

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER (Dicks):** Order, please!

**Statements by Ministers**

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

**MR. FUREY:** Mr. Speaker, as acting Minister of Tourism and Culture, I would like to inform all hon. members of the House of Assembly that 1994 marks 40 years of provincial parks in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The official launch of the 40th anniversary celebrations is being held this evening in Gander.

In 1954, government preserved the land surrounding Big Falls, on the scenic Humber River, by establishing the first provincial park in the Province, Sir Richard Squires Memorial. In creating this provincial park, government preserved and protected 16 square kilometres of the Humber River and the adjacent land to provide quality recreational angling opportunities for Atlantic salmon anglers.

Over a span of 40 years, the provincial park system has evolved from small rest stops along the Trans-Canada Highway, into a diverse system of provincial parks, wilderness reserves and ecological reserves. Many provincial parks offer a diverse range of outdoor recreational and environmental education opportunities for our visitors.

In celebrating the 40th anniversary of our provincial parks, the goal is to inform Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and visitors to this Province, of the variety of unique experiences available through parks and reserves and to demonstrate the vital role these sites play in preserving our natural heritage. In connection with the anniversary, a series of events are being planned that will enable visitors to celebrate our natural heritage. I encourage all resident and non-resident travellers to take part in the activities scheduled and to help celebrate this natural heritage and congratulate the employees, Mr. Speaker, of the department who gave so much time and energy to make these parks such worthwhile areas.

Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

**MR. MANNING:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the hon. the acting Minister of Tourism and Culture for sending me a copy of his statement beforehand. I am disappointed that he didn't invite me out to Gander with him this evening, but I suppose I will have to put up with that.

I am sure that the establishment of provincial parks in the Province forty years ago, made sure that an important asset was added to the total tourism product of the Province. I have, in my district, several provincial parks such as Gooseberry Cove, Point La Haye, Cataract and world-renowned Cape St. Mary's, and the possible tourism development of those parks certainly add to private enterprise and also to the total tourism product of the Province.

I hope throughout the year, as we mark the 40th Anniversary and celebrate our natural heritage that the people of the Province would become aware -

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

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

**MR. MANNING:** By leave, Mr. Speaker?

- that the people of the Province would be come aware of the natural beauty that we have on this Rock and that we would hope to keep it for generations to come. I also would like to -

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

The hon. member's time has elapsed unless he has leave to continue?

**MR. MANNING:** By leave, just for a moment?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**MR. SPEAKER:** By leave.

**MR. MANNING:** I would like to say that I am sure that many people who are involved in the tourism industry in the Province are waiting for a full-time Minister of Tourism and Culture to be appointed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Does the hon. the Member for St. John's East have leave to address the House?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** By leave.

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

**MR. HARRIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to join with the minister in helping to celebrate the forty years of the establishment of provincial parks in the Province. They do add a special mark to our natural heritage and have also given an impetus to others to enjoy the wilderness and participate in outdoor activity. I hope that this 40th anniversary of provincial parks doesn't mark the time when the provincial government decides to privatize these parks, Mr. Speaker. I think that would be a negative move.

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

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

### **Oral Questions**

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

**MR. SIMMS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have now had a chance to review the tape of the Premier's Province-wide address on Tuesday night past. In that speech, of course, the Premier disclosed a conspiracy orchestrated by himself to hide from the people of Newfoundland the real reason why he is selling Hydro. I want to return to the questions and his response to the questions asked yesterday by my colleague, the Member for Burin - Placentia West, when the Premier said, quote: He had not apologized to the people of the Province for his deceit, that he hadn't asked for their forgiveness. But clearly, Mr. Speaker, after reviewing that tape, he does owe the people an apology. I want to give him another chance here today. Will he now apologize to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador for hiding the truth from them?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER WELLS:** Mr. Speaker, I didn't deceive anybody. If anybody wants any justification for the action of the government, all they had to do was listen to the hon. member who spoke last night when he started talking about attacking Hydro Quebec contract.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**PREMIER WELLS:** All they had to do was listen to him and they will see the justification for the government's following the position that we took.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**PREMIER WELLS:** All they had to do was listen to the hon. member talk about the purpose of this legislation. All they have to do is listen to the hon. member talk and suggest that the purpose of this legislation is to attack the Hydro Quebec contract - utterly false, Mr. Speaker. That is not the purpose of this legislation. But now people will understand why I wanted to keep that down. I didn't want to provoke that kind of debate and cause the defeat or the challenge of this legislation. That is the sole reason. I've told that to the people of the Province very clearly, Mr. Speaker, and I've acknowledged my bad judgement in proceeding in that way. I have no quarrel with doing that.

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

**MR. SIMMS:** In that same speech on Tuesday night the Premier said he had asked his caucus to refrain from any comment about his scheme. He confessed that night to a cover up, and there was a cover up, and I will tell the Premier why. On March 3, the day the Electrical Power Control Act was introduced in this House, while I was speaking in the debate, I asked the Premier if he felt part II of that legislation could be used to recall power from the Upper Churchill? His reply to me then was that he didn't know, maybe it could, maybe not. He would have to look into it. Well, we all know now, Mr. Speaker, that he already had looked into it. We all know now that there was a deliberate cover up and that you misled me, as Leader of the Opposition, and other elected representatives in this House of Assembly.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SIMMS:** Now I want to ask the Premier here today to apologize to the House, to the elected representatives of the people for leading a conspiracy to deceive us, will he do the honourable thing and apologize?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER WELLS:** Mr. Speaker, when I introduced the bill to the House on March 3 - all I have to do is get Hansard of March 3 and I'll have it in just a moment. I'll get Hansard of March 3 in just a moment and I will read precisely what I said. I have nothing whatsoever to apologize for, no matter how much the hon. member shouts and rants and raves. As soon as I have it - does nobody have the Hansard of March 3? May I have the Hansard of March 3, please? I will get it and read for the House the precise comment and then I'll answer the hon. member's question.

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

**MR. SIMMS:** Mr. Speaker, I have the Hansard here. It doesn't matter what he wants to read and read into the record of the House. I said when I was speaking, when I asked you the question and what you said. Now in his speech also, Mr. Speaker, on that Tuesday night, that infamous Tuesday, he apologized to his own Caucus for forcing them to participate in his plan to deceive the House and the people. Here's what he said and I quote, 'I apologize to them if the position I have taken has caused them difficulty or embarrassment with their

constituents.' Now, Mr. Speaker, that is an outright admission that he breached their privileges as elected representatives of the people of this Province.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SIMMS:** Mr. Speaker, if he owed an apology to his Caucus then he owes one to this House and he certainly owes one to the people of the Province. So I want him to stand in his place here now today and issue an apology to the elected representatives of the people and to the people of the Province, will he be man enough to do that?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER WELLS:** Mr. Speaker, I'll now address the question that he just asked a few moments ago. Here's Hansard, page 111, March 3, during my introduction of the legislation - I believe it was the Member for Mount Pearl or it might have been the Member for Burin -Placentia West or both of them at different times - some hon. member raised a question and here's what I said, 'Well, we didn't exempt any power. Whatever it does, it does. We didn't exempt anything. We didn't exempt Kruger. Kruger has been there since 1924. Abitibi and its predecessor, AND, and Price has been there since 1904. No power is exempt. There is no basis for exempting anything.'

Then some hon. member said something, part of which was inaudible, but the last five words reported are, "taking back control of Churchill?" It might have been the Member for Mount Pearl, I believe, who said that. I said to him, "No, we are not taking back control. Churchill will continue to operate. But whatever is necessary, whatever the PU board has to do, it will do, with any power in the Province, but that is not taking back control. It is not altering -" Then the member interrupted again. I asked his pardon and he said something else all of which appears to be inaudible because the transcriber did not get it, but my answer is here, Mr. Speaker. "It is not doing anything with the power. It is setting in place a management regime for the Province - all power in the Province. If we say we are not prepared to exempt Abitibi, which has had rights for ninety years, and we are not prepared to exempt Kruger, which has had rights for seventy years, why should we exempt Churchill Falls which has had rights for only thirty years?" Now, there is the answer I gave to this House and I stand by it.

Mr. Speaker, when I spoke to the public of the Province the night before last, I indicated clearly in retrospect: I realize this was error on my part. In reality the legislation should speak for itself, and I went on to explain why I had done it. I simply wanted to avoid the possibility of the repeat of the fiasco of the Upper Churchill Water Rights Reversion Act to which the hon. members opposite contributed a major contribution.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

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

I would ask the Premier to draw his remarks to a close.

**PREMIER WELLS:** I did not hear, Mr. Speaker.

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

I would ask the Premier to draw his remarks to a close as well.

**PREMIER WELLS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On the night before last when I did make my comments to the Province I asked the people of the Province to accept my explanation and apology. I think that is quite adequate. I have already done so directly on television and I have no intention of being pulled around by the strings of the Leader of the Opposition.

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

**MR. SIMMS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We will deal with the Hansard quotes on Page 125, which are the ones I am referring to, outside the House afterwards. I was quite surprised to hear the Premier suggest somehow that we had something to do with the case not being successful in the courts. We did?... when he represented interests who were opposed to our case, Mr. Speaker, at that same time. You talk about a whopper! You talk about a whopper!

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SIMMS:** If ever there was a whopper, there was one!

Mr. Speaker, let me get back to the Premier's Province-wide speech on Tuesday. He repeated the statements of his ministers that we are dealing with the most important piece of legislation dealt with in this Province since Confederation. Now knowing that, proclaiming that, as he and his ministers have done, how can he possibly live with the fact that he chose to mislead the people of the Province, that he chose to use secrecy, propaganda and manipulation to push this deal through the House of Assembly? How can he live with that?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER WELLS:** Mr. Speaker, all anybody of even average intelligence has to do is read the legislation. All anybody of even average intelligence, who doesn't want to deceive and mislead people, has to do is read the legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I brought in legislation and introduced it as being the solution to our Churchill Falls problem, that would tend to make me a hero rather than a villain, so why wouldn't I do it? The only reason why I wouldn't do it is that I didn't want to cause the kind of debate that took place with the Upper Churchill Water Rights Reversion Act, and the Leader of the Opposition is demonstrating in spades why that was the right decision.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

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

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**MR. SIMMS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I say to the Premier there is only one person who is deceiving people around here, and he confessed to it.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SIMMS:** He confessed to it on public television Tuesday night.

Now I put this to him, Mr. Speaker: The credibility of the government is on the line here. The credibility of the Premier is on the line here. Ministers and backbenchers, except for one individual, one member, conspired with him in a dishonourable scheme to mislead people, to violate their trust. How can anybody now believe the Premier on anything he says on this, or anything else for that matter, but particularly on this deal? Why should they trust the Premier on this one?

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

The hon. the Premier.

**PREMIER WELLS:** Mr. Speaker, everybody in the Province will understand the Leader of the Opposition's political motivation for characterizing it as misleading.

I have to apologize to the people of the Province for the behaviour of the party opposite when they were here and they passed the legislation that they did and caused this embarrassing situation.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**PREMIER WELLS:** Now, Mr. Speaker, I could have brought this piece of legislation before the House and said: Look at what the heroic Liberals are going to do; we are going to solve this problem where our predecessors failed. I could have tried to present us as heroes, but I didn't. I chose to do it in the way that would be straightforward and effective, and avoid giving the members opposite the opportunity to defeat or to cause this legislation to be challenged. It didn't work. I am sorry it didn't work. I agree now that it would have been better had I taken the legislation directly and spelled it out for what it was, and would have hoped that the members opposite would have had the good sense to act responsibly. Clearly they don't have that good sense. They are putting solely their political interest ahead of the interest of the people of this Province, and they will never be forgiven for it!

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

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

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

**MR. W. MATTHEWS:** Talk about blowing your own cover, I say to the Premier; talk about blowing your own cover.

I want to pursue a line of questioning to the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations that I pursued on Monday pertaining to the lay-off of electrical inspectors and boiler inspectors in the Province. At that time the minister said that they were putting a new system in place.

I want to ask the minister: Will his department continue to sell permits for people who are doing electrical work on whatever types of buildings in the Province? Will they continue to sell permits to those people? How much will they be charged? And will those people who have to purchase permits still be afforded inspection services such as they do now before the system is changed?

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

**MR. GRIMES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The complete new regulations for the new arrangement in terms of electrical inspection in the Province will be done, expected by the first of June, and the procedure basically will be along the lines of the contractor or individual who picks up a permit to do electrical wiring and installation will have to demonstrate that they have certain certification. There is intended to be three classifications that will be accepted and approved, and they are the only ones who will be entitled to get a permit to do wiring, and then it is the credibility of the individual and/or firm who picks up the permit and does the installation with recognized, certified electricians who can make sure, and guarantee the person they are doing the work for, that they are doing the installation according to the provincial code.

The other part of the regulations and the regulatory regime that will be introduced along with that is that if the individuals or contractors or companies who pick up those permits and do the work, if they are found to be in violation at any point in time by report or by spot checking, then they will lose their entitlement to carry on that kind of business in the Province.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Opposition House Leader, a supplementary.