or of the possible financial consequences to Newfoundland, even

though the three atlantic provinces are now busily looking at that very scenario: what are the financial consequences to Atlantic Canada, if Meech Lake fails?

I think this question deserves a careful, objective and informed examination by and for the public, before the action to rescind, which is more important than anything that follows afterwards. We have heard talk of fearmongering. I think we have been accused time and time again of fearmongering because we say that the Meech Lake Accord, if it fails, will be seriously divisive for Canada and a threat to Canadian unity, even though that opinion has been widely accepted and is gaining far more ground right across Canada. But I would ask you, who started the fear? Is the public opinion in Newfoundland based on an understanding of Meech Lake or is it based on a fear of entrenchment of economic disparity, of being a second class province, of having economic shackles around our necks? Is it based on a fear and dislike of Quebec, is it based on an admiration of the courage of the Premier, which I have willingly admitted I also admire, and I think that it is a factor. There is another point of view and the point of view is that Meech Lake is not as the Premier says, an end to Senate Reform and a permanent economic disparity. It is simply the beginning of a process toward which we must continue to move, in compromise, in co-operation, and in goodwill with the other partners in the Confederation, if we are going to get any of the other things that we want.

Mr. Noel, has made the statement: 'oh, why do we need public

hearings, all we are doing, is rescinding'. Well I cannot say strongly enough that that is all we will ever do, because if we rescind this, any other foolish gestures toward public hearings or anything else on subsequent issues will mean nothing, because we will have already taken the action that is going to put a nail in the coffin of Meech Lake and that will trigger in a set of consequences, which I feel will be very, very damaging to this Province. It will not put Newfoundland on the same footing as New Brunswick and Manitoba, and Members opposite think that it will but in this -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Are you in favour of public hearings.

MS DUFF:

I am very much in favour of public hearings, before we take this motion to rescind Meech Lake. Before! Before! Before! I cannot say it often enough, loud enough or hard enough. We are not going to be on the same footing as Manitoba and New Brunswick. In the first place, it is very obvious now, that Manitoba is moving towards Meech Lake and I think the political reality is, people will understand that Gary Filmon cannot move, he has got Sharron Carstairs barking at his heels, he is in a political dilemma in his own province.

Even if he wanted to move, he cannot move.

That puts us in a position where we gave and where we now take back, where we gave our word, we gave our covenant, and now we are going to take it back. I think that is going to put us right front and center as the people who are going to take all the blame

when Canadians start to worry about what is happening after Meech lake. Unless we want to stand alone. Maybe we do. I do not know. But that is exactly where we are going to stand.

I would have to ask, if this constitutional exercise fails and we try to get back to the table with the other nine provinces what ranking will be given to our concerns on the fishery, or to our concerns on regional disparity in the soured relationships that will occur after this Meech Lake falls.

It is my impression that after Meech dies, the national impression of our Premier as a man with the courage of his convictions, could easily change to that of a man who was so intransigent and stubborn, a provincial politician with a narrow view of the Confederation and a very poor understanding of Quebec. Now I do not think that it is necessarily true, but public opinion can shift very quickly and we can end up as the fall guy, and it will not be the Premier. It will be the Province and the people of Newfoundland who will be the fall guys.

I would like to read another article that I read recently from, I think, The Financial Post of March 12 by John Godfrey. It is called the Peculiar Logic of Clyde Wells. This particular article, in fact it is very complimentary to the Premier in large. He does acknowledge the Premier's intelligence, his courage, his style, and his sincerity, but he says: 'it is too soon to speak of tragedy but it is a strange irony of history that Clyde Wells should play such a decisive role in our national future. He is like one of those richly complex characters

in Shakespeare whose virtues and flaws are dangerously mixed. No one can doubt his sincerity and his genuine concern for the welfare of his fellow Newfoundlanders. No one can doubt his intelligence, and his knowledge of constitutional matters.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
But he suffers from two potentially fatal weaknesses. One is of character, the very strength of his convictions is coupled with a stubborn self-righteousness which might be admirable and useful in other circumstances, but which undermines the possibility of a reasonable outcome on Meech Lake. His other great failing is a basic ignorance of Quebec. An ignorance that is also marked by a narrow minded unwillingness to learn more about that province. He is genuinely convinced that in 1867 there was no special status given to Quebec, despite all the specific constitutional references to language and education. Worse, he seems to have no idea whatever of the current reality of public opinion in Quebec. The burden of history rests heavily on his shoulders.'

AN HON. MEMBER:
Yours truly, Don Mazankowski.

MS DUFF:
No. Yours truly, John Godfrey writing in the Financial Post this month.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MS DUFF:
Yes.

I think there is some feeling by Members on the other side of the House to, that we will, after all this is finished, go back to just like we were before. I heard the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island (Mr. Walsh) talking about, this is a strong, united, happy, wonderful, get together Canada when all this argument is over. But I do not think anybody has ever seriously looked at the question of can Quebec leave Canada? I do not think the hon. Members opposite believe that Quebec can leave Canada. But in point of fact now, Quebec is doing \$28 billion of trade outside Canada, 75 per cent of that to the United States. The reality is that Quebec today is poised for international trade. The FLQ solidarity fund for the last ten years has been invested in business with a good future in Quebec, all with a view to making sure that if the political climate in Quebec changes, that Quebec can separate, which it could not do ten years ago.

Now following up from that you have to ask the question, Will Quebec separate?

I think the reality of Quebec politics at the moment is that most Quebecers would rather stay in Canada, and they felt that with the Meech Accord dealing with a Quebec question, with heavy emphasis on the un-addressed issues from 1982, that there was perhaps a chance for them to be accepted within the Canadian Confederation, but the political reality in Quebec is changing, partly because of their perception of the attitude of some of the English provinces.

I believe this is dangerous and therefore the Debate, the

exercise, and the rescinding of the Meech Lake Accord is dangerous because it pushes Quebec opinion in the opposite direction. I think at this point I should also make reference to the very unfortunate remarks of the hon. Minister of Finance. I know he stood and apologized. I saw the Premier on television last night totally disassociating himself, denying it, saying that he did not find it acceptable or anything else, but you cannot pull back that kind of thing once it is done. It is already in the St. John's Evening Telegram and we have already received phone calls from people, from the hate Quebec element in St. John's, or in Newfoundland, that are behind Meech Lake. I think one of the calls said, 'Kitchen is right on the money, honey,' and hung up the phone. People believe it does reflect the position of the Government. I had a call from Vancouver today and it is already in the Vancouver papers - what has been said. This is the Minister of Finance of the Province of Newfoundland and it is very hard to explain to people in Quebec and Vancouver that the poor Minister had hoof in mouth disease. It really is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:

It is true. There is great damage done by that kind of statement even if it is inadvertent and unintentional. The question, too, has been raised by some of the Members opposite about the language minorities. I think Mr. Dumaesque was one of the first to raise it but it has been raised by other people. The question of the language minorities, I would have to tell you, all the English

groups within Quebec are solidly behind the Meech Lake document, the voice of English Quebec, Alliance Quebec, which are the two big groups within Quebec, the Franco-Manitobans are behind Meech Lake, the Acadians in New Brunswick are behind Meech Lake, even the language minorities in our Province are behind Meech Lake. They would have reason to go into that in more depth, much more depth and understanding than we Members of this House.

And I believe that if they have said that Meech Lake does not damage their position - they look on it as a positive step forward to getting more of their rights in the future. They feel that the greatest damage would be done by killing Meech Lake. They are very concerned about that, and have said in a very loud voice, 'Do not use us as an excuse for killing Meech Lake.' Yet it is still being used as an excuse by Members in this House, who I do not think are tuned in with the national reality.

Since I have been challenged to address the Women's Rights issue, I will do that, as well.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MS DUFF:

Well, I can make a very short statement, and that is, that I have not raised my voice in protest to Meech Lake because of that, because I do not believe that the Meech Lake Accord acts against the interests of women's equality in Canada. Equality rights for women were entrenched in the Charter of Rights in 1982. Some of the women's groups, in English Canada, particularly, expressed some concern because

they wanted that further entrenched in the Constitution, not because there is anything in Meech Lake that goes against the equality provisions in the Charter of Rights, but because they wanted the 'i's dotted and the 't's crossed. The only possibility is in the distinct society clause, in Clause 2 of the Meech Lake Accord, and that relates only to the Province of Quebec. And the feminist movement in Quebec, which is one of the strongest feminist movements in Canada, one of the most vocal, one of the most advanced women's movements. They have said, 'We do not have a problem with Meech Lake. We are confident enough in our political strengths, in the fact that our Government has some of the most enlightened equality legislation in Canada, that the possibility that Clause 2 could be interpreted by the courts to override our rights will not happen, because our Government would not dare do it, politically. And they have said, just as the minority language groups have said, 'Do not use us as an excuse to vote against Meech Lake.' So why are you wonderful, enlightened gentlemen, who are all now worried about women's rights, but who did not mention it in your concerns about Meech Lake, suddenly using it as an excuse?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MS DUFF:

That is the truth. My leader at City Hall is very fond of saying that a lie is half-way around the world before the truth leaves home, and one of the problems we have here, whether by omission or

by intent, is that a lot of half-truths about Meech Lake have been said and not denied, and they are now half-way around the Province, if not the world, and that is one of the reasons there is so much concern about Meech, and one of the reasons we should think before we take the action that this Government is hell-bent on taking tomorrow as a result of closure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:

Now, the hon. the Minister of Justice when he was speaking yesterday referred to an article which I have also read by two law students called, 'Lessening the Leap in the Dark.' It was quite a good article written some months ago and a lot of things have happened since then. But I would have to say that nobody can see the future. To some degree it has to be a matter of interpretation. It has to be a matter of your gut feelings, of your knowledge of history and of politics when you make decisions such as we are being asked to make today.

But in view of what I believe are the scenarios, if the Meech Lake document fails, which would be three to my mind, one is that we would have a status quo, but we as a Province would not be very credible as a constitutional partner and our concerns, be they the fishery or economic disparity will not get a fair address. It will be ten years or twenty years or fifty years before we get any serious debate on constitutional reform.

Another is that if the Meech Lake document fails, Quebec can, and I just told you why it can and why

it possibly will, move toward either sovereignty association or outright separation depending on the political climate. We are not helping the political climate in Quebec. I think if that happens it is a tragedy for Canada because I do not believe we can go it alone. Nobody has shown me any economic figures or facts to show me that we can go it alone.

The third, is that there would an extraordinary attempt by pro-Canadians, by people who are concerned about Canadian unity, to pull it together again after the death of Meech Lake. That will be a very difficult process and Quebec's demands will not be minimal the next time. Quebec politically could not come back with minimal demands, they will be much tougher and it will be a lot harder if we move back from square one where we are now, we are never going to get to square two.

So on that basis, it is my gut feeling, my honest gut feeling about the future of Newfoundland within a strong united Canada, that the leap in the dark I take in accepting Meech Lake is a shorter leap across a much less deep chasm than the leap of rescinding this Accord with all the potential negative fall out for this Province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, I want to make some comments on Meech Lake, but

considering the time of day with just two or three minutes left, I would prefer to adjourn until tomorrow, if Members Opposite agree.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

I believe there is an Estimates Committee sitting tonight, Social Services tomorrow morning, tonight Fisheries in the House, I believe. Is that correct? Would somebody verify this?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes, that is right.

MR. BAKER:

Social Services tomorrow morning at 9:00, Fisheries tonight here.

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

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday April 5, 1990 at 2:00 p.m.