

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Dicks): Order, please!

On behalf of hon. members I would like to welcome to the Speaker's Gallery Mr. John Nolan a former member of this House and Cabinet minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I would also like to welcome to the public galleries fifty Levels I, 11, and 111 students from the Canadian Issues and Democracy class at Discovery Collegiate, Bonavista, accompanied by their teachers Gary Broderick and Stephanie Matchim.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

On Monday, November 28, 1994 and again on Tuesday, November 29, the Member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir rose on a point of privilege. The hon. member claimed that his privileges had been infringed by the manner in which the Department of Justice had handled the provision of legal counsel to him in a civil suit pending before the Supreme Court of Newfoundland.

In reviewing what the member has said it is clear that the matters and issues before the court concern, not his duties as a member of this House, but rather his duties as a former Cabinet minister. The manner in which legal counsel was provided and its timeliness is therefore beyond the jurisdiction of the Speaker and this hon. House which may only determine privileges vis-à-vis members in the performance of their parliamentary duties, and member's rights, privileges, duties, and obligations when acting in a capacity other than as a member of this hon. House, even when it is closely related to those duties as that of a Cabinet minister, is therefore beyond our jurisdiction and any complaint or remedy must be lodged or sought elsewhere.

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday the lawyers for the government tabled in the court a copy of a memo, signed by me, in relation to the Build/Lease proposals for Health Care Facilities.

That memo has been subject to much interpretation and mis-interpretation, but these are the facts, as completely as I can recall.

Cabinet decided to call for general build/lease proposals for the following reasons:

Our normal process was taking too long, and construction projects were taking years, especially in the health-care field, to get started.

Our normal process was resulting in costs that would end up being double or triple our original estimates.

We were in a recession, and we wanted, as quickly as possible, to start construction projects to generate much-needed work.

We had several construction projects that needed to be done immediately.

We had been told that, given a change in the normal process, the private sector could be innovative, avoid escalating prices, and speed up the whole process.

So government decided to initiate a very general call for proposals, and a Cabinet Committee was appointed to oversee the process.

The Committee did encounter resistance within the public service to the change in procedure, as the public servants were uncomfortable with making the subjective judgement that the process required. However, the Committee ensured that the process was proceeded with, and that a fair analysis was done of all the proposals presented. Cabinet ultimately decided that two of the proposals merited detailed examination: namely; (1) Trans City Holdings and (2) 10189 Newfoundland Limited.

The Department thought it necessary to meet with both bidders in an attempt to quantify the value of the major differences between the two proposals. This process led to the conclusion that the Trans City proposal represented the best overall bid.

When the Cabinet paper was presented to Cabinet, some concern was expressed that there was no legal opinion attached regarding the compliance with the Public Tendering Act, so the discussion on the paper was postponed.

The Committee then examined the legal opinion. The opinion summarizes the process. Its conclusion is that - amongst other things - Cabinet does have the authority to award these contracts to Trans City Holdings Limited under section 8 of the Act, however, this would require tabling the reasons for the contract award in the House of Assembly and there were some other matters dealt with in that legal opinion.

After reading the legal opinion, a suggested position was developed for the committees consideration. This was done on or about October 30, 1991 - it could have been a day or so before that but around that date - and this is the memo in question at this current time. The memo was not presented to Cabinet, because, after due consideration, by me and by the Committee, it became apparent that: (1) To re-tender would cause us to go back to our usual method which would cause untold delays in construction activity, and (2) It was our experience that this would cause a major escalation in costs.

When Cabinet consideration was give to this paper on November 13, I recommended, on behalf of the Committee, that, in spite of some problems in perception, the right procedure would be to proceed with the award, and that should we decide to pursue this method in the future, some minor changes be made in the process to answer the perception problem. Cabinet accepted this recommendation, and the contracts were subsequently awarded.

The end result, Mr. Speaker, was that work did start immediately, we got three high-quality buildings at a cost to the taxpayer that was far below what we could have done by following the usual process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIMMS: Well, Mr. Speaker, to quote Sir Walter Scott: "Oh, what a tangled web we weave\When first we practice to deceive!"

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS: If ever there was an example of digging the hole deeper, Mr. Speaker, we just saw it here today, with this weak explanation from the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

Now, there are lots of questions that arise from the Statement, that we won't have an opportunity to ask today, perhaps; just a few I would like to flick out to him first of all:

Where did this legal opinion come from that he talks about? Who were these lawyers? Were they from Halley Hunt, were they Justice Department officials? Who were they, and will he table in this House, a copy of their full and entire legal opinion explaining everything? Will he do that? That is one question I would like to ask him.

Secondly, the point I want to make this, because I only have a couple of minutes to respond to his Statement: Even though the Minister signed the Cabinet paper on behalf of a Cabinet committee, recommending that the contract be reconsidered and recommending that tenders be recalled, he is here today trying to convince the people of this Province, trying to convince the members of this Legislature that he was prepared to ignore all the legal warnings, that said, the approach used complicated the determination of the low bidder, that there is a possibility of legal action by unsuccessful bidders.

It is quite clear we wouldn't be acting within the spirit of the Public Tender Act, but our decision would be difficult to defend within the House of Assembly. Our decision would be impossible or difficult to defend within the Public Accounts Committee. He is prepared to ignore all of that for these two little reasons here that he gives in his Statement? What nonsense! No one in his right mind would ever believe what he had to say here today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR: A point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl on a point of privilege.

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege today, relating to a matter that I raised in this House a number of months ago - I don't have the exact date with me - and it relates to this same matter. I brought it up, as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, in reference to actions taken by certain members of the Public Accounts Committee, at a duly constituted meeting of that committee, when this particular issue which had been referred to the Public Accounts Committee, and which had been placed on our agenda...

As the House will recall, the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation refused to appear before the committee at the time. I reported to the House of Assembly and subsequently, in fact, I believe in a special report to the House on behalf of the committee, I advised the House that members of the committee had voted not to proceed with the hearings on this issue because the matter was before the courts, and that no items of discussion could take place surrounding this issue.

In spite of the fact that I gave a lengthy presentation in this hon. House, citing many references from Beauchesne, many precedents, many statements of legal opinion whereby in civil matters such as this no prejudice to the case could be caused as a result of discussion in the House since the remedy available to the court would be a financial remedy in any case, or not a matter of character, and that many precedents had been set whereby matters of this were discussed in the House of Assembly, or at Public Accounts Committees, on these types of issues when the matter was even before the courts.

At that particular time the matter was not before the courts. There had simply been a statement of claim filed before the court. No proceedings had taken place, no discoveries had even been filed with the courts and, in my view and in my presentation, I think I showed clearly that there was absolutely

no reason that the Public Accounts Committee should not have been entitled to and should not, in fact, have proceeded with debate on this particular issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my point of privilege arises from today seeing the minister making statements relating to this particular matter while the matter is, in fact, before the courts. There may well be a case made at this point in time, that the minister's Statement might prejudice this matter in the courts. My point of privilege is, Mr. Speaker, that the privileges of the Members of the House of Assembly were violated in that the Public Accounts Committee was not allowed to proceed with it, that the members on the Public Accounts Committee representing the opposite side obviously were directed by the Premier. We can see, the Member for Eagle River, who was vice-chair at the time, has his reward now as parliamentary secretary to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to rule on that matter. I would be prepared to make the appropriate motion if you so rule.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Government -

Order, please!

I would like to hear the hon. the Government House Leader on the point of privilege of the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl.

MR. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may make a brief submission -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I would like to hear the hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. ROBERTS: If I may make a brief submission with respect to the point raised by the gentleman, the Member for Mount Pearl. My recollection of the discussion on the point of privilege and Your Honour's ruling last Spring - and I think it was last Spring, if memory serves me - is that Your Honour ruled the Public Accounts Committee was the master of its own affairs. It had dealt with it and so on. That is a matter that will be apparent from the record when Your Honour deals with it.

My submission is that there is no point of privilege arising from anything that happened in this House today. It hardly behooves any member of the Opposition to raise the so-called point of privilege raised by my friend, the Member for Mount Pearl, given that, I won't say he, his colleagues have repeatedly asked questions in this House - I suppose we have had at least one a day for the last two or three weeks - dealing with this health care centres matter. That is fine. The questions have been asked, they've been answered, more questions, more answers, that's fine. So there is no breach of the privileges of the House. All my friend is doing, I suggest with respect, is re-fighting a battle that he fought and lost last Spring.

There is one other thing. My friend, I'm sure unwittingly, cast most unfair, unwarranted and unjustified aspersions on the Member for Eagle River. Mr. Speaker, we can make this House into a bear pit if we wish. We will not serve ourselves well, we will not serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador well, if we get on with this kind of thing: that the hon. the Member for Eagle River becomes the parliamentary secretary to the Premier because he, I think the words were, 'got his just reward', or words to that effect. If ever I've heard an aspersion cast upon -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. ROBERTS: If ever I've heard an aspersion cast upon the motives and conduct of a member, Mr. Speaker, that is it. I suggest to my friend, the Member for Mount Pearl, who is an experienced parliamentarian and knows how to give it and knows how to take it, which is part of the parliamentary life, that is part of why we are here. My friend, the Member for Mount Pearl, I'm quite sure, was just simply led astray in the heat of debate in that phrase and perhaps would be good enough to withdraw the aspersion and take it off the record.

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

MR. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, just very briefly, if Your Honour wishes to rule that, I will certainly take direction from Your Honour, but not from the Government House Leader.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR: I will simply point out, Mr. Speaker, that I am bringing in this matter now simply because the document referred to by the Minister of Finance states quite clearly that: our decision will be difficult to defend within the House of Assembly and at the Public Accounts Committee. I submit to, Your Honour, that that precisely is why this matter was not debated at the Public Accounts Committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I will take the matter under advisement and rule within the next couple of days.

On behalf of hon. members I would like to welcome to the public gallery, Mr. Robert Aylward, former member and minister of the government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday after the questioning in the House related to the Trans City Holdings issue, the health care centres issue, we learned on the public airwaves of this Cabinet document, this paper, this appendix or whatever, the 9191 that the minister talked about in his statement earlier. Now in that document it says: at our last Cabinet meeting on October 22, 1991, you approved the award of the above noted structures. Now we find out that that was approved: subject to further consideration by a committee of ministers that I would head and that committee of ministers was headed by the Deputy Premier, by the Minister of Justice of the day, the Minister of Health - now finally brought into it - and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology. My question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is this, since three of those four ministers were already members of the first committee that had recommended Trans City for the contract in the first place then why was this review, this further consideration ordered on the same day that full Cabinet approved the contract? Can the Premier answer that question?

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

MR. BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The answer is in the statement that I just read. There was some concern expressed I believe, that there was no attached legal opinion. There was one in the process of being compiled or something and there was neither one attached to the Cabinet paper so we were sent back to have a look at that and do a further evaluation, simple.

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, I submit it is not simple.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIMMS: Thank you, I submit it is not simple and that is why I am asking the Premier to answer on behalf of the Cabinet. That does not explain to anybody, Mr. Speaker, why in fact the decision was made to approve the contract, yet on that same day you decided to send it for further review by another committee of Cabinet. That does not explain why that was done. Can the Premier explain it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: Mr. Speaker, I do not recall when the committee of Cabinet was put in place. I do not know if that -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER WELLS: Tell members to hold on, if they want to answer the question with jeers and laughs then that is the answer the members will get but if they want my answers that I am prepared to give, I am quite prepared to give it to the House, Mr. Speaker, but not in this context.

Mr. Speaker, I do not remember whether there was a committee in place from the beginning or the committee was put in place at this time. I just do not recall but as far as I know there was only one committee, or was there two committees? I do not remember to tell you the truth.

AN HON. MEMBER: I can answer that.

PREMIER WELLS: The minister knows, he can better answer it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

A supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, this is unbelievable. We have the Premier standing in his place trying to give the appearance that he does not know what is going on with all of this issue and all this fuss. There has been news media reports for months, there are court cases going on, we have been raising questions in the House, yet the Premier has not even called anybody in to give him a full briefing on this situation? He does not know what is going on? The Cabinet document that was made public last night states clearly: at our last Cabinet meeting on October 22, you approved the tender subject to further consideration by a committee of ministers that I would head. There is a separate committee as I read it. The first committee did not have the Minister of Health on it. He told me that in the House himself the other day.

So can he tell me again why, on the very day that you approved the tender, the contract, awarded it in Cabinet, you would ask that another committee of Cabinet review it again? Wouldn't you hold off on the approval until you got the report back from the committee of Cabinet? That is the question I'm asking the Premier. Surely the Premier was in the Cabinet room when this was done.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The explanation is fairly simple. There was a committee in place for some time that was specifically dealing with construction projects. I would like to point out to hon. members that at the date in question, which I believe was October 22 or October 23 - the hon. member has the date there - but somewhere around there, in 1991, at that point in time the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation had resigned from Cabinet. I think the only change in the

committee at that point was to put one more member on, which was the Minister of Health at the time. It was simply a change of one member on the committee. There was nothing unusual about that. There was a vacancy on the committee and there was one member appointed to fill that vacancy. That is precisely what happened at that point in time to my recollection.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIMMS: That is why it is so hard to get answers out of this government, Mr. Speaker. The Premier refuses to respond to questions on this issue for some strange reason. By the way, if the Premier hasn't thought to ask for a copy - the document that the minister talked about or made public or gave to the courts yesterday - I will send you over a copy of it. Because you should see it. If you are surprised, and surprised and surprised, which I doubt.

PREMIER WELLS: (Inaudible) first time (inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, let me ask -

AN HON. MEMBER: First time reading it?

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, let me ask the -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS: Wait now, listen to the words, please. I ask my colleagues to restrain themselves. Listen to the words he used. It is the first time he read it. Okay? First time he read it.

PREMIER WELLS: First time I saw it (inaudible).

MR. SIMMS: Yes, right. Okay. Now listen to the words. We will get to that a little later on. What I want to ask him is this, Mr. Speaker. This Cabinet committee that you approved, your Cabinet approved, on October 22, drafted this paper for the Cabinet, other members of the Cabinet, dated - notwithstanding his statement here today. It was signed by the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier. It is a two-page statement that recommended against proceeding, reconsidering the tender and putting it out for re-tender in February. That is what the paper says.

I want to ask the Premier this: Why didn't that recommendation, that report from the Cabinet committee, go to the full Cabinet for consideration? Why didn't that happen? I don't believe the answer that was given here today by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board because it doesn't make any sense. It should go to the Cabinet and then you should have that information at your fingertips, if you want to make a decision.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER: Mr. Speaker, in the statement I gave earlier I explained what happened there. This was a suggested memo or a note to Cabinet that was done for me for a discussion within the committee. That is one aspect of them. Certainly the process was such that it was a different process and there were a number of questions that required subjective judgement. It was different from the normal process, no doubt about that. The committee considered it.

Then the committee also considered many other things, and two of the main things were outlined in my statement. The fact that to do anything else would perhaps delay the whole process by a year or two and would result in tremendously increased costs. On balance I recommended on behalf of the committee that the project be proceeded with, and that is the only recommendation that Cabinet considered because that is the only recommendation that went to Cabinet.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, I can't believe that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board would expect anybody in their right minds to believe that explanation. It just doesn't wash, I say to the minister.

Let me get back to the Premier. Because he is the one who should be answering the questions for the government on this issue, this major scandal. You are the one who should be responding!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS: If you haven't the courage to get up and answer that is one thing, but don't try to slough it off to somebody else. Let me ask the Premier this. He says the first time he saw or read this paper was yesterday. Was he aware of the contents of the paper? Was he briefed on it? Did he talk to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, his Deputy Premier? Did anybody tell him about any of the concerns outlined in this Cabinet paper or not? Was he aware of any of that?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: Mr. Speaker, I know that the answers that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has given are not what the hon. members opposite want. I know they are not what they want. I know it disturbs them that it does not lay a foundation to allow them to make their unfounded allegations they have been making. I am well aware of that, Mr. Speaker. I know that it does not suit the Opposition, but it happens to be the full and total information, and I have total confidence in the Minister of Finance, unrestrained, total confidence, that he is telling this House exactly what he knows and exactly what he did. I have no quarrel with any single thing he said.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just indicated from my seat without formally addressing the House that I saw that document for the first time yesterday, and that happens to be the truth. The Minister of Finance told me he found this document and he brought it to me to show me, and the obvious decision was that it had to be made available to the court process immediately so I think it was made available within hours. It was made available immediately, so, Mr. Speaker, the correct and proper procedures were taken and I commend the minister for doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I have no recollection specifically of anything that is in that. I have never seen the document before until yesterday. Now, whether or not any individual statement that is in it was brought to the attention of Cabinet at the time, I do not specifically recall, but I am quite prepared to take a look at the document and see. All I know is that Cabinet dealt with the issues as they were brought to Cabinet and Cabinet made its decision.

MR. SIMMS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The question was: Was the Premier aware of any of it, not the Cabinet? I asked him, quite clearly, if he was aware of the issues, the major concerns outlined in this paper that was drafted by his Deputy Premier? Was he aware of any of those issues? Secondly, since the Premier avoided answering the

question directly, let me get back to the Minister of Finance because I want to ask this question either of the Minister of Finance or the Premier. When, and how, did this Cabinet paper, all of a sudden, come to the minister? Does the Premier know the answer to that question, because I want to make sure that the minister's memory here is accurate? After all he said yesterday evening that he had forgotten about the paper altogether until he came across it by chance, recently. Will he tell us where he got this Cabinet document? Will he tell us how he came upon it all of a sudden, where he found it, and when he found it? Will he tell us that?

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

MR. BAKER: I am trying to get the days sorted out, Mr. Speaker. I think it was on Thursday or Friday of last week. I asked one of my secretaries to go back through, because of discussions that were ongoing and because of the news, the reporting and so on, to go back and check through all of my files to get out all the information related to this proposal. I left Friday afternoon and went to Gander. I was in Gander over the weekend and when I came back Monday morning all the files were on my desk. I looked through them and saw this. This is in my files so I immediately took whatever steps needed to be taken.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIMMS: Does the Minister of Finance know how it came to appear in his files? Is he aware of that?

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

MR. BAKER: I am not certain, Mr. Speaker. It was in my files as an attachment, I believe, to the Cabinet paper, WST 9191. It was in that file anyway as an attachment to that. As the hon. member realizes, he has a copy of it there, that is how it was written up in the first place, as supposed to be an attachment to that file and I suppose that is how it got there, my secretary having it in my office attached to that file.

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

MR. SIMMS: I ask the minister then: he is not aware if somebody else provided that attachment, or that copy to him, to his office?

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

MR. BAKER: No, Mr. Speaker, I had a conversation with Mr. Gilbert, I believe it was Thursday, somewhere in that week, where he indicated that there was a paper that was not produced in evidence in the courts. I then had my files searched. So whenever that was I asked my secretary to search the files, and apparently that was done on Friday.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIMMS: So what the minister is saying now, he searched and asked for his files to be searched after the Member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir made him aware of this, which is not exactly what he told us earlier in the House. That is why I am asking the question, because I want to get the answer correct.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier this question, because we have many, many other questions on this issue and we won't get them all in today, but I want to say this. We have been asking questions on this issue now for the last two weeks, almost day after day. Everything that I suggested, as far back as three years ago, and particularly in the last couple of weeks, all of the concerns we have raised are

contained in this very paper that the minister has written. I could have written this Cabinet paper myself. There is one exception. I would have excluded that you would be in technical compliance with the Public Tender Act, because I believe you are breaking the Public Tender Act technically as well, but that is beside the point.

Now we find not only the Premier and the minister accusing me of being wrong, and that I am wrong about this, we now find not only was I right, but the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board agreed with everything I was saying, which is really rather ironic. Now he is the one who has been chosen to try to defend this mess in an effort to keep the Premier out of the picture. That is what is going on here, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS: The Premier knows what is going on here, because if he doesn't know I can tell him everybody else in this Province knows what is going on.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The question.

MR. SIMMS: I have a question for the Premier, a straightforward question for the Premier, that only he can answer. This may be the only way to get him on his feet. Only he can answer this question. The evidence is mounting. There is enough evidence now that has been building for the last three years at least, and particularly the last few weeks. I want to ask the Premier, who is head of the Cabinet, head of the government: Will he order a public inquiry now to deal with this matter?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: The answer is no at this time, Mr. Speaker. There is a full, open public inquiry dealing with the issue now. I have total and complete confidence in the judges of the Supreme Court, and I am not about to do anything that is going to interfere by having another judge appointed to conduct a public inquiry into the same matters that are at issue in the court. Let the court proceedings take their course, and I give this commitment to the House: If, at the conclusion of those court proceedings there is any basis whatsoever for the conduct of a public inquiry, I can assure the House that one will be ordered, but I will not interfere with the process of justice now to satisfy the political whims of the members opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIMMS: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that what is happening outside here, down on Duckworth Street in the court house, has nothing at all to do with the public inquiry we are looking for. It deals with the political interference, the political manipulation and political tampering. A civil case is not looking at that matter, and the Premier knows it full well.

Let me ask him this final question, because it is a matter that I have raised twice over the last week and I want clarification of it. I want the Premier now to tell us, or ask him if he would at least confirm, that the reason given by the Premier to me on two occasions now for the hiring of a private lawyer for the Member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir - the explanation he gave me on two occasions now - was the

wrong explanation, after hearing what the Member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir has said publicly, and will the Premier therefore admit that he was misleading the House when he gave those answers to me?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: No, Mr. Speaker, I was not misleading the House. The Member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir has made his position. I don't quarrel with the statement that he has basically made; that is what motivated him to do it. I had my understanding of a concern that he had. I don't quarrel with the statement that the member made. I accept his statement. If that is his explanation as to why he came and why he requested that position, I can only say to the members of the House that I had no reason to believe that anybody was doing any harm to the minister, or treating the minister unfairly. The minister had his reasons to believe it, and he stated the reasoning for it, and I think the members of the House ought to accept the member's explanation. I can only say to you, what made good sense to me was the answer that I gave the House after consultation with the man who was Minister of Justice at the time, I approved of proceeding in that way.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister of this country became involved in the decision by HMDC to rob Marystown of the \$16-million tender. He wanted the Quebec shipyard, MIL to be given an opportunity to bid on it. I don't know where the Prime Minister has been for the last two months when they were trying to rob the work from Marystown.

Mr. Speaker, today, Premier McKenna of New Brunswick has become directly involved in it; he is basically ready to go to Ottawa and demand the contract go to Saint John, New Brunswick and not to MIL Davie; the Government of Quebec has become involved in it, the Premier of that province. I want to say, that our Premier, Mr. Speaker, has let us down badly, has let down the people of the Burin Peninsula badly, has let down Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier has decided not to support the officials of Vinland Industries who said they could deliver the work in the Fall of 1994; he has decided not to support the workers of the Marystown shipyard. I ask the Premier: After what has taken place now, will he follow the example of Premier McKenna, Premier Parizeau and the Prime Minister of this country and become directly involved and demand HMDC leave the work in this Province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: Mr. Speaker, that preamble is all stuff and nonsense and there is no merit or accuracy in it at all. All he has to do, is ask -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER WELLS: All he has to do, Mr. Speaker, is ask the Mayor of Marystown if he is satisfied with what the Premier of this Province has done, and the Mayor of Marystown will tell the member who just raised this issue, that he is completely satisfied that the Premier and Government of this Province took

all of the action within its power to take and led in taking that action, so the whole basis for the question is without merit, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN: Mr. Speaker, the people of the Burin Peninsula know full-well that this Premier did absolutely nothing except support Ken Hull in his decision to rip the jobs away. That is what he did.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier, will he do what Frank McKenna, the Premier of New Brunswick is doing; will he stand up for the people of this Province, will he defend the rights of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and will he now, Mr. Speaker, insist that public tenders be called and the work remain in Marystown?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: Mr. Speaker, everything that is possible, reasonable and legal has been done. Now, I don't know what he is suggesting that Premier McKenna is doing. I can stand up and roar and demand and make a loud noise that has no substance either, but what good does it do? I prefer to act on the basis of intelligent judgement, not loud, roaring noises.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West, a final supplementary.

MR. TOBIN: I don't think the Prime Minister of this country or the Premier of New Brunswick needs any lecture on intelligence from this Premier here, and I don't suggest your standing up ranting and roaring. What they are trying to do is, they are trying to create work in their provinces, not drive it away, as you are doing.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier has had a pat answer, every day, that he could not substitute his judgement for the judgement of HMDC. Well, now that the Prime Minister has substituted his judgement, that Premier McKenna has substituted his judgement for HMDC, will the Premier not come on board and substitute his judgement and demand that the work stay in Marystown or, is he saying, Mr. Speaker, that these gentlemen don't know what they are talking about?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the member is totally wrong when he says, first, that the Premier of New Brunswick has substituted his judgement for that of HMDC, or that the Prime Minister of Canada has substituted his judgement for that of HMDC, that is totally and completely wrong; therefore, there is no foundation to the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. HARRIS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier and it concerns information contained in sworn documents filed in provincial court to obtain a search warrant to search for records of Pharmaceutical Supplies Limited in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Now, this investigation relates to secret commissions allegedly received by an Ontario sales representative of a national drug company, who dealt with Pharmaceutical Supplies Limited and

Armbro Pharmaceutical. He received cheques and cash from Pharmaceutical Supplies Limited, Armbro and others, and has made small deposits totalling \$500,000, and has had an additional \$775,000 in cash seized by the police as a part of that investigation.

Mr. Speaker, the document also implies something else, that this man was somehow part of an interprovincial price fixing operation in which drug companies would realize windfall profits, and consumers be effectively overcharged.

I want to ask the Premier whether he has, as Premier, or as Attorney General, caused any further investigation to be made so as to determine whether consumers in this Province, including individuals, nursing homes and hospitals, may have been overcharged for drugs as a result of the activities referred to in these court documents?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, as a lawyer, would know that any inquiry set up by this government or any other government into matters that the police are already investigating - because such activities would be breaches of the criminal law, as the hon. member knows - any inquiry set up could only have the effect of preventing the appropriate prosecution, should prosecution be the appropriate result of the inquiry already being done by the police.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be responsible for preventing anybody who ought to be prosecuted from being prosecuted because of a precipitate action the government has taken.

To the extent that the inquiries that are being conducted by the police will provide full disclosure, no further inquiry would be necessary. To the extent that they don't, then a further inquiry may well be necessary, but that is a judgement that could only be taken at the time.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am not asking for an inquiry, I am asking for an investigation by the Department of Justice into what has been going on in this Province, not what Mr. Moyer is alleged to have done in the Province of Ontario vis-à-vis an employer, which is what this search warrant is all about. This document here also reveals that the drug pricing in this Province, as well as Ontario and Nova Scotia, are based on an honour system whose integrity is solely reliant upon the honest reporting of pricing, including discounts and credits offered by the manufacturers or wholesalers, and that if this system is not followed, the type of activity would result in the consumer paying more for the pharmaceutical product than they should, and the wholesaler realizing a substantial profit.

What I am concerned about is not this police investigation in Ontario, but whether this Premier has caused an investigation to be done to determine whether drug prices in this Province had been substantially raised, causing windfall profits to the drug companies and also to the shareholders of those drug companies.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: Mr. Speaker, the matter of the action of an official of Pharmaceutical Supplies, or of the company, and I don't know which, in relation to this matter has been referred to the police for investigation. Now, it may well be that that investigation will say there was no criminal activity, in which case we will be free then to conduct a full inquiry as to everything that occurred, if there was no criminal activity, to determine whether or not there was any inappropriate activity that adversely impacted the price of drugs in the Province.

If, after the conclusion of the police investigation, it becomes clear that is necessary, such an inquiry will be made. What I will not do is do anything to cause another investigation to occur at a time when the police investigation is under way, only to have the courts rule that it is illegal and they can't proceed with prosecution against somebody who ought, perhaps, to be subject to prosecution.

MR. SPEAKER: A final supplementary, the hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier, as a lawyer, will know that two investigations going on at once don't cancel one another out. The Premier is talking about public inquiries vis-à-vis police investigations.

I want to ask the Premier: Is the reason there hasn't been a separate, independent investigation into what has been going on in this Province which would, if it were true as set forth here, result in windfall profits to the benefit of these companies and their shareholders, to the detriment of consumers and the people of this Province - is the reason there hasn't been an independent investigation because one of these shareholders, in fact, is still sitting in the Premier's Cabinet? Is that the reason why he doesn't want to have an independent investigation here in this Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member really knows the difference of that, and I think it is improper for him to make an assertion that is contrary to something that he knows to be fact. He knows to be fact that certain information came to the knowledge of the minister, and that it was forthwith turned over to the police. Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, he knows that to be fact. It has been stated publicly. He knows that to be fact, so I don't quite understand what the member is driving at. The information has been turned over to the police, and to the best of my knowledge, they are at this moment conducting such an inquiry.

Now, I am not about to interfere with that inquiry. And if they aren't conducting an inquiry, then I invite them publicly now to do so. But I believe they have been conducting an enquiry ever since they have had the information made available to them. The inference in the hon. member's comment is really unworthy of the hon. member in the circumstances.

MR. SPEAKER: There is time for one final question, a short one from the Member for Kilbride.

MR. E. BYRNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations who has stood repeatedly in this House over the past two weeks and not been forthcoming with information dealing with an emergency employment program.

In the news today, the MP for Gander - Grand Falls, Mr. George Baker, said that a \$21 million emergency employment initiative had been negotiated between the Province and the Federal Government. He went on to say that this program would be cost-shared 50-50. Now, two questions: Can the minister confirm this to be so? And, if he can, will the program be offered to only those people who will be kicked off TAGS program by December 31, or will it be offered to all Newfoundlanders who are in desperate financial shape today?

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me first of all say to the hon. member, to my knowledge, what the MP for Gander - Grand Falls had to say is totally news to me. I know nothing about any arrangement between the Federal and Provincial Governments. As a matter of fact, I say to the hon. member, we are still talking to the Federal Government and we will be again tomorrow. I can tell the

hon. member, if we do come to an arrangement or we can reach an agreement whereby we have a cost-shared program, the hon. member won't have to ask the question - this hon. member will be on his feet very quickly.

MR. SPEAKER: Question period has elapsed.

**Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present the report of the Government Services Committee. The committee has reviewed and approved for passage without amendment through the remaining stages of the House of Assembly the following bills:

"An Act To Amend The Pippy Park Commission Act" (Bill No. 43);

"An Act To Amend The City Of Corner Brook Act And The City Of Mount Pearl Act" (Bill No. 40); and,

"An Act To Amend The Pensions Funding Act" (Bill No. 35).

On motion, report of the Government Services Committee received.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Trinity North.

MR. OLDFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to table the report of the Social Services Committee respecting Bill No. 5, "An Act To Continue The Newfoundland Pharmaceutical Act," and Bill No. 34, "An Act To Amend The Waste Material Disposal Act".

On motion, report of the Social Services Committee received.

Answers to Questions

For which Notice has been Given

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it was on Friday, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition asked some questions about the lease arrangements with the health care centres. Subsequent to that question, I have asked my officials to prepare an answer, and I would like to table that answer.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - White Bay.

MR. SHELLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the district of Baie Verte - White Bay:

'We, the undersigned residents of the district of Baie Verte - White Bay, do hereby petition the House of Assembly to direct the Department of Employment and Labour Relations to immediately implement an emergency employment program. With the economic conditions which exist, we find ourselves in a desperate situation. We ask the minister and his government to show compassion and understanding to this urgent matter.'

Mr. Speaker, this is, I think, the twelfth or thirteenth day in a row now that myself and my colleagues have risen in this House to present petitions on behalf of these people. With the confusion and rumours that we keep hearing through the media and now with the minister again today, it is obvious that this government is not acting on what this is called, which is an emergency response program. It is not something to deal with in coming months, or for that matter, in coming weeks. It is a situation that I said yesterday, and I will say again tomorrow and the day after that, that has to be addressed immediately.

The people who are waiting to feed their families, Mr. Speaker, cannot wait for a minister of this Province to be transporting back and forth to Ottawa, to Halifax and everywhere else, looking for answers. The answers should come from this government, Mr. Speaker, that is what the people of this Province expect. They do not expect him to travel back and forth to talk to Mr. Axworthy, Mr. Tobin or anybody else. I say to the House today, Mr. Speaker, that this government and this minister should start thinking about how they are going to act on their own because if the delay is this long coming and it was going to be coming for months before the response was made, I say to the minister in the House today, Mr. Speaker, that it is too late for these people. Now I do not know how much it takes for the message to get through to the minister here today, that this situation is here, it is now and it is today. It is not coming in months and it is not trips back and forth to Ottawa. It is incumbent upon this government, Mr. Speaker, to react to the problems that relate to the people in this Province right here, right now.

When it was heard in the media by people in my district, with what the minister said about the coming months, they said: the coming months? I do not know if I can survive the coming months. How we will make it through Christmas and every other day. They keep saying, Mr. Speaker, they realize - we have heard it time after time everywhere for the last three, four or five years - they realize this is not the answer to our problem. They realize it is not the answer to our long-term fiscal debt that it keeps bringing up, Mr. Speaker, but when a man cannot figure out how he is going to feed his family for the next two and three weeks, then he has to have an answer immediately, not in the coming months, not in the coming weeks. So that is why the people of this Province - and not just in my district of Baie Verte - White Bay because I know I have had the support of hon. colleagues on the opposite side, Mr. Speaker, they are getting the same calls.

In 1990, Mr. Speaker, a response from the minister then of Employment and Labour who is now the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation: while government reaffirms that its long-term strategy is crucial, we are very much aware that many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians need the help immediately. Now, Mr. Speaker, that was said by the former minister three years ago when the situation was not so bad. Now the situation is worst and we have a minister who keeps saying, 'in the coming months,' it does not make sense, Mr. Speaker. If the feeling was there then by the former minister it should be here by this minister now. The support had to be within the government to say from his colleagues in Cabinet and the Premier of the day to say: yes minister, you have a problem. You come to us with a problem. It is the reality in this Province today and it has to be acted upon immediately. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

It is now 3:00 p.m. private members' day. The first motion on the Order Paper is that of the hon. Member for Twillingate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, on November 14, I gave notice of a private members' resolution having to do with the importation of garbage. Now the resolution, the whereas's are;

WHEREAS the importation of garbage and/or industrial wastes in any quantity or form for final disposal in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is an indignity to our people and our Province and should not be seen as a potential source of economic development for this Province;

AND WHEREAS any such initiative would have a negative impact on the image of this Province and be detrimental to other forms of industrial and economic development, including and especially the development of our tourism and aquaculture industries;

AND WHEREAS the overwhelming majority of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are opposed in principal to any such initiatives;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the hon. House of Assembly take such action as may be necessary to enact legislation that would effectively prohibit the importation of garbage and/or industrial waste in any quantity or form for final disposal in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, as a Newfoundlander I feel very strongly that we must never, never allow this beautiful Province of ours to become a dump site for international garbage, irrespective of the circumstances or the perceived economic benefit. With the enactment of more stringent regulatory laws in industrialized countries, especially the United States, the disposal of garbage and industrial waste has become a very serious problem. In fact as a result of increased transportation costs, and more strict regulatory constraints waste disposal companies in the US are desperately looking to other countries for potential dump sites.

For example, at the present time, I am told - and I expect the minister, if this is not accurate, will correct it, but I am told there are four proposals from American waste disposal interests now before the Province, seeking approval to dump approximately 12,000 tons of garbage a day in this Province. In terms of volume these proposals amount to, and just listen to this, fifteen times our own garbage production. In other words the four proposals that are now being considered by government amount to fifteen times the garbage production of our entire Province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this sudden interest in Newfoundland and Labrador as a potential dump site for international garbage at a time when our economy is depressed, when jobs are scarce, when money is scarce, is not a coincidence. It is obvious, I believe, to most people, certainly it should be to most Newfoundlanders, that because of our current economic problems we have been targeted by the international garbage disposal industry as a potential dump site, just as they have targeted other economically depressed regions in the world, including black communities in the southern United States and other poor regions in parts of the US.

Mr. Speaker, I contend that sanctioned by an act of this Legislature the word must go out to these would-be polluters of our Province that under no circumstance, or set of circumstances, will garbage ever be permitted to enter this Province for final disposal, or simply put, Mr. Speaker, the word should go out and as quickly as possibly, that Newfoundland and Labrador is not open for that kind of business. We are open for business, yes, but we are not open for the garbage business.

Unless and until that kind of legislation is enacted by the House of Assembly, the kind of legislation I am proposing in my Private Member's Resolution, there is always the danger that one day the bureaucratic process that is now in place to deal with such matters will fall apart. Mind you we are dealing with human beings. The process that is now in place is being dealt with by human beings with all their weaknesses and frailties and it is almost inevitable that some day the system will fail and we will end up with garbage in our Province.

All it will take will be one project to be approved, one single project to be approved, and we will have set a precedent for massive garbage importation, and having done that, Mr. Speaker, other such projects will be difficult, if not impossible, to stop. It will only take one such project and then the run will be on and we will end up with garbage all over this Province. Mr. Speaker, if that is allowed to happen, this Province will very quickly be perceived by outsiders, especially people involved in the tourist industry, as a dump site for international garbage. The Robin Hood Bay of North America, the ultimate Newfie joke; the ultimate Newfie joke.

Mr. Speaker, the rural garbage disposal industry is the fastest growing and by far the most profitable industry in the world. In the world today, no country wants someone else's garbage. To their credit, Mr. Speaker, countries that are traditionally looked upon as being amongst the poorest countries in the world such as Haiti, Jamaica, Africa and many others, are resisting the temptation that is being offered them by the international garbage disposal industry, offers of substantial sums of money and everything else.

These countries, some of the poorest in the world, have resisted that temptation. The reason of course, that they do not want the garbage is because they realize that garbage and tourism are just not compatible. You cannot have a lucrative tourist industry and at the same time entertain garbage proposals. The two just do not go together.

Tourism depends on the image, Mr. Speaker, that people have of a country or a province or a city, and with garbage strewn around, how can they have a good image of a province or a country or a city if that were to happen. Mr. Speaker, already we have a number of impediments that serve to discourage tourists from visiting this Province. We would like to think that Newfoundland is a mecca for tourists but we have to be realistic, Mr. Speaker, we do have a number of impediments.

Transportation costs for example, the fact that we have to travel ninety miles of water to get from the mainland of Canada to the Province of Newfoundland at a considerable cost. The cost of gasoline, weather, high taxes; there are a number of impediments that keep tourists from coming here but, Mr. Speaker, efforts are being made now by this government to overcome some of these problems but it will take a long time, and by allowing garbage to come here now, will certainly make it that much harder and that much longer.

If garbage is allowed to be brought into Newfoundland, Newfoundland and Labrador will quickly get the reputation of being the world's dump site. All of these plans to import garbage except one, Mr. Speaker, involve the use of open pits. Water fills these pits and must be pumped out and material in the garbage will dissolve in the water and eventually enter rivers and streams and pollute them.

The 1 per cent asbestos containing material that will be dumped in the Baie Verte mines for example, will have 99 per cent sewerage sludge, radio-active waste from closed atomic bomb factories and incinerator ash, which is loaded with enough arsenic to poison a whole town. Just imagine, Mr. Speaker, allowing that sort of thing to be brought into this Province and buried abutting a major town in our Province.

Two studies of the mining potential of the Baie Verte asbestos deposit reveal that there are some 10 million tons of asbestos waiting to be mined by large-scale underground mining methods using a wet-milling process and this could be operated at a profit or at least a break-even position. These studies show, Mr. Speaker, that the 10-million-ton deposit underlies both pits and the hills of waste between the pits; so putting millions of tons of asbestos waste in the pits, would put an end for all time to any possibility of an underground mining operation. It is obvious then, Mr. Speaker, that underground mining and wet milling would provide many more jobs than any asbestos waste dump. In fact, it would provide over 200 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, yes, Newfoundland is desperate in many ways. We have an economy that leaves a lot to be desired, we have high unemployment, it is difficult to attract industry to this Province for a variety of

reasons; it is difficult to attract investment dollars, it is extremely difficult to attract the investment dollars for example for tourism, and I am told that already, now with the talk of Newfoundland becoming a garbage dump, that attracting tourist dollars to the Province, investment dollars, is becoming much more difficult so, Mr. Speaker, as I said a moment ago, to allow this to happen would be nothing short of the biggest Newfie joke of all time, and those of us who stand by and see it happen will have something to answer for, and what a legacy to leave to our children and grandchildren. A legacy of a Province that at one time was noted for its pristine waters and clean air, clean soil, to leave a legacy of garbage, toxic waste, and all other kinds of undesirable trash that would be dumped here by outsiders.

Mr. Speaker, the irony of it is that a lot of the companies that are now trying to find a haven for their unwanted garbage in this Province are provinces and countries which have laws within themselves that do not permit the importation of garbage, so they are willing to foist off on us things that they are not allowed to keep in their own province. That, in my view, is totally unacceptable and should not even be entertained.

My view on the situation is that there should be a law in place, as my motion implies, that imposes a complete ban on the importation of garbage, garbage that is for final disposal. I don't see the point of leading people on, who come here with proposals to set up garbage disposal places, leading them on by having environmental impact studies when at the end of the day we will find that these studies prove that the methods being employed, or the type of garbage being used, is certainly not acceptable.

I think we should let the word get out today to all of North America, Canada, that Newfoundland, we are open for business, yes, but we have no intention of exposing ourselves to garbage from their countries. Garbage will be a detriment to the development of not only tourism, but our aquaculture industry and many more aspects of our economy.

I have a great deal of sympathy for the people of Baie Verte, for example, and my hon. colleague over here, because I suppose anything that offers a few jobs carries with it a certain attraction, but I commend them for the position taken. I understand that he is not altogether sympathetic with the proposition of having garbage dumped in the pits in Baie Verte. I commend him for that, and I hope that he will join forces with the powers that be and make sure that doesn't happen.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, before we were in government, I had a visit one day from a certain gentleman who, at one time, held a very highly paid job within the provincial civil service. In fact, I believe he was of a deputy minister status. He came to see me, and asked me if I would lobby for him with the ministers and the Premier - Premier Peckford, I believe, was in office then - and help him achieve what he was setting out to do, namely to fill up the pits, the mine shafts under Bell Island and Conception Bay, with municipal garbage. This fellow came to my office -

AN HON. MEMBER: You didn't lobby for him?

MR. CARTER: No. This fellow came to my office with a great deal of promise and a great deal of flair, and tried to give the impression that this would be the salvation for Bell Island and other parts of Conception Bay. So I asked him what he was going to do with all the garbage. He said: Well, we are going to run it into the open pits underneath, and these pits, by the way, run out under Conception Bay three or four miles. He was going to fill in all of those shafts with municipal garbage.

I asked him, not knowing very much about geology or the nature of rock or whatever, but I asked him what would happen some day if a leak developed, or a small earth tremor, and all of this garbage suddenly floated to the top of Conception Bay. Of course, he was quite a glib speaker and it didn't take him long to explain to me what would happen, none of which, of course, made sense or was satisfactory, but at least he thought he was getting through, I suppose.

Subsequent to that we had another gentleman, one of the promoters of the company that wanted to bring municipal garbage into the Long Harbour area. He briefed a number of us, government and caucus, on this great new industrial venture that he was imposing on our people. This was going to be the godsend for Newfoundland, the beginning of a brand new industry, garbage disposal.

He started telling us, and he had flow charts and he had overhead slides, about what profits we were going to make and how clean it was going to be. He had me convinced - I was Minister of Fisheries at the time - that the trucks that they were bringing this garbage in in, that we could use them to bring raw fresh fish out of the Province into New York somewhere. That is the kind of a line he gave. He was extolling the virtues of this great proposition and telling us how lucky we were in Newfoundland that that company he represented chose Newfoundland as a possible site for this garbage disposal. Thirty-five hundred tons of municipal garbage, I think it was, a day. Telling us that there were cities in the U.S. and the Eastern Seaboard which would give their eye teeth to have access to this kind of business. It would be a Mecca for the provinces and the towns involved.

I asked him would he entertain a question. I was reminded of an incident that happened a few months ago when a barge loaded with garbage left port. When it left port of course the word went out. Consequently they weren't allowed to come back to any port. The result being that they were drifting on the high seas. A barge chock full of garbage drifting around on the high seas without a port to go to to tie up. There wasn't a city or a port on the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S. or Canada that would even allow them to come within 100 miles of their shores.

I asked my friend who was outlining this grandiose plan for development: How come, if these cities are so interested in getting garbage and developing an industry based on garbage, they allowed that barge to be floating on the high seas for two or three months? That threw him completely. He didn't expect that question. In fact I think I can take some credit for destroying whatever chance he had of winning friends and influencing people in that meeting. He was completely at a loss to explain why it is that all of this, the great interest in the garbage in those cities, and this vessel that was loaded with garbage wasn't allowed to come to their shores. He was obviously trying to pull a fast one, and I take some little credit, I guess, for cutting him off at the pass.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland has had to suffer many indignities over the past years. We've had the newspapers, *The Globe & Mail*, others, columnists, radio commentators, literally dumping on this Province, making us look somewhat less than good citizens, making us look silly in some cases. Never hesitating to accentuate the negative when it comes to Newfoundland. I can tell you now, that if we allow them to -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CARTER: - bring garbage here -

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: By leave!

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member have leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: By leave!

MR. SPEAKER: Leave given.

MR. CARTER: To dump their garbage in this Province, Mr. Speaker, if we allow them to do that, then we will become the ultimate Newfoundland joke. I can tell you now that that is not the kind of a legacy that I want to leave my children and grandchildren. I think it would be nothing short of a tragedy that we would allow any garbage - it doesn't matter how innocent it is, or how clean. It could be discarded

house flowers. It is garbage. When the story appears in *The Globe & Mail* or in some sports magazine in Canada there will be no explanation about the kind of garbage it is. Garbage is garbage is garbage. Our image will be gone.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to give serious thought to this resolution. I'm doing this, by the way, not in any way to embarrass my friend the minister, or to cause him any problems. I have a lot of faith in the new Minister of Environment. In fact, I wrote him I think a day or two after he was elected congratulating him on his appointment and bringing to his attention some of the concerns I am having with respect to the possibility of importing garbage. I believe the young minister has the right ideas and I have every confidence, Mr. Speaker, that he is going to put something in place that is going to address my problem, my concerns and those of a lot of other people.

I know that the proposal having to do with the Baie Verte Asbestos Mine, would have been another tragedy that we would have had to live with for the next 200 years. That proposal came dangerously close to being approved, even without an environmental impact study but, to his credit, when this young gentleman assumed office, he immediately saw the need to pull in the reins and have a second look at it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CARTER: I am looking to him now, Mr. Speaker, for the ultimate remedy for the importation of garbage, and that is a total ban on the importation of any kind of garbage irrespective of what kind it is or what economic benefits are perceived by people who are trying to foist the garbage on us in this Province. So I will wait with great anticipation to hear what the minister has to say, because it might well be that he is going to be telling the House things today that will go a long way towards allaying the fears of people as to the importation of garbage. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. J. BYRNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, it is about time, Mr. Speaker, that the Member for Twillingate was allowed to stand in his place and present his resolution to this House. Mr. Speaker, I basically support his resolution with respect to the importation of garbage into this Province.

I stood in my place on a number of occasions and asked for similar legislation but, of course, the Premier continues to refuse, saying there is a system in place, the system will work and we should give it the opportunity to work; but as the Member for Twillingate mentioned a few moments ago, the application for the Baie Verte project came very close to being approved. Maybe the system that is in place today doesn't work, will not work and will not protect us in the future.

The Premier says that each application has to be accepted on its own merit, Mr. Speaker, but the people of this Province are tired, fed up and they don't want to be having to fight the same battle over and over again in the years to come as they have in the past couple of years.

We have seen in the papers, letters to the editor on this issue about the importation of garbage. They are probably numbering into the hundreds now, Mr. Speaker. We have heard people phone into *The Open Line Show*, I have done it myself. Read the editorials, Mr. Speaker, and they are all, all against the importation of garbage -I think I saw one that spoke in favour of the importation of garbage into this Province, and that, probably from a person in the business himself or herself.

Mr. Speaker, I have had personal contact with many people in this Province - I deliberately bring up this very subject - and I have yet to speak to one person who spoke in favour of the importation of garbage into this Province for any reason. I believe that this resolution is a good resolution and that government should give some serious consideration to what is being asked here.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few phrases in this resolution that I want to refer to, that I think are key; 'the importation of garbage and/or industrial wastes ... should not be seen as a potential source of economic development for this Province'. I know we are in desperate shape in this Province when it comes to jobs, but I don't think we should sell out our Province for the sake of a few jobs. It is very far-reaching. Also it says, 'any such initiative would have a negative impact on the image of this Province' - that is, the importation of garbage. I agree wholeheartedly with that, Mr. Speaker, and I will get into it later on.

The last of the resolution: 'necessary to enact legislation that would effectively prohibit the importation of garbage and/or industrial waste in any quantity or form for final disposal in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.' How can we disagree with that statement, Mr. Speaker? I can't, and I fully support it.

It was obvious last week in this House that the Premier and the government did not want to discuss this matter for political reasons and I have had some problems with that. The Member for St. John's Centre, I believe it was, stood in his place and said that government was being very childish on this issue, the Cabinet ministers in particular, and I agree with that. I have to say it is good to see now that members opposite agree, basically, with the policy that the Opposition has been putting forward.

AN HON. MEMBER: Not totally.

MR. J. BYRNE: Not totally. I will get to that later on. They basically agree with the policy of the Opposition, in that, before, during, and since the last election, we have been saying that we oppose the importation of garbage. This resolution comes close to what we have been saying, but not exactly.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read our policy: 'We would, and we believe that this government should, ban the importation of domestic or industrial waste for incineration, storage, or other methods of disposal in this Province.' It goes on to say that 'waste products imported for use as raw materials in manufacturing would be subject to the review and approval process required under the Environmental Assessment Act.' For example, if we were to recycle paper in our pulp and paper mills, or cardboard, we could easily support that, but the importation of garbage for final disposal in landfills cannot and will not be accepted by the people of this Province.

Just in passing, I was sorry to see that some members opposite couldn't bring themselves to agree to this policy when they were sitting in Cabinet. When I asked for legislation to be brought forward on this before, they were quite silent. I am wondering if they were willing to sell out the Province for a position in Cabinet - I sincerely hope not. It seems to me that maybe the credibility of the resolution may be questioned for that very reason. But this is a very serious situation, a very serious resolution, and again, I wish to say I support it.

I asked the Premier in this House on a number of occasions, would he bring in a bill to ban the importation of garbage, but the Premier always geared his answer to the creation of jobs, new industry, and I have a serious problem with that, especially in light of the fact that the history of this government when it comes to creating jobs is very poor indeed. I certainly wouldn't want to see the importation of garbage used to create jobs when basically this government has created no jobs in any field or any industry since they became elected in 1989.

Let us just look at some of the policies that government have introduced in this House and have passed and approved as legislation. The first thing they did when they got elected, Mr. Speaker, was cut 1,600 to 2,000 jobs from the civil service. Now, what is seventy or eighty jobs going to do for the

economy of this Province when they look at these kinds of cuts, Mr. Speaker? Then they brought in amalgamation, and again there were jobs gone.

Actually, we have an individual now, down in my town, who is suing the government because he lost his job through the amalgamation fiasco. Then the government were going to privatize Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, another 400 or 500 jobs gone. Now, what are fifty or sixty jobs compared to another 400 or 500? The Marystown shipyard, we asked questions on it again today, another 350 jobs gone, and it doesn't seem to be any big deal with this government.

Now, I may be getting off the topic somewhat but it is all relative to this resolution, because I believe the Premier firmly believes that we should be considering the importation of garbage for the creation of jobs, and it is wrong, wrong, wrong!

Again, another policy, the motor vehicle inspection policy, jobs gone again. People who own small garages in rural Newfoundland will end up losing their jobs, or sons and brothers may end up losing jobs because of motor vehicle inspections out the window. The debt retirement policy for the municipalities, again, jobs gone.

The list goes on and on, and on, Mr. Speaker. The payroll tax, \$300,000 down to \$100,000, jobs gone again because of the attack on small companies, who could not hire, or would not hire, to keep below that level of \$100,000.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. J. BYRNE: Good job. Mr. Speaker, the list goes on. The Premier and the government can't be serious, the number of jobs here, when you are looking at the negatives of importation of garbage versus the jobs that we would lose. How many jobs would we lose if we import garbage into this Province? How many existing jobs would we lose with respect to tourism? How many jobs would we lose in the potential tourism industry? We are talking about promoting tourism in this Province, adventure tourism and the like. How many jobs would be out the window there? I can't answer that but I'm sure they would be numerous. Newfoundland and Labrador has some of the cleanest water, cleanest air and the cleanest land in the world. We are promoting this in our brochures for tourism all over the world. Again, if we import garbage into this Province all that would be out the window.

We have a number of applications here before the Province about the importation of garbage and waste in this Province. The Member for Twillingate addressed that. He mentioned four applications which would basically see us bringing in 12,000 tons of garbage a day into this Province. This is unreal, Mr. Speaker. We had the application for Long Harbour in the past, we have Baie Verte, and I want to address the Baie Verte issue in particular.

One of the things I have to say, if it is good for the people of this Province, why is it not good for the areas from which the garbage is originating? Why are people in the business in those areas not fighting and grabbing to have the opportunity to take the garbage and to manage the garbage that people are asking us to take, if it is that good a deal? I don't know. I can't see it myself.

Shipping of waste halfway around the world - we would have to look at the cost involved in that alone. If you take garbage from Europe, for example, or wherever, and ship it across the Atlantic to Newfoundland, then handle that garbage, dump it into the mines in Baie Verte, cover it, and it is going to be feasible for us to take it and to handle that. Well, how feasible would it be for Europe to do it? Yet they won't do it. I have to ask the question, why? Because of the inherent dangers involved, yet they are still heading our way.

We, in Newfoundland and Labrador, at this particular point in time, have problems handling our own garbage and waste. We have 550,000 people in this Province. Why do we need to take more? Why should we even consider taking more? Do we really want to become the dump site for the Atlantic

Seaboard or the dump site for North America? I say no, as do most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Presently, we have a study being done on the Northeast Avalon, and it was first started - it is being done for the region of the Northeast Avalon. When I was chairman of the Northeast Avalon Towns Joint Council, we were asked by the then minister, to oversee this study. I believe it was Mr. Hogan. Basically, we have Robin Hood Bay in the Northeast Avalon, and we can't even handle our own garbage.

I have a note here somewhere where the present minister, back in September, was calling on the Province to have Province-wide meetings with respect to solid waste disposal.

We have 240, I believe, municipal landfills in this Province today, and we are looking at how to find out how to manage the garbage that is being produced by 550,000 people. It is ludicrous to even consider bringing more garbage into this Province when we don't even know what to do with our own garbage at this point in time. We are talking about regional landfills. The minister, to his credit, says that we should be looking at including recycling, re-using, reducing and composting with respect to the landfills and the amount of garbage going into our landfills in this Province. He says we have to become more environmentally friendly, and the municipalities have to probably come up with regional sites, become more feasible in the disposing of garbage within our own Province. Yet we are still considering bringing in garbage here from outside Newfoundland, outside Canada, outside North America - as I said, nothing less than ludicrous!

I have to compliment the minister, though, in passing, in that he did ask for an environmental impact study on Baie Verte. Then again, I have to temper that with common sense, because when did he ask for this environmental impact study? He came out of a caucus meeting, a government caucus meeting - not a Cabinet meeting now, a government caucus meeting - when the big kerfuffle was on the opposite side with the Premier having come back from China all upset. He made a statement. He left the caucus meeting and came out and read a hand-written statement about the Baie Verte issue, and he called for an environmental impact study. Obviously, the members on the opposite side are getting a lot of calls. They are not supporting the importation of garbage, and they put the pressure on and the Premier finally agreed to an environmental impact study, and rightly so - so he should - and so should the members opposite put the pressure on in this situation.

Now, the Premier says that we have - this blew my mind, really - a moral responsibility to take asbestos back. It is laughable. We have been shipping out asbestos for thirty years, and we have the moral responsibility to take it back. What a joke, Mr. Speaker! What a foolish, irresponsible and illogical argument from an educated, or so-called educated, individual, Mr. Speaker.

If you use that line of argument, according to that logic, how many car wrecks should we take back from all over the world? How many car wrecks should we take back and produce from our iron ore? How much cardboard and waste should we take back from the paper that was produced by the mills in Newfoundland? And what other garbage should we take back from the materials produced from our mining industry? It is laughable.

I would like to remind the Premier that only 1 per cent of the garbage that is being proposed to come back into this Province, to be dumped in Baie Verte, only 1 per cent, has to be asbestos. What will the other 99 per cent be, Mr. Speaker? I can't answer that. If you look at the environmental preview report produced by the people proposing this, only 5 per cent has to be checked. I have explained that, and I have done it here in the House before, and it seems to hit home to the people out there, when this hits them, that if you have containers coming into this Province on ships filled with garbage, those big containers, only one in four containers will be checked. Each container itself contains 600 bags. Now, how would you put, for a start, or get asbestos containing material into these plastic bags without breaking them open in the first place, if you are looking at different kinds of metals, or whatever the case may be? Each container contains 600 bags. Only 120 bags out of 600 will be checked, out of

one container. Therefore, 120 bags out of 2,400 bags will be checked. I think that explains quite realistically the situation we are setting ourselves up for with respect to the importation of garbage and the checking system itself.

The project in Baie Verte is often referred to as a recycling project, I say to the minister. To me, if you have a recycling project, you take something, you reuse it, and you come up with another product. This is not a recycling project, by any stretch of the imagination. The materials that will be brought back to Newfoundland would be put in a pit and covered and not reused, so by any stretch of the imagination it is not a recycling project.

I have a lot of notes here, Mr. Speaker; I am going to have to skip some of them now.

With respect to bringing asbestos into this Province, or asbestos-containing materials, we have TV ads running in the States now raising fears of asbestos contamination. Now, why would the people who were looking to come here on vacation, for tourism purposes, or whatever, come to Newfoundland if this was the situation, if we were a dump site and asbestos-containing material were dumped here?

Mr. Speaker, Baie Verte is compared to California in the environmental preview report. It is not a good comparison, it is not a fair comparison, because of the size of the project in California. It is much smaller. We have 15,000 tons per year versus 150,000 tons per year that would come to Newfoundland.

Another factor with respect to the California project - it has only been in production for two to three years, and I believe that is too soon to say whether or not it is a safe project. So I don't think we should be comparing this project to the California project.

We talk about reclamation of the site. The site is a disaster, Mr. Speaker, and some money should be spent in cleaning up the Baie Verte mine site. I have to say that governments in the past have neglected that area, but again, that was the policy; the mines were started and they had their own way, they could do what they wanted basically, in the Province, Mr. Speaker. But we do need to spend some money on cleaning up that site.

There have been recent petitions with as many as 10,000 names signed, opposing the importation of garbage into this Province - 10,000 names from all over the Province. I, myself, presented a petition of 268 names from the Baie Verte area opposing the importation of garbage. The minister, himself, recently visited the site, as I did in November of 1993, and as I said, I agree with the minister that it is an environmental disaster and has to be cleaned up. But, on September 16, there was an ad in *The Evening Telegram* and the minister, in reading that ad, seemed to be favouring the project, when he was talking about cleaning up the site, how this project would actually do that. But I have to say: two wrongs don't make a right, Mr. Speaker, and the fact of the matter remains that this project will not reclaim that site.

The whole site, Mr. Speaker, I think, is something like 900 acres, and very small portions of the site would be reclaimed, only the areas that are being utilized by the project itself and the asbestos going into that mine, so even if there are areas being reclaimed, it would be at a very slow rate and I don't see anything positive whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. There are two large pits out there, five large piles of materials, the tailings which will be used to cover up the asbestos, and all over the 900 acres, we have various dump sites, tires, used and abandoned equipment, old vehicles and other waste material.

There is a brook flowing through that site that is polluted now, get the word, 'polluted', with asbestos, flowing into the ocean. Now, in the environmental preview report they are saying that the river is polluted with asbestos, yet asbestos is not supposed to be -

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member's time is up.

MR. J. BYRNE: - a contamination product.

By leave?

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member have leave?

MR. GRIMES: You want some leave?

MR. J. BYRNE: Yes.

MR. GRIMES: Well, then, carry on.

AN HON. MEMBER: Carry on, we are enjoying every minute of it.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. J. BYRNE: Yes, at five o'clock, I will see what I can do.

Mr. Speaker, I had meetings in Baie Verte; I went to Baie Verte back in November of 1993 and had meetings with the Baie Verte Council and they were in favour of this project. I can understand where they are coming from, I am a former mayor; I mean, they have infrastructure out there that they need to support and this, they feel, would give them some tax dollars to do that, and they believe, honestly believe, that the proponent would clean up the site. I don't think that is going to happen - and to what extent, as I mentioned earlier.

Baie Verte, the arena itself is closed out there. I know they need the tax dollars but, Mr. Speaker, they say that this project will create twenty to seventy-five jobs, I question that, and when you read the report you can understand why. The council feels that it is a safe project and the monitoring system is a safe monitoring system. I questioned that in the past and I question it now.

At the public meeting I held out there - the Member for Baie Verte -White Bay was there - we had sixty people in attendance. They had a number of concerns, some spoke in favour and some spoke against. At that meeting, to be honest, it was split 50/50 for and against from my record but, when we got the petitions from the area, you could see that the actual fact it is not a 50/50 split for and against, it is actually probably something like 90/10.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Twillingate mentioned that economically depressed areas are always targeted for these types of projects and no doubt this is the situation here now with respect to the Baie Verte project. In the U.S. alone, Mr. Speaker, asbestos abatement is costing the Government of the United States more than \$3 billion a year, that is \$3 billion a year to clean up asbestos in the United States. Can you imagine the amount of asbestos that would come into this Province if we even give the business people who are proposing this, any indication that we would favour such a project!

As I said, Mr. Speaker, we should not consider any applications to import garbage. We should find ways to handle our own garbage and waste material, and I encourage the minister to do that.

For example, we have raw sewage flowing into the harbours and bays of Newfoundland. I brought this up before. Maybe we should start concentrating on that. Maybe we should create some jobs there cleaning up that. Look at the situation in St. John's harbour, itself - millions of gallons a day going into the harbour, raw sewage. I don't know how long the harbour will be able to continue flushing out the bay - no treatment at all.

I think we have to take seriously the environmental problems in our own Province before we start spending dollars importing garbage into this Province. I called for similar legislation in this House in June 1992 and in November 1993. That is not correct - I have to correct myself. I wasn't here in June

1992. But there was a call for legislation in June 1992 and I called for it in November 1993. The Premier refuses to listen.

In conclusion, maybe his caucus is starting to listen. I believe we should start - or you people over there should put pressure on him. Obviously, he reacts to pressure. We saw that when the minister came out of the caucus meeting and announced an environmental impact study on the Baie Verte project. I encourage all members to support the resolution and to pressure the government to bring in legislation to ban the importation of garbage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. AYLWARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure today to rise to debate this resolution put forward by my colleague, the hon. the Member for Twillingate.

AN HON. MEMBER: You are delighted he got it on.

MR. AYLWARD: I am delighted that he has it on. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I'm one who would never shy away from a debate. I'm glad he put it on. I think it is healthy for the debate in the Province on this issue. And I think, as we move towards policy development within government, that it is going to help the policy development of this minister and of the government, itself.

First off, I welcome the fact that it is on the House paper today for open debate in the House of Assembly and say that the government has a policy to protect the environment. It doesn't have a policy to go out and attract garbage projects to come to this Province. It has a policy for protection of the environment. We are presently evaluating all of our policies within the Department of Environment. We are redoing them, we are going over them, and we are evaluating whether or not, in certain policy areas, we have enough legislation in place. Do we have the right policies in place? Do we have enough mechanisms in place that can deal with the concerns of people in this Province?

When it comes to this issue, we are reviewing the policy as we speak. It is a little more complex than what is put forward here today, but we are reviewing it as we speak, and we are evaluating what are potential options.

This issue is one that has created a lot of public debate. It is a sensitive issue, not only at this point in time. It has always been somewhat sensitive. Since the Environmental Assessment Act was brought in in 1980 and amended afterwards, there has never been a need from the previous government or the government which took over in 1989 to put forward any further types of policy to deal with this matter.

We have been looking at different options. The government in the past further put in place a mechanism by requiring any proposal for waste importation to go to Cabinet for a final decision. That wasn't part of the legislation. It was brought in to allow for another mechanism to allow for the full Cabinet and government to make a decision on any project regarding waste importation.

So that was put forward. That means that it wasn't just the Minister of Environment, whoever he or she may be at the time, to deal with an issue and a proposal coming from a proponent on waste importation. That was put in place as another mechanism along with the Environmental Assessment Act further, to allow for the process to get full debate and full decision-making authority from government.

Now, that process was in place and, in the case of the Baie Verte proposal, which has generated a great deal of debate in the Province, this allowed for the proponent to bring forward their proposal. It was evaluated by officials, brought forward to the minister, and then the minister had to bring that proposal to Cabinet for a final decision. As we saw in September, that decision was to go to an EIS and also a public board which will hold public hearings after the EIS is completed.

The question of whether or not you need a further process in place, and a further mechanism in place, is one that we are reviewing at this time. When it comes to waste importation, we have an Atlantic Environmental Accord amongst Atlantic ministers and Atlantic governments in Atlantic Canada to deal with waste within Atlantic Canada. So if we are going to develop a policy - and we are evaluating different policy options at this time - we have to make sure to incorporate that we are able to deal with waste within our boundaries in Atlantic Canada. It is an initiative that means taking stewardship of what we create in Atlantic Canada and in this Province. We have to find a way to deal with our own waste here in this Province, and we have signed an accord with the Atlantic Canada Provinces to deal with that issue in a together manner.

As a matter of fact, there was just recently in the paper, a proposal call for a waste tire strategy to deal with waste tires in Atlantic Canada. We generate over 500,000 annually in this Province, and in the other provinces I think it adds up to be over two million. The Atlantic Provinces are looking at a way to deal with that issue and to figure out how we can do it amongst our boundaries here.

When you are talking about importation for final disposal, you have to ensure that you take into account all of the issues that are involved here. It is a sensitive issue that has come about in the last couple of years, and I think a lot of people have expressed strong views on it, there is no doubt about that. I still get those expressions of views in my office on a weekly basis.

The government has never let a project which is, as has been described, come into the Province. The government has never let that happen. Two or three of the proposals that are in existence at this point - and you are going kind of far to say that they are really in existence but, at the present time, that were originally submitted, the two in Labrador have been told by the government that yes, under the Environmental Assessment Act you can bring forward a proposal, but your chances are not very good of getting any approval because of the public regard for the type of proposal.

Under the Environmental Assessment Act, it covers the whole gambit of concerns that have to be met in order for a proponent to bring a project forward in this Province. The legislation is very good. It has worked thus far. The question is, do we need a further policy initiative? That is something that is under consideration by government at this time in our review of policy that we have been doing since September. It is a question of which I think this debate will help maybe generate even some solutions and some suggestions. The one generated by the Member for Twillingate is more than of passing interest to this government and to this minister. We have, as I said, been reviewing potential options and are in the middle of doing that right now.

There is always a concern, when you have proposals coming in, of what the impact can be on this Province. The Environmental Assessment Act allows for not only a public process of consultation, but it allows for a public board to be set up. In the Baie Verte situation, a proposal that was brought forward, we see that for the first time going to be put in place. The question of whether or not that will even happen hasn't been decided upon because the proponent for the Baie Verte project has not decided whether to go ahead. They will make that decision sometime in the near future, but if they do, then there is the EIS process, and then a public hearing board that will deal with the issue.

The policy that presently is in place meets, I think, certain standards, and has so far prevented from occurring, a proposal that I think is not acceptable to the people. Whether or not we need something else is a question that we are wrestling with, Mr. Speaker. A lot of members on both sides of the House have expressed a view that we need, I suppose, a tougher policy but probably a more detailed policy in dealing with waste importation. I say to members today that we are undertaking and have

undertaken a review. We are proceeding to evaluate that amongst our caucus and amongst the government ministers, and we will see whether or not there will be a stronger or a more detailed policy put in place. I think the debate today again, helps generate the thought processes of people in the Province, it helps generate some possible suggestions and I am looking forward to listening and seeing what comes out of it as we are, as I said, in the middle of our review.

The government has a policy to protect the environment and we are intent on making sure that that policy is acceptable to the people of the Province. When you are in politics you always try to figure out whether or not you have an acceptable practice in place or not. We are in the middle of doing that right now and this minister and this government have no intention of allowing projects of the type described, to come into this Province to be an economic saviour, because they are not going to be.

We have identified and the government has identified tourism to be one of the lead economic industries of this Province. We are going to promote that industry, and if we are going to do that, we should have a policy that reflects it. That is something that we are also taking into account as we review what policy initiatives we may decide to come forward with in the very near future.

What we do need - as we are looking at this and as I have been evaluating this problem in the last few months - we do need, I think, a comprehensive evaluation done and we have been doing that within the Department of Environment to see what other provinces are doing. Some other provinces have put some policies in place regarding final disposal when it comes to waste importation. We are reviewing those and we have looked at those. They are amongst a number of options that are being evaluated by my office right now in government. We will see where that takes us in the very near future.

Some of the initiatives that we have to be aware of are, again, dealing with our own waste within the Province and within Atlantic Canada so that we can show stewardship and show that if we are going to generate waste that we are able to find a way to deal with it. One of the things, I think, that should be included in a waste management strategy - which we are now doing within the Province, carrying out some public consultations on, and a comprehensive waste management strategy - we should be dealing with waste importation but we should also be looking at ways to deal with our own waste and also help small industries who are attempting to set up to deal with waste, environmental industries that are right now contributing employment in the Province and helping clean up problems that we have in this Province. That is something that can be a major benefit to us.

We have the strongest environment industries association in Atlantic Canada. They are doing superb work in this Province, they are developing technologies, they are using existing technologies and they are helping clean up sites in this Province and are doing a good job of it. They are creating employment in the economy and they are showing a lot of us what can happen if you undertake a decent waste management strategy. They are helping lead the way, and as we form a waste management strategy, which I believe will include a policy to deal with waste importation for final disposal - I think we are evaluating that at this time.

As we evaluate the waste management strategy we are also looking at, at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, a sustainable development strategy for the Province. Right now, the Province doesn't have one. The Round Table on the Environment and the Economy has been asked to help develop a sustainable development strategy that would include - and I believe it will include - some public consultations. And again, it will generate some more debate in the new year as to a whole range of issues when it comes to the environment in this Province and how to deal with development and so on. It is something that is overdue. It is something that is high on the agenda of this government. It will, we hope in the new year, start to get more than a life and that we will be able to undertake it.

I think in a sustainable development strategy, we are working to put that in place, but this issue again, or these types of issues, will be able to be put forward, options will be able to be put forward, and that maybe by that time, and maybe even sooner, that we will have, when it comes to this issue, on waste importation, we may have a policy that may be changed from what we have now. We are not sure yet.

We are still evaluating that possibility. We are looking at all the information that is available. We are trying to evaluate whether or not the present act is strong enough. We are trying to evaluate whether or not stronger regulations or policies or legislation are required. I think the debate today and next Wednesday will help that situation within government as we try to decide where we go on this matter.

It is an issue that is not going to go away. It is an issue that we must face and deal with. I feel very confident, Mr. Speaker, that this government which has faced issues head-on in the past is going to face this one. We have been with our officials working, like I said, to develop and look at what other provinces are doing. I think it is very important that we do that as we look for an acceptable environmental policy for this Province, for its people, so that the concerns of people - and they have deep concerns, especially on this issue - are dealt with. We are working towards evaluating what those options are.

We think it is important that this debate occur. Our caucus has had a number of discussions on this matter over the last few months. I think it will be beneficial and I look forward to seeing the outcome. It is quite a challenge to be in this portfolio at this time, I can tell you. I can tell you this, that we are also going to deal with the issues and try to reform our legislation and reform our polices as needed, and to carry on the role that the former minister carried on in a very excellent capacity, to try to carry forward that role.

Because we are at this point in time - government is reviewing the polices regarding this matter - we would like to move an amendment to the resolution that has been put forward. I will do that. It is an amendment that has already been passed by the government in a private member's motion a while ago, a couple of years ago.

I would like to move the following. After "Newfoundland and Labrador" in the resolution: Therefore be it resolved that the hon. House of Assembly take such action as may be necessary to enact legislation that would effectively prohibit the importation of garbage and/or industrial waste in any quantity or form for final disposal in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador if such a project is registered and evaluated as required by the environmental assessment act and is found to be either ecologically unsafe, socially unacceptable, or contrary to the will of the people of the Province.

I move that, Mr. Speaker, and I say that I'm looking forward to hearing the views of people on both sides of the House as the minister. I'm looking forward to seeing and to, as we review the policy, seeing where we head. I say that this government -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Chair is trying to hear what the hon. minister has to say.

MR. AYLWARD: As we move forward, Mr. Speaker. This government is taking this issue, along with a whole range of environmental issues seriously. We intend on making sure that the adequate policies are in place to deal with the issues and look forward to this debate, and look forward to the evolution of some further policy in this area and in other areas, as a matter of fact, that we are looking forward to bringing forward.

I think this motion is seconded by the Member for LaPoile. I put it forward, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Could the Chair have a copy of the amendment, please.

The amendment is in order as per Standing Order 36.

The hon. the Member for Waterford - Kenmount.

MR. HODDER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to rise today to support the resolution put forward by the Member for Twillingate. I want to note that intent of the resolution is consistent with the Conservative Party policy. As my colleague just noted a few moments ago the resolution is consistent with the blueprint that has been followed by the Conservative Party, and I should note and read into the record again, the part of our policy which reads as follows: the Conservative Party believes in banning the importation of domestic and industrial waste for incineration, storage, or other methods of disposal in the Province. They also believe that waste products imported for use as raw materials in manufacturing are subject to the review and approval process required under the Environmental Assessment Act.

The minister a few moments ago made an amendment which basically has the effect of modifying the resolution to make it acceptable to hon. members opposite, and acceptable to the Premier and his government, and of course it in many ways tampers with the intent of the original resolution, and in effect it scuttles it. It is again an attempt, as was done a few weeks ago by other private member's resolutions, when the government does not want to have the matter addressed in the way that the private member puts forward, they will make the appropriate amendments.

Mr. Speaker, we want to draw attention as well to the fact that this is not a new resolution in this House. In fact on June 1, 1992 the Member for Torngat moved a notice of a resolution which was debated on June 3. That resolution read: be it resolved that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador immediately reject any industrial development project that involved the importation or disposal of garbage, industrial waste, from any jurisdiction outside of this Province.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution by the Member for Twillingate is not a new resolution. In fact on that very same day the Member for St. John's East also put forward a similar resolution, a private member's resolution, so therefore this is not a new issue. What has been happening is that the people of this Province have been telling their political leaders that they do not want garbage imported into this Province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it should be known that we as political leaders should be saying, no, no, no, to the importation of garbage. We should say, no, and mean it. We should not say, no, and then put out a whole lot of conditions. We should say n-o, and when we get an application we should be asking the proponents, what part of no do you not understand? Is it the 'n' or is it the 'o'. Mr. Speaker, that is how firm we have to be.

I want to draw attention as well to the fact that on Friday, September 16, 1988 the Leader of the Opposition, the Liberal Opposition at that time, put out the following press release. It was from Clyde K. Wells, MHA, Windsor - Buchans, Leader of the Opposition, and the subject was: Industrial waste storage proposal

for Bell Island.

Mr. Speaker, let me quote some of the comments from that particular press release. In fact, I will read extensively from it because it goes to show what a variance the government policy we have in place today is with what the Premier of the Province was saying when he was a member of the Opposition party. It reads as follows: The proposal to establish an international industrial waste dump on Bell Island is clearly unacceptable to the citizens of that community, and I believe, and I quote: ..it is offensive to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

He said: The Liberal Party is opposed to the proposal from Canadian Ecology Limited, and will be opposed to any similar proposal for dumping industrial and toxic materials, or potentially toxic waste, in any part of this Province.

Then he mentions how he became involved in the issue, and he mentions that the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island, Leo Barry, had arranged a meeting with his constituents on Bell Island to talk about it. It says, and I quote again: It quickly became clear that there were serious concerns over the actual risk to the environment and the reputation of Bell Island and the Province that would be created by the storage of hazardous waste in the mines.

He says: From the information given, we have identified the following concerns with these types of applications. The wastes to be stored are hazardous. This is borne out by the company's advice that Bell Island was chosen over abandoned mines in Ontario because Bell Island was considered to be a safe mine.

Number two, he wrote as well: There are also risks involved in transportation, handling and storage of these waste. Apart from the obvious danger of leakage from the mines themselves, the very real possibility of an accident at sea that would involve a shipload of highly dangerous waste sinking in Conception Bay or in other waters around our coastline.

Then, Mr. Speaker, he mentions that Newfoundland would become known not as an environmentally safe, relatively pollution free area, a reputation which it now enjoys, he wrote, but a place which is so impoverished and so desperate that it has to take in other people's garbage. Do we really want to become North America's garbage dump for the sake of a few jobs?

Mr. Speaker, in concluding he said the following. Again, I quote: Surely, more positive programs can be developed to stimulate the economy in this Province than to grab at any promise of a few dollars at the risk of endangering our environment, the health of our people, and existing industry.

Mr. Speaker, that is what the Premier of this Province said in 1988. Today, of course, we have a resolution by a member of the governing party which is saying: Would you please implement this policy?

We are saying to the government today, saying to the Premier and his party: Would you please implement the policy that you released in 1988 when you were Leader of the Official Opposition?

Mr. Speaker, I just want to quote a few comments from people who have had articles appearing in the local press. *The Evening Telegram*, on May 27, 1992, had an article entitled: Area Residents Air Objections to Incinerator; Motive is Profit Says a Resident of Dunville.

I will just read to you what that resident said, and this was in relation to the proposal for the development of Long Harbour. Deborah Yetman Wilde said her father had recently died of cancer after working for eighteen years at the former Long Harbour phosphorous plant. No one can convince her that an energy from a waste incinerator can be made safe, she said. A job is not worth what the people of the area would have to go through, she said, emphasizing no job is worth having to clean up someone else's garbage.

Dunville Mayor at the time, Ray Murphy, called the scheme a quick-fix to a New York problem, saying it was simply a case of the Americans trying to find a place to dispose of garbage they can't get rid of in their own area.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move to what is happening in Europe. Because just a few months ago, on May 27 1994, in an article in a paper called *The European*, and the headlines that basically talked about the dangers of the transportation of garbage, it said: Squads Track Toxic Smugglers. I will read from the article. It said: Police from twelve countries in Europe and America are mounting an international operation to track down criminal gangs who are moving into the lucrative trade of toxic waste smuggling. It says: A decision in March by the 127 signatories to the 1989 Basel convention to make it illegal for industrial nations to export waste to developing countries has led to fears that firms desperate to dispose of toxic waste will go to any lengths to do so. Then you have a quote from Paul

Johnson, who is a British scientist. It says: The recycling which takes place in a lot of developing countries verges on the criminally negligent.

The Member for Twillingate said today that we would be importing twelve times as much garbage as Newfoundland would ordinarily generate in a day or a month period. Therefore let me mention what is happening in Europe and show you the concerns that people have. Germany, the world's largest exporter of toxic waste, sent 1,370,892 tons of toxic waste and other hazardous rubbish to non-OECD countries between 1989 and 1993. Some of this was legally exported under the old rules for recycling to Indonesia and eastern Europe, but much was shipped in under false labels or simply dumped by unscrupulous German waste operators.

That is the concern we have. We are told that we will be able to control a very low percentage of the actual contents of the proposals that are put forward to bring waste into Newfoundland. For example, the proposal at Baie Verte says that there is only a guarantee that 1 per cent of the waste that was proposed to be disposed of in Baie Verte would actually be of the content that was specified under, I guess, the guidelines put forth by the government. What happens to the other 99 per cent?

Therefore in Europe they are saying that there is a lot of falseness in the way in which this material is shipped. For example, Romania, Albania, Poland and the other former Soviet Union countries are now the most popular dumping grounds. In 1992, 500 tons of out-of-date pesticides from East Germany were discovered near the town of Sibiu in Romania. They had been shipped there illegally under a period of two years after being carried across the border labelled as humanitarian aid for use in agriculture. Our difficulty is that in importing garbage we have no control over the contents. We have absolutely no control over it. It has been said that we would know approximately and have a guarantee there might be as little as 1 per cent would be able to be controlled. That doesn't make any sense, that we are going to go and put Newfoundland at risk when we have that kind of problem.

It is time for Newfoundlanders to hear from their government a definitive statement. They want the government to say that Newfoundland is not a dump for American garbage, is not a dump for Canadian garbage, is not a dump for any kind of garbage, European garbage included; and as I said before, we want to go and to have a policy that says: we are not interested in your garbage, we want the government to say no and we want the government to mean it, instead, Mr. Speaker, of entertaining applications to go and to bring in more garbage, we need a government that says: let's clean up Long Harbour, let us put some money into cleaning up that former resource; let us go and do something with the Baie Verte mine. We are not saying leave Baie Verte like it is, we are saying we have to clean it up, we have to restore that facility.

Mr. Speaker, most of us have family or have members of our families who have worked in the mines of this Province. We know the kind of impact that silicosis and other diseases can have on families and the mining that goes on. Mr. Speaker, every single one of us, every single member of this House, is familiar with the damage that is caused to families when we have mining industries that take an awful toll on people and on the lives of people. You only have to go to St. Lawrence to find out what a sacrifice the people of St. Lawrence have made to have a mine in that part of the Province over I guess, a 30-year or 40-year period.

Mr. Speaker, however you look at it, the people of this Province are saying today: protect our heritage, protect our clean air, protect our open spaces, protect our pure waters and protect our healthy lifestyles. We do not want to put our people at risk and what the people of this Province are saying is that they don't want to have their children put at risk because a government of any political stripe is going to be importing garbage that they can't control, they don't know what is in the garbage, therefore, Mr. Speaker, people are saying that is not what Newfoundland and Labrador is all about.

We certainly have to look as well at the impact on our image abroad. One can only imagine the impact on our tourist industry and of course, keep in mind that when we market our Province, and we know it is difficult to market this Province in the tourist industry, it is not an easy job, we are doing much better

than we used to be doing, but, can you imagine the comments that would be made by commentators in the Canadian press when they find out that, here we are, using Newfoundland as a dump for American waste. If the Americans were so interested in this as a viable industry, the question is, why don't they do it in their own backyard?

Certainly, we know that in the case of, South Dakota, I think it was, wanted to move its garbage up to North Dakota to dispose of it, that the state next door said, absolutely not. In fact it became quite an issue between the two states about two years ago so, Mr. Speaker, what we are saying is, that in the United States, North Dakota cannot agree with South Dakota on the disposal of garbage and yet, we in this Province are saying: well, show us the details, we might consider it; we will have an environmental impact statement and then we will go ahead and have some public hearings on it but we are not going to say up front, no.

Mr. Speaker, what we are saying today, is the same thing we said in this party for the last numbers of years. We said no to the importation of any garbage and of course, in particular in this case, American garbage, because, Mr. Speaker, we believe that we have many things going for us in this Province and having Newfoundland labelled as the receptacle site for millions of tons of American waste is not something that is positive today for this Province, and I have not seen anything that would convince me it would be positive in the future.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I go back to what the member has said in his statement, that it would be an indignity to our people and to our Province, and that we should not see this kind of industry as a potential source of economic development for our Province. The Premier in his statements in 1988 laid out a policy for his party. The Conservative party laid out its policy in 1993. Now, we have two political parties and we certainly cannot dispute the intent of both of those documents. They are both saying the same thing, so therefore I say to the government opposite, it is time to be definitive, it is time to be firm, time to say, no, time to stop giving people any idea that we might even think about entertaining an application.

It is time to make a decision so that no company in the future will ever, ever, misunderstand the intent of this Province's determination to say, no, to the importation of garbage. It is not worth the jobs, it is not worth the risk to our health, it is not worth the potential damage to our tourism industry, and it is not akin to economic development, it is not akin to people's health, and it is something this Province can certainly do without.

Thank you, very much.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. member's motion is a topic which, I suppose, is dealt with by many people in armchair discussions and around the kitchen table, wondering whether the importation of garbage as such is something that should ever be contemplated in the Province.

The term garbage refers to, I suppose, anything that we as human beings consume. It is also created by other species but mainly what we would consume, so therefore we have to look at it in the overall bigger picture. The bigger picture is such that we consume products, we consume services, and we consume things such as electricity here in this Province, so ultimately any garbage here in this Province is something that we generate, and if we are to allow garbage to come to this Province from anywhere else it would only be for the interest of our own consumption as a people here in the Province.

Now, to suggest that we could stick our heads in the sand and assume that our problem is any different, or any more important than that of the garbage disposal problems of anybody else, is to put

blinkers on and not to see the reality of the overall marketplace here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We bring in countless amounts of consumable products into this Province each and every day. They are brought in by ship here in the harbour in St. John's, brought by ship to Port aux Basques, but usually by tractor trailer, and these goods are brought here and consumed by us as residents of the Province.

We consume any number of a variety of food products with packaging. We consume drinks, canned goods, etc., and most of it manufactured elsewhere and ending up in our landfills here in Newfoundland and Labrador, so therefore, when we look at this situation where we are dealing with the potential for importation of garbage and waste of another kind from somewhere else in the country or in the world for that matter, we cannot isolate ourselves from the fact that we consume a large amount here ourselves, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing I might point out, is that, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where we now want to improve the public policy that is on the books here in the Province, in the interest of making sure that tourism is not hurt badly or affected negatively by the actions we take in thinking that Newfoundland is a potential place for final disposal of other garbage. Garbage other than that which we bring in ourselves cannot isolate the fact that we consume huge amounts ourselves and fill up our own landfill sites. That cannot be isolated from this because it is an overall problem. We need an overall recycling program, as the hon. member mentions, that is in fact the case but a recycling program without a proper system of dealing with that waste is in effect a program that has no place here or anywhere else. What do you do, stockpile all the waste until you figure out something to do with it? The thing is you have to deal with the problem by creating methods and means for industry to deal with recycled products -

AN HON. MEMBER: And refillable containers.

MR. RAMSAY: The possibility of refillable containers. Although the soft drink association has initiated, along with government in partnership, a new means to handle the disposal of soft drink containers and a litter program. A program to improve the disposal of litter here in the Province which we hope will work. If it does not work, I will be the first to stand and support the idea of refillable containers.

The hon. member and other hon. members who have spoken previous, would have to think that the legacy that we offer for our children and our grandchildren is one, at this stage, where we will not allow the importation of garbage. There is nothing on the books, the legislative journals, to prevent it from happening at this stage. The exception being the environmental impact study process which this government has seen fit to implement in light of two or three different projects that have been proposed. Now is there a benefit for us to allow some garbage to come here to Newfoundland and Labrador? There is an inherent benefit if in fact, we are going to be good stewards and if we intend to deal with problems that are not only ours in the making.

If we have hazardous wastes here in Newfoundland and Labrador, waste such as PCBs, which were brought here from other provinces originally - and if we have other things, such as automobiles which are consumed at a very rapid pace in this small Province of ours - we see many tractor trailer loads of car wrecks leaving Newfoundland and Labrador on a regular basis. Some parts of which are crushed and sent out of the Province, some which stay in our landfills and many rubber tires here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Rubber tires, as an example, and I use rubber tires as something that we could look at - the potential that rubber tires offers at the current time is about - the potential number to be disposed of on an annual basis in Atlantic Canada is in excess of 2.4 million tires. On a Newfoundland basis, Newfoundland itself could not justify the disposal of all of the rubber tires that are used here and consumed - the term that I use - in this Province at this stage. We need to cooperate with other provinces to consider the disposal of rubber tires in a proper way. That disposal may take any number

of different means to be completed and to be acceptable to the people, not only of here, but of the other Atlantic provinces.

Now this Province is involved in negotiations with other provinces, reciprocal agreements, and if we are to close our doors to the potential for agreeing with other provinces for reciprocal agreements, if they take some of our hazardous waste and the waste that we have here in this Province, and other provinces in turn - if we are willing to take some of theirs, they, in turn, can take some of ours, and that is very important, because if one province is to act as a garbage dumping site for anything and everything that comes back into it, some things in their useful form are not good for the environment in the form that they take when they are disposed of. So you have to be cognizant of that, and we have to see to it that we are a part of the solution and not a part of the problem by shutting our doors to the potential for co-operation with other provinces. I think we have to take that into account.

We have to look at final disposal, the idea of final disposal. Some people find it offensive. Some people find it problematic because of the emotional arguments. Environmentalists who get up in arms over the issue of final disposal, and the terrible things that it will do, often times are the same individuals who will not think twice about taking a nickel cadmium battery and throwing it into their trash can to go off to a landfill site. These are often the same individuals who complain vehemently about the kind of legislation that is not on the books in this Province at this stage, who will - and I repeat it for the hon. members who just mentioned - think nothing of taking that and disposing of it.

There are possibly individuals who will turn up the heat rather than put on a sweater, drive a large car rather than a small car. All of these things are things that contribute to the greenhouse gas problem that is in existence in North America and throughout the world, that contributes to the depletion of the ozone layer and, in turn, causes the overall environmental concerns. Why are we concerned about the environment? If the ozone layer is depleted fully, then the possibilities are of half of the world population having some form of skin cancer in their lives because of the depletion of that ozone layer, due to the increase in greenhouse gases.

Commensurately, the government of this Province and the Government of Canada and other provinces have signed a convention to decrease greenhouse gases substantially between now and the year 2000. The intent is to try to make the air more pure, and therefore eliminate the problems associated with carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide emissions wreaking havoc with the upper atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, another thing we might point out is municipal waste, not just municipal solid waste in garbage that is out by the side of the road every week, but the problems associated with the teepees that exist all over this Province, and there are a number of areas. One is the municipal incinerator just outside of my own home town of Port aux Basques where, if you drive across the highway on a given direction of the wind, you will meet a very, very unpleasant smell about six miles outside of Channel - Port aux Basques. It is a well-kept incinerator. It is extremely well maintained. The problem is one of, is that the kind of activity we should continue to perpetuate? But, there is always a monetary question, and that is what I am leading into.

The monetary question is: Are the people willing to pay? We are going to pay one way or the other. We either pay in the depletion of the upper atmosphere, or we will pay out of our pockets to buy products that are (a) recyclable, or; (b) reusable in some other form. So society is going to pay, one way or the other.

Mr. Speaker, the passing of this kind of legislation will not solve the problem. If we isolate ourselves completely, it may be one step to making sure that we increase our tourism industry, but what if - and I say this to the hon. members opposite - we end up increasing our population and our tourism industry to a point where we have a large tourism industry but really affect the overall environment, not just the NIMBY principle, or the not-in-my-back-yard, but affect our overall environment in a terrible way by increased air travel and all of these terrible things that contribute to the problems that the environment

faces. It is the big picture, I know, but there is a consequence to every action that we take as a society in consuming goods and services. There is a price to every activity that we do.

Let's look at electricity as another part of the overall environment. We bring in and we consume fuel oils in the generation of electricity and the driving of our cars up the highways so we contribute to problems in the environment by consuming fossil fuels as they are known, and that electricity, if we increase the overall industrial activity in the Province, we in turn potentially generate more Co emissions and in turn affect the environment very negatively with our activity as consumers.

We have to look at the size of Newfoundland and Labrador and its drainage patterns and of course, the fact that we are in very cold coastal waters, is another point that I would like to bring out. If the municipal waste, the municipal waste through the septic and sewer systems here in the Province continues to go into the oceans unchecked, thereby polluting our waters, that in turn is a problem that has to be addressed as well. Are the people of this Province willing to pay, or is the government of this Province able to pay is another question, for the improvements that would have to be made to our municipal waste systems? I think not. I think the cost of making these kinds of changes would be prohibitive in the current technology that is available.

There are some new technologies which the hon. minister has investigated recently to see if we might be able to undertake some initiatives in that area. That may help some of the problem, but what I think we are going to come down to is a levy on the sale of goods here in this Province as well as everywhere else in the country. Each product that we purchase will end up having to have a reclamation fee attached to it.

If it is the grocery industry, it will probably be a reclamation fee for the purpose of cardboard or what have you, and the only way of getting that money back is for the individual to recycle those goods and/or products, therefore be able to reclaim the cash. Those reclamation fees I think, are the only possible way that we can effectively improve our recycling plans as mentioned by the hon. Member for St. John's East, and the only way we can deal with the problems associated with recycling and the overall environmental questions that we have to address as a people here in this Province.

I might say that environment itself is not a simple issue. It is so easy for what one would call an armchair environmentalist, to rise up and say, take on an issue. Yes, I am against it. I am against it because we do not need that garbage here in Newfoundland. It is so easy and it is not a simple issue. It is a very complex issue. To simply say that we cannot bring garbage here to Newfoundland for final disposal is a simplistic view that we cannot allow us to deal with here today in that manner. I feel we have to deal with it. It is a complex issue and it lends itself for complex analysis, and it is an issue for armchair environmentalists like the hon. member. The problem is such that it is a complex issue, as I said, and it has to be dealt with in a complex manner. It has to have analysis.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)

MR. RAMSAY: Well, I will not be so bound as to stereotype those who are environmentalists. I feel that I could probably categorize myself as much an environmentalist as anybody, but I am a practical environmentalist as well. I do not litter, but then again I understand the consumption of goods is something you have to take in light of what you are willing to pay for. If you are willing to pay for the more environmentally friendly product that is one thing, but if you are only willing to pay so much and live by your pocketbook, as many people are, then it will have to be the kind of thing that is imposed by legislation, that we have reclamation levies on goods and products that we want to recycle for the benefit of the environment of the Province.

It is only us as a Legislature here, and as a government, that can do this kind of thing. Now, with that I want to put forward that I have seconded the amendment as put forward by the hon. Minister of Environment. I am pleased to support the amendment because I feel that the motion in its present form is not complex enough to take into account the problems associated with environment here in the

Province today. With that, Mr. Speaker, I feel that we have to deal with the environmental problems for my children, for hopefully my grandchildren, should my children be blessed with children of their own eventually. It is a legacy that I want to leave to my children, that we did something right, but also that we did the prudent thing and not always the politically expedient thing in dealing with issues of this nature in a very simplistic fashion.

I think we have to deal with it in a very complex way, it is not as pretty, it is not as easy to go out and thump your chest and say, I am an environmentalist; but we can go out and say that we did the right and prudent thing, and our suggestion is to deal with it by sharing the stewardship with other provinces, by sharing our waste problems with other places that have waste problems, and from that I feel we would have good public policy for the people of this Province that will last a long time and will steward us well into the future insofar as environmental concerns are given.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in support of the very comprehensive resolution put forth by the Member for Twillingate, put forth with some courage, I might add, in the face of attempts by government members and the members of the Cabinet to prevent him from having this discussion in the House.

I say that this motion is very similar to other motions that have been put before the House on Private Members' business. I, myself, had a Private Members' motion before the House in 1992 when the issue of the Long Harbour incineration project was before the public and before the government for consideration, in which I made similar concerns about the prospect of shipping household garbage into this Province from outside. That particular project caused the formation of a group which is still operating; in fact, it is meeting tonight, a group called 'Say No To American Garbage'.

They have had a very strong level of support throughout this Province, and have been very active in raising in the public a lot of points related to the issue of the importation of garbage and the consequences for the people of this Province, not only for the environment itself, of which we all profess concern, but also for the prospects of this Province being a viable and growing destination for tourists in the development of tourist potential.

I would imagine that the Member for Twillingate's resolution would find great favour with the new Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation who would, no doubt, have very serious concerns about the consequences of our Province becoming a depository, or a repository, for other people's garbage.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the previous speaker, the Member for LaPoile, talked about armchair environmentalists, and I suppose, distinguishing them from himself, as I suspect he would call himself some sort of realist in that he believes in the environment but he doesn't believe in doing anything about it. And I say that seems to be the attitude of the minister, himself, who is sending out a great deal of mixed messages on this, and this government is sending out mixed messages on this whole issue of protection of the environment, and they are doing that on an ongoing basis, Mr. Speaker.

If the government truly believed that the only concern about not having legislation of this nature into effect was the possibility that it would interfere with economic development projects, then it is very easy to craft legislation that excludes the one but includes the other - excludes the possibility of importing garbage for final disposal here, and certainly includes the possibility of importing waste, what some people might consider to be waste material, but would, in fact, be raw material for industrial development in this Province.

I would have no objection, for example, if the people of Port aux Basques, as one of their industrial development projects, had a manufacturing enterprise to turn plastic bottles, recycle plastic into fish boxes. I would have no problem, Mr. Speaker, with having container load and container load of pop bottles, recyclable plastic, come over on the Gulf to be taken to Port aux Basques and turn into plastic fish boxes and sold in the fishing industry in this Province and elsewhere. I would have no difficulty with that, no problem whatsoever, and I would encourage the Member for LaPoile to try to develop such an industry in his district. I am sure it would be greatly appreciated.

There are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of fish boxes still in use in this Province despite the cod moratorium, and there will be no difficulty whatsoever in importing plastics for recycling purposes for that reason.

But I think it is time that the Department of Environment and the new minister adopt a new slogan for the Department of Environment -and that is not a 'green' slogan but a 'come clean' slogan. It is time for the Minister of Environment and his department to come clean about what they are really up to here. He has to come clean. The Minister of Environment and the department is going to have to come clean on this issue because you are being caught out. You are being found out about how serious you are about the environment.

When the opportunity arose a couple of years ago to introduce a scheme that was going to prevent the desecration of this Province, and not only the highways and byways and the cities and the countryside, but also the waste disposal parts of this Province, to fill them up with one-time use beverage containers - what did the government do? It rolled over and played dead. It allowed the soft drink industry to bamboozle this government and to bamboozle the people of Newfoundland into giving them \$1 million, given to the soft drink industry at the expense of the consumers of this Province and for what? to tell us not to litter. Well, boys, that is really a lot of good news for the people of this Province. 'Please don't litter. We really would be happy if you didn't litter.'

Now, they got \$1 million to do that, and we are going to do this. Instead of doing something constructive, instead of doing something that has a value, instead of doing something that would create new industry in this Province, we are going to let the Canadian Soft Drink Association have \$1 million to propagandize - it is not about litter. They were not really interested in propagandizing about litter, their real interest was to propagandize the people of this Province against having a returnable bottle policy. That is what they wanted to do. They wanted \$1 million to lobby this government to propagandize the people of this Province to be against a refillable container system, and to be in favour of their notion of anti-litter.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the studies that this department, itself, had done had already shown that littering in Newfoundland was less of a problem than in any other province. But the real problem here was that this government, and previous governments of other political stripes, had allowed the soft drink industry to create in this Province, the only place in Canada where there is not one single, solitary, refillable, soft drink container, not one. There is not a single one that is refillable. In every other province there are refillable soft drink containers except in Newfoundland.

What did this government do? Did they say, Well, we are going to put an end to that policy? We are going to insist that the soft drink company be responsible? No, we didn't do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is time that this government came clean about their policy on the environment, and at least do the honourable and honest thing and say that we, as a people, are opposed to taking other people's garbage. It is very simple and I say to the Member for Twillingate, he has made this very simple proposition. He has avoided this issue of recycling and bringing in, as I suggested, bringing in for example used newsprint that can go into newsprint and be recycled into newsprint with a recycle content. That is permitted by this resolution.

The proposal I talked about of bringing in recyclable plastic from North Sydney to build fish boxes and make plastic fish boxes in Port aux Basques, that is all right under this resolution. That is all right according to this resolution but, Mr. Speaker, this resolution makes it very clear that we do not have to have five, six or ten groups out there every time a proposal comes along to get out and try to build public opinion against it. It should be a blanket policy that is made known to everybody and will solve the problem.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have about ten minutes left in my twenty minutes allocated. I know the former Minister of Justice can hardly wait to hear more of what I have to say on this and other issues but since we are approaching the hour, I have used up ten minutes. I guess, I will use up another ten next Wednesday and conclude my remarks. So I would move the adjournment.

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

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I understand the debate has been adjourned. I say to my friend from St. John's East, I do not know whether he used up ten minutes or abused ten minutes but that is for him to decide.

Your Honour, the House will meet tomorrow, of course, at 2:00 p.m. Members may wish to know the results of consultations behind the Chair which have produced at least a plan of attack, whether they produce accomplishment remains to be seen.

Tomorrow we will finish Bill No. 41, which is the Health Care Directives Bill, I assume it will be very brief and I think I have the floor. I adjourned debate in closing debate on that bill. That will be the end of that. Then we shall move on, we will start Order 14 and we shall carry on -

AN HON. MEMBER: Number fourteen?

MR. ROBERTS: Fourteen, not thirteen. Thirteen it turns out has been passed by the House in a different form. So we will start at Order 14, which is - I am sorry, I am reading from today's Order Paper - Order 14 which is the aquaculture amendment bill. I read it for the first time today, I say to my friend and it was quite interesting. I learned a great deal that I did not know before but now No. 14 - and then we will just carry on taking them in order with the exception of two orders, Sir, Order 23 and Order 25 which are respectfully the Kruger Bill and the (inaudible) Corporation Bill. We will schedule special debates on those. They are both matters which we, on this side, are anxious to debate, and I understand members on the other side are anxious to debate as well. Other than that, we will simply take them as they come, and we will see how we get along with that, and we will carry on from there.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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