

Fisheries and Aquaculture
December 18, 2012



The following statement was given today in the House of Assembly by the Honourable Derrick Dalley, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture:

Carino Processing Limited Provides First Installment of Seal Industry Loan Repayment

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in this Honourable House today to report that Carino Processing Limited, the primary seal processing facility in our province, has made the first payment of approximately \$1.1 million toward the \$2 million loan our government provided the sealing industry last spring. The remaining amount owing is anticipated to be paid back in the first quarter of the new year.

Mr. Speaker, this is great news and it is an indication that the sealing industry continues to provide opportunity for harvesters and business owners in this province. There were over 67,000 pelts purchased from harvesters throughout the province this year, with a landed value of approximately \$1.5 million. About 430 harvesters and 388 vessels were involved in the harvest, representing an increase from the previous year.

Mr. Speaker, our government continues to support the sealing industry in its innovative and creative efforts to identify new markets, and generate new opportunities for seal products in the world markets.

We are pleased to see that the funding provided by our government last year had such a positive impact. The success can be seen in the participation of harvesters, to the success of stores like Always in Vogue, Natural Boutique and the North Atlantic Fur Group, to increases in activity at Carino, the Northeast Coast Sealers Co-op and Sea Water Products. I recently attended a very encouraging meeting with industry stakeholders where discussions focused on the future of the sealing industry and the commitment to full utilization of these animals to maximize the economic benefit to the province.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing positive movement in relation to the ongoing World Trade Organization challenge and the European Court of Justice, which may once again provide access to world markets. Here at home, we continue to work with our federal partners in finalizing access to markets in China. I recently met with federal minister Gail Shea to discuss these important issues and to reiterate our unwavering support in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, the anti-sealing campaigns are filled with misinformation on the harvest – a skewed perspective to say the least. The annual seal harvest is highly regulated and environmentally sustainable. The harp seal population has increased from approximately two million animals to nearly eight million in just a few years. This is extraordinary and surely invites the question of impact on the natural balance of the ocean's ecosystem.

Activist groups truly display a lack of understanding about what is responsible ecosystem management, the economic importance to people dependant on this hunt, and the cultural realities in this province. We will not be swayed by the propaganda of such campaigns or that of misinformed followers and celebrities. Collectively, we must continue our resolve to overcome the challenges of this industry to ensure a humane and sustainable annual seal harvest.

Over the years, the sealing industry has contributed much to the provincial economy. It has helped to define our culture and it has carved a place in our storied history.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud to support the seal harvest – a part of our heritage that has provided much benefit to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador for centuries. We are confident it will continue to do so in the years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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1:50 p.m.

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