
Jones, Shea meet in Ottawa

BY DAVE BARTLETT dbartlett@thetelegram.com
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Gail Shea

Provincial Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones was in Ottawa Friday to meet with federal Fisheries Minister Gail Shea.

Jones said the meeting lasted about an hour and a half.

"The meeting went well. She was very eager to have a discussion around a number of issues that are important to people in Newfoundland and Labrador," Jones told The Telegram Friday afternoon.

Jones and Shea discussed pending amendments to the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the future of the sealing industry and the buy back of some fishing licenses in 1999, which Jones said unfairly taxed about 800 families in this province.

"On the issues around NAFO, I guess I was surprised to learn that the government's decision is final," said Jones.

She said the current debate in the House of Commons — which is to resume next week — won't change the government's mind, no matter the outcome of that vote.

Jones said.

On sealing, she said Shea told her the federal government is looking at Asian markets for Canadian seal products as well as encouraging new seal product development.



Yvonne Jones

Jones called the discussion on the buy back issue "reasonable."

She said a court decisions deemed only 25 per cent of the buy back was taxable, but some people in this province were taxed on 100 per cent of what they received.

Jones said those people have still not received the money they're owed.

"I think it's a real injustice to those people. If they owed this money to Revenue Canada, (Ottawa) would be coming after them," she said.

Jones said Shea will look at the case, but made no commitment on the issue.

The Liberal leader also wanted to discuss a number of issues related to wharf infrastructure and small craft harbour's in a number of Labrador communities.

"She was very firm on that message,"

"She was very receptive. We had

some very detailed discussions," Jones said about that part of the meeting.

There are currently four applications pending for wharf improvements in Forteau, Charlottetown, Battle Harbour and Makkovik, said Jones, and Shea is committed to those projects.

Jones also asked that Mary's Harbour and Pinsent's Arm be added to the list of small craft harbours which need upgrades.

"That is a political decisions, there's really no process for it," said Jones. "It's at the discretion of the minister."