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P.M. SCRUM IN GANDER, NEWFOUNDLAND

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For Internal Information and Research Purposes only

STEPHEN HARPER (Canadian Prime Minister): Good morning.

MODERATOR: Good morning. Jeanie Brown, Rogers TV.

QUESTION: Prime Minister, could you please give us an idea of the timetable that we're looking at to having the weather office up and running when we're talking about the numbers as well as the time period?

STEPHEN HARPER: There is, I guess, still presently 10 people fully reinstated, that will be 25 people, and our expectation is that that will be up and running before the end of the year; in fact, hopefully by the fall.

QUESTION: At full staff?

STEPHEN HARPER: Yes. That's our plan.

MODERATOR: Jason Turnbull, CBC Radio.

STEPHEN HARPER: So we're going to proceed quickly.

MODERATOR: Jason Turnbull, CBC Radio. Where is Jason?

QUESTION: Hi. I'm just wondering, where are the jobs going to be relocated from?

STEPHEN HARPER: I'm not sure I'm the one to answer that question. I think it's a combination of some new employment and also some relocation from the Maritimes.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Those who want to move back.

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STEPHEN HARPER: Yes. Do you want to answer the details of that? There won't be any layoffs. Some will be given the option to move back. Other jobs will be created here.

QUESTION: Is that going to be more federal jobs for Newfoundland in the future?

STEPHEN HARPER: This will certainly be an increase in the number of federal jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador. Obviously the Minister has, as you know, long been advocating for more federal jobs for Newfoundland and Labrador and that's something we will be working on in the months and years to come.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MODERATOR: Kevin Harvey, CBC Television.

QUESTION: When you did the studies to determine that you needed to reopen the Gander weather office, did you conclude that it was a mistake that it closed in the first place?

STEPHEN HARPER: Well, that had been our belief all along that a region of this size should have its own weather forecasting. It was a decision we never had agreed with. So, yes, we believe it was a mistake and we believe not only should the weather forecasting be reinstated here, we're looking down the road and we can see, quite frankly, on the east coast, additional functions that could eventually be run out of this weather office.

QUESTION: When they shut the office down, they said the technology had improved so much that you didn't need the weather centre here, in Newfoundland anymore. I mean, does this prove that the human factor is still valuable in forecasting?

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STEPHEN HARPER: Well, you know that... I guess it's all judgement. I mean, people say, do we have the technology? We all know that we still make lots of mistakes in weather forecasting. It seemed to us that mistakes were more common here than they were elsewhere.

QUESTION: Did you have statistics to show that when you did your studies?

STEPHEN HARPER: I haven't actually looked at the studies ourselves, but that's certainly what I'm led to believe.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

MODERATOR: Thank you.

STEPHEN HARPER: Okay, that's it.

MODERATOR: We're all done.

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