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*Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA*

Tuesday

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

In the public gallery today, I would like to recognize April White, who is an award-winning artist whose accomplishments will be the subject of a Member's statement today.

Welcome.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would also like to welcome to the public gallery Mr. Jon Sturge, who's with the Salvation Army; a very important organization throughout our province. He is based in Springdale.

Welcome to you, Mr. Sturge.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today I'd like to make a special tribute, if I may, to Marie Keefe.

I'd like to recognize Ms. Keefe. She has been an employee of the House of Assembly Service who retired on October 31, 2017, after more than 30 years with the provincial government.

Marie began her career in the public service with the Pensions Division, Department of Finance. She served in various roles there before moving on to the Centre for Learning and Development. While working with the CLD, she delivered training to both elected Members and government employees and also provided facilitation services to various public consultations undertaken by government.

In September 2007, Marie joined the House of Assembly Service as the Policy and Communications Officer, a position established as a result of the implementation of the Green report. In this role, Marie has provided extensive policy, planning and communication support to the Speaker, House of Assembly Management Commission, the House of Assembly Service and the statutory offices. She has also been responsible for overseeing the development of the policy manuals provided to Members and

staff of the House, coordinating parliamentary conferences and providing public education and outreach services.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in thanking Marie for her service to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and wishing her well in her retirement.

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

### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** For Members' statements today, we will hear from the hon. Members for the Districts of Cape St. Francis, Harbour Grace – Port de Grave, Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, Conception Bay South, St. George's – Humber and St. John's Centre.

The hon. Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize the Pouch Cove Volunteer Fire Department for the tremendous 40 years of service they have provided to the residents of Pouch Cove and Bauline.

Mr. Speaker, this department consists of 35 highly trained volunteer firefighters, as well as three junior firefighters. Members have weekly in-house training to supplement the provincial training in defensive and offensive structural firefighting, motor vehicle and machinery rescue, rope rescue, first aid and many other operations.

This year, the addition of a new medical van also allows the department to respond to the medical needs in the area.

At this year's annual ball, firefighters Barry Murray, Rodney Ryan and Mike Noseworthy each received 20-year pins for their long service.

Mr. Speaker, the Pouch Cove Volunteer Firefighters, along with the firettes, also provide many other volunteer services in their community, such as the Santa Claus parade, breakfast with Santa Claus, and this weekend they served the dinner for the Pouch Cove Lions

Club Charter Night. These men and women are always there when called upon.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join with me in congratulating and thanking the Pouch Cove Volunteer Fire Department for their many years of valuable service.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace – Port de Grave.

**MS. P. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today with great pride to recognize John Drover of Upper Island Cove.

In October of 1981, John was born with spina bifida, paralyzed from the waist down. Along with other health complications, there was a major buildup of fluid on his brain. The medical team predicted John would live for two weeks. Doctors installed a brain shunt, a dangerous surgery for an infant, but he pulled through and embarked on a long road of recovery, involving a series of surgeries.

John was six months old when he first came home from hospital and, Mr. Speaker, he hasn't stopped since. He loves and enjoys life to the fullest. Following graduation at Ascension Collegiate High School, he became an honorary member of the Upper Island Cove Fire Department. He is a big supporter of all community events and initiatives.

On Canada Day you can see him, front and centre, on his grandmother, Enid's, patio, sporting the Maple Leaf in red and white, while greeting the annual Canada Day parade.

A special moment for John was meeting Prince Charles and Lady Diana in 1983, while at the Janeway hospital awaiting another surgery.

John recently celebrated his 36th birthday with family and friends. So please join me in wishing him a happy birthday and many more years of good health and happiness.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to extend congratulations to the very bright students who received Electoral District Scholarships this year from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Recipients from King Academy were: Nicole Langdon, Matthew Skinner and Taylor Stone. Recipients of the Centenary for Responsible Government Scholarships were: Melanie Collier of Bay d'Espoir Academy, Rebecca Day of King Academy, Patricia Hammond of Fitzgerald Academy and Kyle Poole of John Watkins Academy. We are very proud of their achievement and wish them the best of luck in their future studies.

Achieving academic excellence is an important part of preparing these fine young adults for their future. I also commend their families, their teachers and all those people who encouraged them to be the very best that they can be. They have proven their tremendous work ethic and we know their dedication and great initiative will serve them very well in whatever career path they choose.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating these gifted and very hard-working individuals. With what they have achieved already, there is no doubt that they have very bright futures ahead of them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for the District of Conception Bay South.

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

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, October 20, my colleague, the MHA for Topsail – Paradise, and I attended the sixth annual Bright Business luncheon awards ceremony at the Manuels River Hibernia Interpretation Centre.

This event is hosted by the Town of Conception Bay South and it's a great opportunity for local entrepreneurs to network and showcase their individual businesses in our community. This year, 36 nominations were received.

The Bright Business Achievement Awards help recognize the contributions of local businesses that have gone above and beyond. This year's award winners are: Beautiful Business – Hickey's Greenhouses and Nursery, single tenant, and Funky Island Decor, a multiple tenant; Community Pride and Partnership – Tim Hortons; David Murphy Chamber Leadership – Dawe's Plumbing and Heating; Glenda Noseworthy Award – Anita Brown, Sobeys; Established Business of the Year – Taylor's Fish Fruit & Vegetable Market; Main Street Business Improvement Member of the Year – Ocean Quest Spa; New Start Up of the Year – Ovation Music Studio.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the award winners, nominees and sponsors. Conception Bay South has grown significantly and it's great to see the business community has also shown tremendous growth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for the District of St. George's – Humber.

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

Encounters with Canada brings together young Canadians from all provinces and territories to our nation's capital to discover – through innovative, experiential learning activities – our nation's diverse culture, heritage, institutions, history and leaders, as well as to explore potential career options.

This month, Josh Fiander from the Codroy Valley was one of the youth from this province to participate in this program.

Encounters with Canada is our country's largest and foremost youth forum. Every week of the school year, over 100 teens from across Canada participate.

Introducing Canada's youth to our country's diverse cultures, heritage, beliefs, contemporary issues, institutions and leaders opens their eyes to the vast potential of their own lives, as well as that of their communities, their nation and the world.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Josh Fiander of the Codroy Valley on representing the province in this program and also commend the organizers for providing youth with this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of St. John's Centre.

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, this has been a large year for interdisciplinary artist April White. She was named 2017 Emerging Artist of the Year by Visual Artists of Newfoundland and Labrador and just recently named recipient of the Cox & Palmer Pivotal Point Grant, valued at \$5,000.

April's work finds wonder in moments that might otherwise feel unremarkable, while investigating our relationship to our own bodies. She was awarded the grant to create a new series called *I Didn't Volunteer for This*, which examines involuntary bodily actions like sneezing, yawning, laughing and crying through performance, drawing, watercolour and watercolour animation.

The series builds on April's 2016 solo exhibition at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, *A Day in the Life Of*, as well as a watercolour series called *Sneeze*.

Part of what inspires her to make this work is an interest in challenging historical representation of women, by painting herself in moments of lost composure. She troubles a history of women being treated as beautiful objects in art. April holds a bachelor of fine arts degree in visual arts from our very own Grenfell Campus at MUN.

I am so excited to see what incredible work April has in store for all of us, and I encourage everyone to give April White a bravo!

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

**Statements by Ministers**

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to join representatives of the arts community today to recognize an important piece of legislation that will be debated in this hon. House. The *Status of the Artist Act* recognizes the important role artists play in contributing to the cultural, social and economic well-being of the province.

Mr. Speaker, the *Status of the Artist Act* is intended to enhance the recognition and support of professional artists and to ensure that they receive fair compensation. Through the act, the provincial government encourages everyone, with government departments and agencies leading by example, to pay artists fairly and equitably based on existing industry pay scales for their genre.

The provincial government is also committed to revitalizing its approach to supporting culture through a new cultural plan renewal to be completed by January 2019. This is in support of the *Status of the Artist Act* and will involve broader consultation with stakeholders from both the arts and heritage sectors. This renewal process will offer the opportunity to explore government programming and support, and ways to improve opportunities for artists in the province.

In developing the legislation, the provincial government consulted with representatives from the various art sectors including: visual arts, craft, music, literary and publishing, dance, theatre and film. In addition, 256 professional artists provided their perspective through an online survey.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring forward legislation that formally recognizes the important contribution artists make to our province. Recognizing and supporting professional artists is a key priority for our government, as outlined in *The Way Forward*.

This legislation is just the beginning; through the cultural plan renewal, we will ensure continued support to improve the lives of artists in our province.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, we, too, are pleased to see this piece of legislation. Artists make a tremendous contribution to the culture and economy of Newfoundland and Labrador. We see evidence of this every day in communities all across this great province. This legislation is a good start in recognizing the unique value of artists.

I am also pleased – yet somewhat surprised – to hear the minister say that he is committed to a new cultural plan renewal, particularly given that it was his government that shamelessly cut culture from the department title.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this plan's completion, but we certainly would like to see it much sooner than 2019.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our artists and art organizations are producing incredible award-winning work and are economic drivers for our province, yet funding for ArtsNL is still at 2009 levels. Our artists have among the lowest incomes in all of Canada and cannot live on praise alone. Artists are waiting for real commitment and concrete economic support from government. There are many models internationally that show creative ways to support artists.

Let's do something real to improve the status of the artists.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to recognize the tremendous contributions foster families make to the well-being of children and youth in our province.

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

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Recently, our province celebrated Foster Families Week to show our appreciation for foster families, and to acknowledge the great work of social workers and the Foster Families Association.

Mr. Speaker, foster families willingly open their hearts and homes to children and youth during a time in their lives when they need it most. Living and thriving in a supportive family environment is so important for a child – it is comfort, stability and love.

There are approximately 605 foster families located throughout Newfoundland and Labrador that are dedicated to helping children and youth by providing safe and nurturing homes.

Author and award-winning youth speaker Josh Shipp said, “Every child is one caring adult away from being a success story.” Children flourish when they have caring and reliable foster parents to help support and guide them, and help them maintain family connections.

Mr. Speaker, being a foster parent is a rewarding experience and has many positive aspects, not only for the children in their care, but also for the family itself. To help us meet the need for new foster families, I encourage anyone who is interested in becoming a foster parent to please reach out to our department or the Foster Families Association.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. We join with the government in recognizing the tremendous contribution of foster families to our province’s children, youth and families. Their importance and value cannot be overstated.

Any discussion regarding foster families has to include the structure that provides valuable support to them. Both social workers and the Foster Families Association are certainly two groups that offer vital assistance. I’m happy to hear the minister acknowledge all parties, but mentioning isn’t enough. I encourage the minister to continue to work with all and provide necessary support when requested, as the need is so great.

Mr. Speaker, those individuals involved in foster care are passionate, caring, empathetic and, unfortunately, in short supply. The reasons they get involved are genuine and admirable. And, frankly, I can’t imagine our province or our society without them.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I wish to offer a heartfelt thank you to all foster parents in our province as well as to those who support them in carrying out their precious role.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John’s Centre.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. We all join in celebrating our foster families and those who help them provide love, comfort and stability for children. We know from examples across the country that foster families do best when they get support in three key areas: adequate financial resources, training and professional support, and respite care, when needed.

Government's foster family service is no place for economizing, and I trust the minister will work hard to ensure foster families get all the support they need to do the incredible work that they do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's been some significant policy decisions regarding the development of Muskrat Falls since the Liberals formed government two years ago.

I ask the Premier: Will all decisions made on Muskrat Falls in the past two years be included as part of the inquiry? A simple question Premier: yes or no?

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

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

Well, first of all, I was very pleased yesterday to be able to announce the inquiry. What's unfortunate about all of this is we're now going to enter into a time of public debate, a public debate that many people across our province were expecting prior to sanctioning. We were pleased yesterday as a government to put the terms of reference in place to call the inquiry.

As I said yesterday when we introduced this, when we announced this, we will be compliant, Mr. Speaker. Any Cabinet documents that are required and compelled by the commission, we will put them forth.

What I didn't hear yesterday when I asked the question, from the Leader of the Opposition who was part of this decision: Are they prepared to

put out all the information that they had access to in their Cabinet deliberations?

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I realize we asked questions in this regard yesterday, but the same as yesterday, we don't get an answer to the question. So I'll be more specific.

I'll ask the Premier if the management of the project, procurement and oversight activities over the last two years will be included in the terms of reference for the inquiry. Yes or no?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** We certainly, on this side of the House, intend to comply with any of the questions that are asked by the Commissioner. So, yes, we'll be making that information available.

For the third time now – and I realize that we do not get a chance to answer questions to the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, but I'd be very curious to know, we've answered the question, but for the third time the Leader of the Opposition has not been forthcoming and has not said publicly that they are willing to make sure that the commission will have access to the Cabinet information that they used to sanction the project.

We intend, on this side of the House, to be fully compliant and make that information available.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was quite clear on that yesterday. I provided an answer to the minister or to the government yesterday and spoke very clearly on it.

My question is about what's going to be included over the last two years. That's what's important here. That's what we're asking the government about today.

He just said, again, if they're asked by the Commissioner. Now, it's not part of the terms of reference, Mr. Speaker, is my point here – t's not part of the terms of reference. The minister answered yesterday and tried to say it was.

So I'll ask the Premier this: Will the Astaldi contract renewal be included as part of the inquiry work? Yes or no?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear the answer yesterday from the Member opposite. So if he would like to clarify his position in making all the information that they had available to make that, to reinforce that and reiterate and repeat what he said yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Astaldi contract, the contracts that were put in place, I think the Commissioner would really like to see that. Mr. Speaker, they need to see that. That information will be provided.

On this side of the House, we intend to be fully compliant in any decisions that we had made. Whatever the Commissioner needs, I can guarantee you we'll be co-operating with the Commissioner, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, it says whatever the Commissioner needs, but it's not part of the terms of reference. So therefore the terms of the inquiry, if they're not included in those aspects, then the Commissioner won't need it.

I don't know why the Premier is so specific on the matter previous to two years ago, but not after they took office. It's not a difficult concept to understand, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll ask the Premier this: Will all the circumstances and details related to process in

Labrador, especially respecting the methylmercury, be included in the inquiry? Yes or no?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, it may be a very simple argument or answer to all of this is just to say yes.

Now, maybe the Leader of the Opposition will just simply say that, yes, they are willing to provide all of the Cabinet documents to the Commissioner. Mr. Speaker, just simply answer that, yes or no.

We are prepared to do all of this. The Commissioner has a right to compel all of this information, Mr. Speaker. We want to lay out publicly all of the information that we have used, the decisions that we have made on behalf of the Muskrat Falls Project, Mr. Speaker. I will tell you that this project is in a much better position today than it was when we took office in 2015.

Will you put out the information that you had access to?

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was quite clear yesterday and I'll be quite clear again today. I'll use an answer in a form that the Premier likes to use. I'll provide whatever the Commissioner requires, Mr. Speaker, I'll assure you that. We will provide everything that's required.

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, when I asked the Premier about the last two years, he continues to dodge the question and he won't provide a clear answer without it being weighed down with rhetoric.

The previous federal Conservative Government of Canada and the current federal Liberal

Government of Canada both provided loan guarantees to the Muskrat Falls Project.

Will their assessments and their review leading up to endorsing the project and providing those loan guarantees be part of the inquiry?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, absolutely, we will be very pleased. As a matter of fact, I'll have that discussion if you want to talk about the enhanced loan guarantee, the COREA. We had to renegotiate the cost overruns, that account. We had to extend the date, Mr. Speaker, because they said there'd be no loss of schedule, which indeed that was not the case. There were a number of things that we have been doing.

I think the Members opposite – why don't they want to talk about 48 per cent complete in June of 2016, 85 per cent complete now in just over 15 months, Mr. Speaker? That is the progress that we have made since we have taken over government.

All the information should be out there. The Commissioner needs to see this. I am looking forward to getting this inquiry started. Unfortunately, we're having (inaudible) –

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

**PREMIER BALL:** – but we will get it started.

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

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

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We're very interested to know how it went; an additional billion dollars in three months, right after the new CEO, hand-picked and appointed by the Premier, said no more surprises. No more increases, no more surprises, and within three months a billion dollars extra. So we look forward to seeing all the details on that.

Yesterday, when we asked the government if Justice LeBlanc wanted to expand the terms of inquiry, I asked if the government would

approve that and will he allow him to expand the scope as requested by the justice and will people know about it.

We couldn't get an answer yesterday, so I'll ask again today. Will it be made public if Justice LeBlanc wishes to expand the scope of the inquiry and will the government approve it?

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

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

Well, the Leader of the Opposition likes to take the opportunity in preambles to plant seeds of doubt and rhetoric to the people of this province.

I want to make it very clear that when the budget changed by the current CEO, he was being very upfront with the people of this province. What that billion dollars was about was legacy costs. What legacy costs means these are risks that were associated with contracts that they put in place, that they were not forthcoming with, Mr. Speaker.

He laid out what would be the requirement, simply via a contingency fund, Mr. Speaker. Laying out that the contracts they put in place were not accurate, needed changes.

In June of 2015, prior to the election, the Leader of the Opposition knew that and did not share it with the people of the province. This government put it out there.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

Mr. Speaker, recently we've seen a new royalty regulatory framework quietly released.

I ask the minister: Is there an update on who will pay the UN Law of the Sea royalty related to oil and gas development beyond the 200-mile limit?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, we have a Generic Offshore Oil Royalty Regime. It was announced two years ago and we do have the regulatory framework around that Oil Royalty Regime.

Regarding UNCLOS, which is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and requirements posted outside of the 200-mile limit – just for the people listening, Mr. Speaker, who would not understand that – we're not in any negotiations on any projects that are outside the 200-mile limit, or outside the continental shelf, I should say.

If there is a project that is outside of the continental shelf, there is a requirement, of course, to pay to the United Nations. And, Mr. Speaker, that's all part of that ball of value and competitiveness that I've been bringing to this House.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

Mr. Speaker, as we know, Canada is the signature to the Law of the Sea agreement with the incremental royalty, which could increase up to 7 per cent on production value.

When deliberating over the new generic royalty regime, I ask the minister: Did she have any conversations about who would pay this 7 per cent?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question.

It is an important one because, as I've said to this House, there is more than just the royalty regime that makes up the competitiveness and the requirements under this whole ball of value. There would be taxation, there would be the UNCLOS, as the Member just mentioned, there would be royalty and there would be equity. So all of these things form part of the competitiveness and the ball of value.

There hasn't been any direct discussions with anyone as to who is going to pay that because we're not in any position at this point in time to have a project outside that would be imposed by that, Mr. Speaker; but as we move forward in our competitiveness, we are speaking with our colleagues in Ottawa about this and, of course, the industry as a whole.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

Mr. Speaker, in Estimates in 2017, the minister said: "We've left it to the federal government who is responsible for UNCLOS and left it, at this point, as part of their requirements. We'll continue to monitor this as we move forward."

I ask the minister again: As part of your recent work on the Oil Royalty Regime, have you received confirmation from the federal government that they are willing to pay the 7 per cent royalty without charging it to this province and affecting our return on our offshore resources?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question.

I'm going to just again reiterate that the generic oil royalty is the royalty that Newfoundland and Labrador would participate in, and would receive from the oil companies on a project, on the bigger ball of value would come the UNCLOS. I agree with the Member opposite: it is an important discussion. We have no projects that are affected by this at this point in time.

I would think that in part of our discussions, and as going forward on the competitiveness review, that the federal government will be part of that discussion, Mr. Speaker, because in my estimate, it is an agreement that the federal government pursued and is required to do. Therefore, I would think it would be part of the competitiveness requirements.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Ferryland.

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

Mr. Speaker, with a mandated carbon tax from the federal government's commitment in 2018 and with the 7 per cent royalty, has an assessment been done to the total cost of the oil industry in this province in future developments, such as related to a Statoil development?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

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

As we know, the carbon tax is a federal regulation that has been put in place, but one of the positive things to that is they said you can have your own solution. So we are trying to make a homemade, made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution.

On top of that, and with that in mind, we are in consultation with all the offshore industries, industries in Newfoundland and Labrador, to come up with a made-in-Newfoundland solution that's going to help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and help promote economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador. So we're working towards that with all industry partners in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Ferryland.

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

I thank the minister for his answer. He mentioned a made-in-Newfoundland solution. I know here in this House some time ago we passed legislation related to five industrial entities here in the province and their greenhouse gas emissions. At the time it was passed, there were two years of monitoring to be done for greenhouse gas emissions.

I ask the minister for an update. What have been the results of that monitoring?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister Responsible for the Office of Climate Change.

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

I don't have the results on me, but I'll endeavour to get you the results on that. I can assure you that we're in constant consultations with the federal government; we're in constant consultations with all the partners in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, we will make a Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution that will help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That includes consultation with all stakeholders, including the federal government that said here's the backstop; you can find a solution yourself. We will have a solution in 2018.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Ferryland.

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

I thank the minister, but just to remind him that the two-year monitoring was put in place by your government. At the conclusion of that, there was going to be an approval by Cabinet of what type of fees would be put in place in regard to a carbon tax.

A recent Hydro report entitled *Near-term Generation Adequacy Report* indicated concerns with reservoir water inflow rates which could result in low energy reserves at Hydro generation sites.

I ask the minister: Can he provide an update on the reserves in the Hydro generation sites in the province?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It has been a dry fall; everyone in the province knows that, and some are even thankful for that. The reserves are about 87 per cent today, Mr. Speaker. Hydro Newfoundland and Labrador are quite confident they can supply the energy required. They are monitoring the situation as

they are with any electricity asset, and we will certainly have the energy that is required and electricity that is required for the coming winter season.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

I'll just ask the minister again: Does she have confidence that power generation is secure and there is no threat to water availability and power generation during the upcoming winter months? We understand that there are 1,000 gigawatt hours less than last year due to reservoir levels. Does she have concerns with this?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I've been assured by Hydro that they have no concerns. There are opportunities for other generation in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. As I indicated, we are about 87 per cent today, but we could be up again tomorrow. It depends on our weather and on how much rain and how much snow we do get, but I don't think there's any concern at this point. I've spoken to Hydro Newfoundland and Labrador; they feel very confident for this coming winter.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

Some of the concerns expressed looks at additional capacity to generate and, in particular, the new turbine at Holyrood, which indicates that would have to run at 80 per cent capacity or greater.

I ask the minister: Is this her understanding, and is she confident this can actually occur?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are thermal generation opportunities throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I've not been made aware of any concerns in any of the thermal generation that are untoward or that need to be noted at this point in time. Mr. Speaker, I've been assured by Newfoundland Hydro that they are prepared, and well prepared, for this winter.

There has been a tremendous investment in Newfoundland Hydro over the last number of years and, therefore, I think we're in good shape for this coming winter.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

Mr. Speaker, the combustion turbine in Holyrood is a backup system for power generation. We've been told that it's been running constantly throughout the summer.

I ask the minister: Is this related to low reservoir levels or for some other reason?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just indicated there are low reservoir levels, as there have been throughout any period of time. It fluctuates.

Newfoundland Hydro is putting some new asset generation. As you've seen on the highway, Mr. Speaker, there have been some new transmission lines coming in from other assets that we have in the province. We use thermal generation from time to time; we use hydro generation from time

to time in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Newfoundland Hydro has put in a tremendous plan over the last number of years, including under the former administration where they actually had DarkNL and required some investments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

I'll go back to that question again. My simple question is: Has it been running all summer and, if so, what are the fuel costs this summer as compared to last summer and previous summers?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, that's a very specific question that I do not have the answer to at this point in time. I will endeavour to get the information to how much fuel was consumed this summer and how does it compare to other years. I will ask Newfoundland Hydro to provide that to this House.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

**MR. PETTEN:** My question was has it been running all summer, and the minister never answered that question, Mr. Speaker. It was a two-part question.

Has the combustion turbine been used this past summer to provide power to the Island; if so, why?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MS. COADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just answered the question. It's a very specific question as to how much has it been utilized this

summer, how does that compare to the previous year. I will get that information for the Member opposite. I'll be happy to provide it to this House. I've been made aware of no concerns in that regard, but I will certainly ask Newfoundland Hydro to provide the information.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Minister of Tourism tell this House why the 2017 Public Accounts from Marble Mountain have not been made public?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

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

I certainly signed off on the Marble Mountain report to be tabled before the House of Assembly. All the information is available.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** The year ended on April 30, 2017. Can the minister tell us when he will be tabling that information and to explain why the Public Accounts have been so late?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, the report was provided to me, I signed off on the report, reviewed the tabled documents and had lived up to the obligations that were provided by the accountability office for this House.

So is there some specific information the Member is looking for, for the Marble Mountain Development Corporation?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we'll look forward to when he tables it in the House because we haven't seen that tabling happen yet and we'd like to know when that will happen.

Does the minister know the bottom line of Marble Mountain for the past fiscal year and how much the operation has cost the taxpayers of this province?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, under their House in 2015, they had not tabled the reports to the Marble Mountain Development Corporation. We will make available any of the information to the Marble Mountain Development Corporation. I made a very clear commitment to the House of Assembly that we were working on a plan to bring Marble Mountain to a sustainable level.

We have, under the new board that's in existence with the Marble Mountain Development Corporation – they've made significant changes. They've been listening to the public and making sure that Marble Mountain is going to be operating and improving customer service for the people of the province.

It is a significant economic generator for the West Coast of the province and for all other regions supporting major business. It is a good operation to have Marble Mountain Development –

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

Your time has expired.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** The report is not public, it has not been tabled in the House and it's a simple question: When will you do it?

Mr. Speaker, my next question – last year, the Minister of Tourism said that he was going to order an operational review to look at how the resort can be weaned off a \$930,000 subsidy from the government, which happens annually.

Can the minister update us on the status of this review?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

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

I'm very pleased that just a few weeks ago, or a few months ago, actually, this information became public in terms of the changes that were happening at Marble Mountain. It was made public around different activities that would be taking place, how the season-pass holder was going to have a reduction of \$100 on a season pass. There was a rate that was put forward for early bird passes. There's going to be a change to food and beverage services.

There was an operational review that took place so that we could focus on our core services and also looking at improving the customer experience at Marble Mountain Development Corporation. It operates its accommodations; it does a tremendous amount of activity. We're working with the board of directors to make sure that Marble Mountain Development Corporation is –

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** What the taxpayers of this province want to know is how much the operation is costing them.

Can the minister confirm that the chair of the board at Marble Mountain is also the main supplier for maintenance at the facility?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, the Marble Mountain Development Corporation is over a \$12-million asset to the people of this province. If you look at the liabilities and the assets that are there, there is a book value to the people of this province. There's a tremendous amount of base development that can take place and other economic activity. We have interest in Marble Mountain. We're drawing upon partnerships and we're doing it right.

They neglected, they underinsured, they let the taxpayers pay \$4.6 million for the lift that was there. I can confirm, no, it is not the same person. The CEO is not the same person as the operator that is the main contractor.

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

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

First and final reminder, again today, I will not tolerate interruptions when a Member has been identified to speak.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune for a quick question, please.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, for your protection.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Based on your fiscal update and comments on agencies, boards and commissions, what is your expectation for Marble Mountain?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear with our agencies, boards and commissions and myself as minister responsible for Marble Mountain, we have done a review. We are finding better ways to operate. We're doing the same thing with other agencies, boards and commissions that are under my department and we are taking a very proactive approach.

It is a very important asset to the people of the province, but it is something that their administration just ignored and they made sure

that when they insured and when the operations were there when lightning struck that Lightning Express, it was underinsured and it cost the taxpayers \$4.6 million.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

**MS. MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday we asked –

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** Yesterday we asked the Premier to table the evidence he used in 2015 to decide the Muskrat Falls Project was too far along to even pause for review. He talked about bills that had to be paid and commitments that had to be met.

I ask the Premier: Will he produce the concrete proof of what it is that made it impossible to pause the project in 2015 to review where things were, or are we just supposed to take his word for it?

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

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

Well, first of all, the concrete proof is actually sitting in the Churchill River. Mr. Speaker, when you think of it, this is a very serious issue that we're talking about here. This equates to some \$24,000 to every man, woman and child in this province when you think of the magnitude, the impact this is having on our province.

Mr. Speaker, in 2012 at sanctioning there were a number of contracts that were put in place – I remind people the Emera people were not even signed on as a partner at the time of sanctioning. Regardless of all that, there were a number of contracts that were put in place, commitments that were put in place, power purchase agreements and it really didn't matter what the cost was, it was paid for by the taxpayers and ratepayers of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I say it, I've said it so many times, the bills were not going away –

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, today government launched its new *Status of the Artist Act*, but artists were not impressed. It only encourages government to pay scale rates when hiring artists and provide some contract information. There is no commitment for more investment in the arts. ArtsNL is operating on the same budget since 2009.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Can he explain exactly how this act will improve the financial status of the artists?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, I take great exception to the Member opposite saying that artists are not impressed with Status of the Artist legislation. This was something that they had asked for, there was significant feedback and consultation throughout this whole process: 256 responses, the arts advisory council, we consulted with the community.

The Status of the Artist is an internationally recognized designation that looks at improving the economic and social status of professional artists. This is a good move for the people of the province. Four other provinces have enacted Status of the Artist legislation.

But if you look at your platform promises when it comes to what you're going to invest in the artists, it was \$526,000. This year alone we invested over \$2 million additionally in to the arts.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker –

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, the number of artists is growing but funding the ArtsNL has not. This affects funding for both established and emerging artists. Incomes of our hardworking, yet chronically underfunded artists are among the lowest in the country.

I ask the minister again: What really is his concrete commitment to artists, and will he establish an additional funding source to help emerging artists?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, if you look at the Third Party's election platform campaign for arts funding, it totalled \$526,000 in additional funding. If you look at this year's budget, as to what the department is funding in to the arts, it's over \$20 million – 9 per cent increase in funding.

You are specifically looking at the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, but if you look at what we invest into culture in Newfoundland and Labrador, we invest the most per capita than anywhere in the country and we have a suite of other programs that we use to support the arts. We run more cultural facilities in the province. If you heard the Member from BC, who moved to Newfoundland and Labrador, he said we support the arts more –

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

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, Quebec followed up their Status of the Artist legislation with concrete measures. A portion of artists' copyright income can be deducted from provincial income tax and they can average their income from a project over several years. These are concrete, progressive measures.

I ask the minister: Will he push government to offer similar measures for our artists in this province?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, we work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, with all the industry associations like MusicNL. One of the wonderful things we did with MusicNL was an export program so that we could make sure professional artists were getting contracts, were getting signed internationally.

We provided a lot of additional support to artists to work with them. We want to make sure there are ways of which government, when they hire an artist, are paying fair wage. We want to encourage all the agencies, boards and commissions, and everyone in the province, to make sure that artists are paid fairly and equitably to the pay scales. We also want to – and we've announced that we're renewing our cultural plan which is going to look at all of our programs and supports of which we help –

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The time for Oral Questions has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament

assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS deaf and hard of hearing children in the public education system of Newfoundland and Labrador are not receiving full and equivalent access to a quality education because of the lack of appropriate full-time resources; and

WHEREAS from 1964 to 2010, deaf and hard of hearing children were provided with a full-time quality education in the Newfoundland School for the Deaf, but deaf and hard of hearing children currently placed in mainstream schools receive only a fraction of a school day with a teacher qualified to instruct deaf and hard of hearing children;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to undertake an immediate complete and thorough assessment of the supports in place for deaf and hard of hearing children by a committee of at least two independent and recognized experts in the field of deaf and hard of hearing education, and to accept the recommendations of these experts and in the interim take measures to honour the support commitments made to all current and future students upon closure of the Newfoundland School for the Deaf in 2010 to ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing children are provided with access to a quality education, equivalent to hearing classmates as well as access to sign language.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I'm presenting a couple of hundred names here of people throughout the province, a lot of it in the Conception Bay North and St. John's metro area. I notice some from the Northern Peninsula there as well; people who are concerned.

In other jurisdictions, sign languages are being reintroduced into the education of deaf children where they were taken out previously. This government is just always lock-step behind what's going on in everything. In this province, the official position since 2010 is that cochlear implants are a cure for most deafness and that

sign languages should not be taught to children with these implants. In actual fact, because others have learned that's not the case, it is coming back in other jurisdictions.

Sign languages don't impede the ability to learn a spoken language, they actually enhance it. One researcher has put it this way: the language areas of the brain have no preference for language input, which means language can be learned in several different ways. Oral or manual doesn't matter in acquiring a language base, but early learning of and facility in any language is an important thing. Sign language is recognized internationally as the language of the deaf.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the medical transport policy was changed in *Budget 2016*; and

WHEREAS the new policy does not provide medical transportation to those who travel less than 60 kilometres or have less than eight trips per month; and

WHEREAS in many parts of the province there is no public transportation system available, thus making this inconvenient and expensive;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to take immediate action to provide transportation to those who require it.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this issue affects a lot of us. I know me, personally, in CBS it's been an issue I've

dealt with on many occasions. Many people have struggled with this policy change.

We don't have any public transportation available, so you have the taxi service or find your best way if you fall outside the criteria of eight trips per month or you live closer than 60 kilometres. I've had cases where people have four appointments a month and they have 57 kilometres to the nearest – that's when the GPS systems kicked in, it is 57 kilometres and four trips.

My question is: There's no public transportation; how do they get to those four trips? It's 57 kilometres – it's not walking distance. There are no buses available and they can't afford a cab. So what is the solution?

I've written the minister on this broad issue of this medical transportation policy change. I've actually represented people who have gone through appeals on it and it's a tough one. What's the alternative? I don't want to get on a bus; I want to get a cab. You have the alternative. You got a bus. Well, that's the cheap route. If you can afford a bus, get on the bus.

Up in CBS, Mr. Speaker, we have a cab or you're walking, in a nutshell. I've had cancer patients who are in the 50-55 kilometre zone and then they're probably 60 years of age, they can't avail of the transportation provided by the cancer clinic which is not always – sometimes there are gaps in that. They've had trouble getting to their cancer treatment, plus associated medical visits as a result of the cancer.

So they're falling into this four to five trips a month at 55 kilometres, Mr. Speaker. That's not just pertinent to CBS; that affects a lot of districts in the province. It's a policy change. I know why they did it: to save money. I get that. But you can't save money on the backs of people's health and safety.

Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

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

To the hon. House of Assembly in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the inshore harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador have serious concerns about their current union representation; and

WHEREAS the inshore fish harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador want the right to vote on which union will represent them;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to request that government urge the Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Relations Board to proceed immediately to a vote of the inshore fish harvesters to decide which union will represent them.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have approximately 60 more names on this petition that came in, and it's coming from areas such as Port Saunders, Black Duck Cove, Port au Choix, St. Barbe, Shoal Cove West, Reef's Harbour, New Ferolle, Conception Bay South, Dunville, Red Head Cove, Shearstown, Grates Cove, Victoria and Seal Cove, so various areas throughout the province.

Again, Mr. Speaker, what this petition is basically calling for is for individuals to have the right to decide who will represent their interests in terms of being a union. As I said when I spoke to this yesterday, we have enough problems in our fishery today. We've been riddled with problems and the last thing we need is division.

I think the time has come to settle this once and for all, whichever way it goes. And certainly for me, I have no horse with the race here. I have no vested interest in this. It doesn't matter to me one way or the other who the representative is, but I think it's in all of our best interests, as a province, that we settle this so that we can start working together to focus on the fishery in general, which is having such a major impact on our province, particularly our rural communities.

That's what's being called for. I've been asked to present it. I will continue to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

I'm glad to rise today and present a petition on behalf of people from my district.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS Mutton Bay Bridge located in the Trepassy area is approximately 50 years old and had a bridge inspection report completed in 2015; and

WHEREAS the inspection report identified significant structural issues with both the substructure and superstructure portion of the bridge; and

WHEREAS the 2015 inspection report recognized substructure condition as poor and repair within one year; and

WHEREAS the superstructure condition was identified as fair and called for inspections one year and expansion joints repaired within three years; and

WHEREAS the deck is identified as fair and repair within one year, identifying immediate repair of handrails; and

WHEREAS the 2015 report advised repair date of 2015 and recommended that structure should be rehabilitated or replaced with bottomless arch soon, and in the interim deck asphalt and approach asphalt should be repaired, as well as guiderails with hazard markers installed;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to immediately attend to the repair

recommendations and confirm replacement date of bridge in accordance with the 2015 inspection report, as this is a serious issue that impacts the lives and safety of the travelling public.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue I've brought to the House of Assembly before. I've also brought it to the attention of the officials in Transportation and Works. The residents of the region in regard to the safety of this particular piece of infrastructure on Route 10, I said before, for all kinds of reasons, people have to use this highway, none more important than for medical treatment.

There are no acute care facilities on the Southern Avalon, so all major diagnostic testing and acute care requirements for hospital are used to travel over this highway, as well related to commercial development, economic development, the activities of the region. It's very important and it is a fundamental piece of infrastructure for the region.

As I said, in 2015 a report was done that clearly indicated that immediate repairs needed to take place. To date, we have no indication any of that has been done. There is a recommendation as well for replacement of this bridge. The Minister of Transportation and Works has recently put out a request on their five-year roads program, what will be put on the list for 2018.

We have requested that this be immediately looked at and rectified in the upcoming season, but in the interim there needs to be another look at this bridge by the engineers to make sure that safety is paramount and anything that needs to be done on a temporary basis is done to maintain the safety and security of this bridge for the travelling public and for the safety of all those concerns.

We certainly implore the minister and the department to look at this immediately on the immediate repairs that are required and, in the long term, to replace this bridge in their 2018 roads program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

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

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS provincial wait-lists for long-term care continue to grow; and

WHEREAS hospital beds are increasingly being occupied by individuals who are in need of long-term care; and

WHEREAS this government cancelled the previous administration's plan to increase capacity by 360 beds province-wide;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to immediately develop a plan to address the shortage of long-term care beds in order to ensure people receive appropriate care and are treated with dignity.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to this and I do want to acknowledge that the government has taken some steps forward on announcing the long-term care facility in Corner Brook – a needed facility that was outlined by the previous administration and the process was started. It's a welcomed addition to addressing long-term care and particularly freeing up acute beds that would be in our health facilities that would ensure people who go for immediate health needs have a bed available so that they can address whatever particular ailment that's being addressed and that the health professionals have at their disposal the amenities they need, particularly it would be a bed available for intake and then for recovery after the procedures are being done.

What is lacking here – it was identified by the previous administration and still identified – is that Central Newfoundland and Labrador is particularly a big demand area for long-term care. Because it's a large geographic area, with a spread-out populous, having a facility or a multitude of facilities that would address that particular need would only enhance the two larger hospitals that are there, particularly in Gander and Grand Falls-Windsor, to ensure that their beds are freed up to be used for health interventions and acute care versus having long-term care patients accommodate those rooms. It would make it easier for travel for family members, because the geography dictates there is going to have to be some travel as part of that.

The other is here on the East Coast. We have an aging population and we have a demographic here that the population is also increasing. There is a demand. We have some aging long-term care facilities here that need major upgrades or may be better facilitated in another more modern, upgraded facility. Only a number of years ago, we opened a large facility in Pleasantville which started to accommodate the real particular needs there, but what we need to do now is we started to address, and give credit, the West Coast needs; we're now to address Central Newfoundland and Labrador's needs and the East Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador as part of it, in particular, so that we can take the strain off the regular health care system.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have a chance to speak to this again. We petition the government to look at the other two geographic areas that need this type of service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

**MS. MICHAEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS a 2013 risk assessment report made public in June 2017 makes it clear that initial cost estimates and financial risk for the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project were understated; and

WHEREAS the Muskrat Falls Project is way over budget, diverting funds from other needs and potentially doubling electricity bills, and it has raised serious concerns about damage to the environment and downstream communities; and

WHEREAS Nalcor and the provincial government have not been transparent or accountable as to why the 2013 report was not previously made public and the people of the province are left with many unanswered questions;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to immediately conduct a forensic audit of the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to present this petition from people in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area, from Port Saunders, from Happy Valley and – yes, and Hopedale. I knew there was another community in Labrador that was involved.

These people are very concerned about issues that the government has not specifically put in the terms of reference for the review that's going to be done of Muskrat Falls. They would have liked to have seen, obviously, concerns about the environmental issues with regard to methylmercury. That is a big issue for people in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area and out as far as Rigolet.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call Order 7, second reading of Bill 22, please.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, that Bill 22, Status Of The Artist Act, be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 22, entitled Status Of The Artist Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "Status Of The Artist Act." (Bill 22)

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

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

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

I am extremely proud to stand here today in the House and begin second reading on Bill 22, the *Status of the Artist Act*. It's something that's been talked about in the arts community for some years now and I am happy that our government will be delivering this legislation to the professional artists of our province.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I was joined by many members of the arts community as they showed their overwhelmingly support of our government's commitment to the *Status of the Artist Act*. We gathered today at the Arts and Culture Centre, a befitting venue considering its long and vibrant history of providing inspiration and support and guidance to many of our province's best-loved and most well-known artists.

It was inspiring to look at the walls decorated with playbills and think about how many artists passed through that building; however, Mr. Speaker, the ACC is more than just a venue. It is a valuable resource for creators, performers and community organizations as they continue to facilitate artistic engagement across our province.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, our traditional and cultural landscape, our identity has been cultivated through song, music, dance, art and theatre. I was proud to be at the St. John's Arts and Culture Centre today, especially as they celebrate their 50th season –

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** – because the Centre continues to play an integral role in sustaining, preserving and enhancing this unique cultural identity.

When I was appointed Minister Responsible for Culture by Premier Ball in 2015, part of my mandate was to recognize that artists are essential to the preservation and progression of our cultural identity in this province. That mandate included collaborating with the arts community to help improve the social and economic status of professional artists in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my distinct pleasure today to announce that the provincial government is enhancing the recognition and support of artists throughout Newfoundland and Labrador by introducing *Status of the Artist Act*. This is something that is internationally recognized, describing the policies and programs intended to improve the economic and social status of professional artists. This legislation acknowledges the important contributions that artists make to our province and government's role in supporting the creation and distribution of their work.

Mr. Speaker, my parliamentary secretary will expand on these important contributions shortly and what our government has done to support artists in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to see representation today from the disciplines of the arts, literary arts, performing arts and visual artists. These professional artists, who create, perform and give artistic expression to the culture we hold so dear.

I know all Members of this House and everyone watching at home are wondering, what does Status of the Artist mean to an artist in Newfoundland and Labrador? Mr. Speaker, it

means a commitment, a commitment from government to continue to invest in culture. It means honouring scale agreements and developing and using written contracts for professional artists, including work description, terms of payment, dispute-resolution mechanisms and rights agreements, and it means a continued dialogue on matters relating to culture with artists in this province.

As Minister of Culture, I am so very proud to say that I've been connecting, engaged and in tune with the arts community of this province. I've been consulting with them. I've been going to the various shows, performances and travelling all around this province to support artists that we have here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** And I encourage all Members to continue to support the vibrancy of the arts here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, to further build on the Status of the Artist, the provincial government has also committed to strengthening our support of culture by renewing our cultural plan. This will offer artists further opportunities to explore government programming and funding mechanisms and offer artists even more ways to improve their professional opportunities here at home.

Our government proudly invests \$20 million annually to culture in this province. That is why, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation worked very hard to get this legislation for Status of the Artist right.

I want to take a moment right now to recognize the staff at the Department of TCII that have worked very diligently since I have become minister, who've worked very closely with the community. There are a number of people from the assistant deputy minister, to the Director of Arts and Heritage, to the manager of Culture, to all of the staff in the department; they have worked very closely with the community.

In developing this legislation, my department consulted with various representatives of the arts

community through all the sectors, from visual arts, craft and music, to literary and publishing, to dance, theatre and film. In addition, we received over 250 responses to our online survey of professional artists.

I was very pleased to see the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council distribute the news release, saying they were very pleased to share this with their members and with people who they support all throughout this province.

Mr. Speaker, we wanted to speak to all sectors to gain insight to what their concerns were and how we, as a government, could help. I was very encouraged by the feedback, the discussions and the dialogue from the arts community because our government believes that this is the time for bold and forward thinking, a time to look at our cultural assets and how we can enhance them. We have tremendous cultural assets here in our province.

I was very excited that I was at the Commissariat House this weekend. It's an 1830s historic building that we have and to see the provincial historic site staff engaged and involved and bringing together those who are creating embroidery, dealing with bobbins, dealing with all kinds of aspects of how they engage the community. That is very important because they do a lot of programming where they engage and hire professional artists, whether it is musicians or people to engage in dance or other artisan activities.

Just a few weeks ago, or a couple of weeks ago I believe now, I had opened up the Colonial Building to the media for a tour and to look at how we can utilize that building as well to make sure that professional artists and professional art and other activities can be incorporated into that cultural asset. We have tremendous facilities here in our province, well beyond the network of our arts and culture centres.

Mr. Speaker, Status of the Artist demonstrates this government's commitment to the artists of our province and the important role they play in society. We have a truly vibrant arts community in Newfoundland and Labrador that consistently punches well above its weight, nationally and internationally, and one that makes a significant economic contribution to our province.

Our artists are creative, innovative, entrepreneurial, vibrant, bold and very community minded.

Mr. Speaker, one of these fine artists is author Sharon Bala, a recent finalist in the Journey Prize category at the 2017 Writers' Trust Awards. At our event today, Sharon read a detailed passage from her nominated short story "Butter Tea at Starbucks." This intricate tale is about sisters, postpartum depression and the politics of Tibet. Sharon is a three-time Arts and Letters Awards winner for short fiction and twice has been long listed for the Journey Prize.

Mr. Speaker, another great example of our artists' proficiency is Joel Thomas Hynes. Joel recently received the 2017 Governor General's Literary Award in English fiction category for *We'll All Be Burnt in Our Beds Some Night*. In what some consider the most prestigious literary prize in the country, Hynes' novel was one of 14 winners chosen from a list of 70 finalists.

Mr. Speaker, along with being an acclaimed author, Joel Thomas Hynes is certainly making his mark in the entertainment scene across the country. As an award winning multi-disciplinary artist, he has worked in Canadian film and television industry for more than 15 years as a writer, actor and director. In addition, Hynes will soon be starring in a CBC TV series called *Little Dog* set to be released in 2018. Joel Thomas Hynes certainly punches above his weight.

Mr. Speaker, how about the work of Rob and Peter Blackie who, along with their involvement with the *Republic of Doyle*, created the smash hit *Frontier*. This series is a gripping tale of the struggle and intrigue of the late 18th century fur trade and was mostly filmed right here in our province. Through the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation, we proudly supported this exciting project, along with the professional individuals associated with its production, with an equity investment of \$2,375,000.

Since the creation of the Film Development Corporation as the Crown Corporation in 1997, more than \$335 million in total production activity has occurred in this province. Of that, more than \$260 million has been new-industry-

specific investments leveraged into our province.

I was really excited when I talked to the Film Development Corporation and their board of directors about last year being major when it came to over \$46 million in production. We have films like *Maudie* that was here in this province.

When I was flying last week and travelling to do business on behalf of the government, *Maudie* was on the entertainment system for multiple airlines, not just Air Canada, and that was quite exciting because that film by Mary Sexton was produced right here in Newfoundland and Labrador, various parts of the Bonavista Peninsula.

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** I remember travelling with the Member for Bonavista through his district and he highlighted *Random Passage*, which came from a book of Bernice Morgan and led to a film.

Art forms create different forms of art and create all sorts of economic development for the region. Now from a tourism point of view, there are tremendous amounts of bus tours coming to this region. It's almost like there's a little Hollywood happening on the Bonavista Peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, because of this support, Newfoundland and Labrador's film industry is proudly home to some of the country's most talented actors, directors and producers. When I speak of this talent, our musical ability, Mr. Speaker, is unparalleled. Truly, the musical talent that exists in Newfoundland and Labrador is second to none. I firmly believe many are on par with musicians from anywhere in the world.

We were delighted this morning by a performance by Rube & Rake. This dynamic roots duo of Josh Sandu and Andrew Laite are busy promoting their album *Back and Forth* and are certainly making a name for themselves with their stripped-down arrangements and beautiful harmonies.

By helping local musicians like Rube & Rake foster their talents, skills and growth, our government continues to cultivate a culture and style that is all our own. Ultimately, this will lead to the success of communities, regions and the entire province. That is why the provincial government has long been a partner with MusicNL, and that great partnership has continued again this year with an investment of \$350,000. MusicNL has evolved into an organization that promotes, develops and advocates for musicians and the music industry in our province and we are proud to support this organization.

Just last month, Mr. Speaker, along with my parliamentary secretary, I attended MusicNL's 25th anniversary gala at the St. John's Convention Centre. What a show! The artistry of our musicians was amazing and the performances were off the charts. I must mention Janet Cull from my very home District of St. Barbe – L'Anse aux Meadows. She took home three awards: Female Artist of the Year, Pop/Rock Artist of the Year and Album of the Year.

The big winners of the night were a Ukrainian folk-jam band called The Kubasonics. They won every category in which they were nominated, including Folk/Roots Artist of the Year, Group of the Year and Entertainer of the Year. I can tell you one thing: They certainly please and entertain and know how to get the energy levels up in any single room.

The band, which started in 2011, has enthusiastically embraced Newfoundland and Labrador audiences for their high energy and their lyrics. Audiences are amazed by the level of musicianship displayed by The Kubasonics in their live performances. To all Members of this House and those watching at home, I certainly encourage you to check them out.

I also encourage Members of this House and members of the public to support the performance and visual arts spaces, attend theatre productions, dance and film festivals, awards events, symposiums and workshops, readings and concerts. These spaces provide significant multidisciplinary cultural programming for the benefit of diverse

audiences and we have shown our commitment to these spaces.

Just last week, the Premier announced a \$500,000 investment to help support the construction of a new multifunctional theatre complex in Cow Head for Theatre Newfoundland and Labrador. It's quite exciting, Mr. Speaker, when you have a venue that is outgrowing its space, that's achieving such success.

I want to also acknowledge a place that I love to go and that is one of which we made a recent investment: almost \$70,000 to the Resource Centre for the Arts, or more commonly known as the LSPU Hall. It's incredible the work the LSPU Hall does and the number of performances that they have booked. They have about 300 days booked out through the year. That is quite significant for any venue. It shows the diversity that's happening. It's incredible.

I say to all Members of this House: Let's promote these venue spaces, let's continue to do everything we can, along with leveraging investments from our federal colleagues so that we can continually support professional artists involved with theatre productions.

Mr. Speaker, I also recognize that tourism and culture are intrinsically linked. Our government remains committed to supporting these outstanding industries. That is why we developed our *2017-20 Provincial Tourism Product Development Plan*. This plan is a provincial tourism development road map for maximizing our tourism growth by effectively utilizing all available resources from public, private and non-profit tourism partners so that we can focus on collective priorities. I was very excited today to see Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador attend today's launch and also to have the Tourism Board chair in attendance.

The plan that was put together collectively by business, by operators and by the community strengthens our economic foundation by creating a strong business environment for private tourism investment. I also focus on how that plan can use public resources in product development areas to provide the greatest return through increased visiting and spending. One of their priorities was certainly how it can support

and work with the arts. It is imperative that we continue to concentrate on fostering, developing and enhancing products and experiences that visitors are seeking to build on tourism experiences that tell a story of our people, place and culture.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the shining examples of many talented artists and many exciting things that are happening here in our province, and how we as a government support them. We do a tremendous amount of work to support our artists and people who travel outside of the province to look at export development, to look at a multitude of different investments. We've worked with the Labrador North Chamber of Commerce to ensure that Indigenous artists and artists from Labrador are present in Ottawa when it comes to the Northern Lights Conference and raising the quality and standards of craft and supporting sculpting and that level of activity that is taking place.

I had the pleasure to be with the Member for Torngat Mountains to meet with the president of the Nunatsiavut Government and the minister when I was in Nain just recently, and had the opportunity to talk about culture and economic development and how it is important that, government to government, we work very closely and collaboratively so that we can support Indigenous artists as well. I look forward to working with the Member for Torngat Mountains and also members of the Craft Council and others to support these initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, there is so much more that we can be doing and we're looking forward to the Status of the Artist legislation being passed. Newfoundland and Labrador has such a rich and unique artistic community, one that works very tirelessly to create, to produce and showcase some of the best works featured in this country and around the world.

We had the opportunity to be at The Rooms and for anyone to see the exhibit that took place with Gerald Squires and to see that exhibit of visual artists and to see the professional artist and members like Jane Walker and her exhibit that took place at The Rooms recently. There is tremendous opportunity to connect. I was at The Rooms when they had Bulgarian art, when they

had a lot of contemporary art that had taken place, so it's a great venue space for those to come, create, share, exhibit and express themselves. Our professional artists are the very foundation of our cultural identity and expression, and I look forward to continuing to work with them as we develop a new cultural framework for this province.

Before I conclude, I must point out that prior to this morning's performance at the Arts and Culture Centre, I want to say that Josh Sandu from the duo Rube & Rake mentioned that he wasn't from Newfoundland and Labrador, that he was from northern BC. He came to Newfoundland and Labrador and he was pleasantly surprised by how much the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador supports the arts community in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – far more, he said, than he experienced when he was in British Columbia.

So I want to say that I will have every opportunity to listen to the debate. I will have the opportunity to close debate and make further comments, and I look forward to everybody contributing to this important, significant bill that is before the House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Warr):** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say I'm very pleased to stand today in support of this legislation. I come from an area of the province that has quite an abundance of artists, Mr. Speaker. The Coast of Bays region certainly has some world-renowned artists. I'm sure everyone in this hon. Chamber and across the province as a whole has heard of the great Simani and "The Mummer's Song."

I certainly would not be able to name them all because each and every community of the 21 communities in my district has some fabulous artists. Some do their artwork on a small scale and some do their artwork as a professional occupation. Individuals like Stan Hill and Clyde

Drew, we're quite proud to boast that they are from the District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune; authors like John Nick Jeddore, Chief Misel Joe and Colleen Dollimont, who recently wrote a book called *A Dreamer's Life*. I might add it's a great Christmas present for anyone who is looking for a good book to read over the Christmas holidays.

Mr. Speaker, I'm all too aware of the challenges that artists face, particularly those who want to be an artist and not have to work at any other occupation to supplement their income. We've all heard the term, in fact, starving artist.

Just last week, when I was speaking with one of my nephews, he told me what he really wants to do is to be a musician, but he knows it's something – he's only young, he's just 19 – that he can't pay his rent and pay his groceries on being a musician alone. So he also has a day job in the retail sector.

Through measures such as the artist act that we see today, I certainly do hope to see a strengthening of opportunities for artisans to truly be able to use the sector as their sole means of earning a livelihood. Acts such as this one move us forward in that regard, but certainly fall short, I do believe, of where we actually need to be.

In terms of the impact that artists have on the overall well-being of a people and a place, one of my most vivid memories is of visiting Reykjavik in Iceland. It was back in the '90s. I was in awe of, everywhere we went, the recognition that was given to the arts community.

In high school, all the children – art was a very important part of their education as young children. Every street you walked down, there was an artist venue that you could take in a theatre or you could view artwork. All of the youth centres, you could go in and engage in artistic activities yourself. It was fostered from a very young age, an appreciation of the arts and an encouragement to develop your artistic abilities if you were so blessed.

I'd like to see that stronger all across Canada – in particular, across Newfoundland and Labrador. I'm sure each and every one of us in

every community of this province can point to a musician. We never have any trouble when we're trying to arrange a dinner theatre as a fundraiser, I know in my communities, because there's always someone who can do a skit off the cuff and there's always someone who can play a guitar and sing a song of any genre. We certainly are very blessed in that regard, and I truly believe we need to do more to support our artisans and grow the industry, which does have significant potential for the people of this province.

I'm going to get in to the bill now in a little more detail. According to the bill's Explanatory Notes: "This Bill would enact the *Status of the Artist Act*" to "acknowledge the important and dynamic contributions that artists make to the economic and social well-being of the province;" to provide a definition of what a professional artist is; to "set out certain government undertakings with respect to artists in the province; and recognize the importance of continued improvement to the lives and working conditions of professional artists."

Mr. Speaker, the term Status of the Artist is an internationally recognized term. It refers to legislation, policies and programs which give recognition and improve the economic and social status of professional artists.

Under this act, the definition of a professional artist is defined in section 5 of the legislation. For the public out there, I always believe in sharing as much as we can of the details of the act, so the public is as fully informed as they possibly can be about the various bills we're passing in the House and how it pertains to them.

So for the purposes of this act, going forward once it's approved, professional artists in this province will be defined as those who satisfy any four of the following conditions that I'm going to now list, and there must be at least one of (a), (b) or (c), plus any other three.

Item (a) under section 5 says that a professional artist to receive the designation must be someone who receives or has received compensation which can be included in their income; (b) has a record of income or loss relevant to their artist work history; and (c) has

received public or peer recognition. So at least one of these three conditions must be met, plus any three others for a total of four.

So (d) is listed as has presented his or her work to the public; (e) is represented by a dealer, publisher or agent; (f) devotes a reasonable proportion of their professional time to promoting or marketing; (g)(i) “has received professional training in an educational institution ...” or (g)(ii) “is self-taught within the established practices of the person’s cultural traditions;” (h) has membership in a professional association, or (h)(ii) trade union and (i) holds copyright or has received a royalty.

So these are the conditions under which a person will be defined as a professional artist under this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, one of the drawbacks that we see in this legislation, one of its shortcomings is it applies only to the Crown. In the briefing we were told it would apply to core government departments, but it was really unclear regarding agencies, boards and commissions.

The officials noted during our briefing that there was nothing directing the ABCs to follow it, but that the officials would work with them and the artists to implement the principles of the act. It’s great to encourage non-government entities to honour the same pay scales and the components of the act, but there is going to be nothing that makes it obligatory for them to do so because the legislation only speaks to the Crown.

It implements the following principles: “artists in the province make important and dynamic contributions to the economic and social well-being of the province ....” Another principle is “artistic creativity enhances the health, education, quality of life and communal identity of the province ....”

As I just spoke in my opening remarks about my impressions of Reykjavik, I strongly believe that artistic creativity is key to a healthy community and a healthy province. “Artistic diversity contributes to the strength of the province’s culture; and (d) fair compensation of professional artists is important for the creation and use of their artistic works.”

As I stated a little while ago, the legislation includes the definition of a professional artist and it is in line with the inclusive definition in the *Arts Council Act*. It follows the Arts Canada Council and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council definition.

Section 6 of the legislation outlines the government’s commitments, which will be enshrined in legislation. These commitments I will list again for our listening audience. These government commitments includes: honouring the scale agreements of the artists’ associations. Again, I reiterate, we strongly feel the legislation falls short here because it does obligate the Crown to honour the scale agreements, but it doesn’t obligate a general buyer, like myself for example, or any of the ABCs, municipalities. They will not be obligated to honour the scale agreements. So we would like to see the act strengthened in that regard.

Honouring the working condition protocols which are established by artists’ associations; seek input of artists and their associations on related government matters; give consideration to cultural products produced in the province when purchasing goods and services within the *Public Tender Act* and other trade agreements; support access to education and training relating to the arts and promote awareness of artistic activity; conduct related research; provide investment for artists and artists’ associations; support the promotion and sale of cultural products from the province; encourage public recognition; as well, to use a written contract when government departments enter into a contract with a provincial artist.

Again, these commitments are certainly ones we can applaud for the government, but we’d like to see such written contracts and commitments enshrined for all organizations and all people who purchase artists’ services in this province.

Section 7 of the legislation notes that government will try to improve the working conditions by encouraging appropriate labour standards – again, soft words: will try, will encourage. We certainly believe it’s a step forward, but we do hope we will see some stronger mechanisms in place as we do truly work together to improve the status of the artists in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, when we were preparing to speak in second reading of this legislation, we did do a jurisdictional scan across the province. The federal legislation allows the Canada Industrial Relations Board to make regulations and rulings to certify artists' associations and it outlines scale agreement and bargaining.

Nova Scotia brought in an act for the Status of the Artist in 2012. In fact, the act for Nova Scotia is almost the same as ours, pretty much word for word in a lot of cases. In Ontario in 2009, the minister designated one weekend in each year to celebrate as artists' weekend. It does mention municipalities where they encourage the promotion of the arts and a ministerial advisory committee is in place for Ontario.

Quebec, interestingly enough, in 1988 had legislation that spoke to this. They have an Administrative Labour Tribunal to hear complaints from artisans. It governs the associations for artisans and it spells out specific contractual requirements. In New Brunswick in 2015, there was no legislation in place; PEI, no legislation in place; and in Saskatchewan in 2010, they brought in *The Arts Professions Act*, which mandates written contracts are required for all artisans.

Mr. Speaker, again, I'll reiterate that we are supportive of this legislation. We are very pleased to see strong recognition of the value that artists make to our communities and to our province as a whole, but we'd like to see a little less fluff in terms of words like encourage, acknowledge and we'll try; and we'd like to see stronger teeth put in. As I said a little while ago, the act doesn't include municipalities. We're really unclear of the extent to which ABCs are going to have to follow it.

From that point of view, we would like to see stronger legislation so we can eliminate the problem of starving artists once and for all, and truly afford our talented and artistic people of this province the opportunity to develop their talent as a full-time profession, and one which they can afford to do as a full-time profession and feed themselves and their families based on their creativity.

Mr. Speaker, the value of artists are recognized worldwide. Another article that we reviewed while preparing for this bill here today was an update on the 30th anniversary of the UNESCO recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist. At the Canadian Conference of the Arts in September of 2010, they prepared a report. It was authored by Mr. Garry Neil of Neil Craig Associates, with some Quebec research from a Mr. Sirois, and the book was published in September 2010.

In this report, Mr. Speaker, it talks about how long artists have been struggling for this recognition. Status of the Artist was first used in the process launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization that culminated in 1980 in Belgrade, when the General Conference adopted the recommendations concerning the Status of the Artist. This was the end of the process of consultation with civil society and discussion among governments around issues of critical importance to the artists and creators around the world.

The 1980 recommendation was certainly very comprehensive in its survey of the issues affecting artists and here we are 30-plus, almost 40 years later, and we're still talking about some of these recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to list as well some of the recommendations that came from this UNESCO report, more so for the purposes of highlighting where we still have some gaps. This recommendation, as defined at the UNESCO conference, addresses issues and recommends government actions on the following: employment, working and living conditions of the artists; recognition of the rights of their professional and union organizations; social status, including measures to ensure equivalent status to other workers in areas such as health and insurance; protection of freedom of expression and protection of intellectual property rights; the education and training of artists; the importance of arts education; and measures related to income, support during periods of unemployment and retirement issues.

Mr. Speaker, you can see from the list as defined at the UNESCO convention that our legislation certainly falls short of some of these

recommendations and is indeed, in some cases, very fluffy. We hope that through the course of the debate, the minister will be open to looking at areas where the legislation can be improved.

Mr. Speaker, this 2010 report looks at best practices from other countries. In some countries, particularly the Nordic countries and former socialist countries that are now in the European Union, social programs have been adapted to deal with the reality of the work of artists.

In countries such as France, Belgium and United States, some categories of artists are deemed to be employees. This enables them to obtain relevant benefits. In virtually every country there are some provisions that have been designed uniquely for some categories of artists, Mr. Speaker. We see that this legislation is going to require contractual arrangements with the Crown, but it doesn't require other entities, the private sector and other levels of government to do the same. I do hope that's something the minister will consider.

In 2008, the Conference Board of Canada did a groundbreaking study that looked at the culture sector. They concluded that the value of the sector to the Canadian economy was far greater than anyone had previously thought. I would suggest that the case is the same for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Conference Board estimated that the economic footprint of Canada's culture sector was \$84.6 billion in 2007, or 7.4 per cent of Canada's total real GDP, including direct, indirect and induced contributions. The culture sector employment exceeded 1.1 million jobs in 2007. Now, I don't have the current figures, but I'm certainly anticipating that number is much higher today, 10 years later.

The report also states: "The government of Newfoundland and Labrador got it right when it placed artists at the very centre of The Culture System and when it said developing and nurturing creative talent is a fundamental requirement for developing the creative economy. They were right when they said that it is essential 'to support excellence in artistic endeavour' and 'to improve the conditions under

which professional artists and other cultural workers create and produce.'"

So, Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador is recognized for the value it places on artisans. I'm sure that we will continue to be applauded for the bill that we are bringing into this House here today, but again, it does have shortcomings and it does need to be strengthened. With respect to the cultural strategy renewal, 2019 is a very long time for artisans to wait. So we're hoping that can be expedited and, throughout that process, maybe recommendations will come forward for strengthening this bill that we do truly hope government is open to considering. Because, at the end of the day, we have some outstanding, excellent artisans in this fine province of ours – some of them even serve with us right here in this hon. House.

One day I, myself, hope to write a book based on my experiences of the last 10 years; although I'm not sure if that's a good idea, sometimes. But everyone in this province has a particular skill, whether it be in drawing, whether it be in writing, whether it be in music, whether it be in carving – so many special skills that the people of this province have.

I'm so happy to see this bill brought forward and happy to work with government to continue to do what we can to support the fine artisans of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

It's a pleasure for me to stand here today and to speak on this bill, Bill 22, the *Status of the Artist Act*. First of all, I have to commend the minister and the department for moving forward with this, as it was one of our election commitments and it was reconfirmed in *The Way Forward* document.

I know it was either in his remarks or the answers in QP, he had stated that he was very much interested in the arts. We can all attest to

that on this side of the House because I don't know if there's a show or an event that he's missed over this past two years. If he has, it hasn't been very many. We know what he's presenting here today is something he's been working on for some time.

As has been stated by the minister and the Member opposite, I won't get into the act itself, but the Status of the Artist is an internationally recognized term which applies to legislation, policies and programs. We were very pleased to follow in footsteps of provinces like Quebec and Saskatchewan and others to implement legislation to address this.

The intention of this act is to improve the economic and social status of professional artists in the province. We hear comments from the Member opposite: starving artists. Well, what I will say to that, Mr. Speaker, is that there is probably no other province in Canada that supports its culture and heritage as well as Newfoundland and Labrador does. That goes as well for the artists who take part in these events.

We are very supportive of our artists in the province. Whether they're singers, whether they're comedians, whether they're carvers, whether they're actresses or actors or whatever they do, we are very supportive of our arts in Newfoundland and Labrador.

What I wanted to do today, Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Labrador West, I represent my colleagues from Labrador here in the House of Assembly when we talk about the arts in Labrador. There is probably nowhere more evident than that than in the Member's district from Torngat when it comes to Aboriginal art or whatever and carvers because carvings from that part of the country are world renowned. It's sold all over the world. It's respected all over the world.

I know in my time that I've seen many carvings from artists on the North Coast of Labrador that have had some great prominence, not only in this country, but in the world. There are artists like Gilbert Rich and John Terriak from Nain.

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Gilbert Hay.

**MR. LETTO:** Gilbert Hay – you put down Gilbert Rich – Ross Flowers from Hopedale, Bronson Jacque from Postville. Mr. Speaker, you depend on your colleague to give you some information and then they all throw you under the bus. Anyway, there are people on the North Coast of Labrador, Inuit carvers, who are world renowned.

There are people like Billy Gauthier, for instance. Billy Gauthier is somebody that we all know as a great carver and a great artist. I've seen some of his work. Actually, my brother had some done for him specifically of different pieces, whether it's ptarmigan, snow birds or whatever. It's absolutely beautiful.

As you know, Billy Gauthier is one of the artists that has gained world recognition for his work. He lives in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, of course, and he's a very well-known sculptor out of Labrador. He's carved many pieces in galleries in Labrador and New Brunswick, and participated in many exhibitions. He's always been fascinated by the human faces and their individual expressions, so he's been at this for some time. He's gained a lot of prominence in that field.

Mr. Speaker, again, the crafts, there's nowhere probably in the world where the production of crafts is more prominent than in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. LETTO:** Yeah, there you go.

There are craft producers from all over Labrador as well when you talk about the Inuit crafts, the quilting, you name it. There are many, many professionals all over the world from Labrador that have gained recognition.

Mr. Speaker, when you talk about art in this province, the earliest examples of art in this province were produced by Aboriginal people. The oldest known object of this type is a small ivory carving of a bear found in Labrador and now is in the collection of The Rooms provincial Museum Division in St. John's. It has been identified with the Dorset Eskimo people and it was possibly created around 800 AD.

Mr. Speaker, when you talk about the artists and here we are today in 2017 implementing the *Status of the Artist Act*, it is something that we certainly recognize is long overdue but we, as a government, have said that this is something that's needed and we are moving forward with that today.

When you look at some of the art that's been found around this land, certainly from that time, Labrador's influence in artistry has remained very strong, as I've stated. Art and craft in Labrador has its roots in both the Aboriginal cultures and the European contact period of the 18th to the 19th centuries. In the 1700s the Moravian missionaries came to Northern Labrador and, in the late 1800s, Grenfell's Medical Mission to Southern Labrador and Northern Newfoundland. It was during the 1970s that contemporary visual arts actually began to flourish in Labrador.

We've been at this for a long time and Labrador, you could probably say, is the birthplace for the arts in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. LETTO:** For 20-plus years of development and growth, a strong and vibrant visual arts association continues throughout Labrador. In Labrador West, for instance, in my own district, you have people like Sheilagh Harvey, Marjorie O'Brien, Ed Owen, Mary Jacobs and all those people who've been certainly very active in the arts industry, whether it's through paintings and other types of art.

I wanted to just mention that a very big part of our culture and heritage and the arts in this province is our system of Arts and Culture Centres throughout the province. I'm very pleased to stand here today and say that Labrador West has such a facility that is well used, not as much as we'd like to see it, but certainly is well used and we've seen a lot of good artists come and go through that centre.

Because we have centres like that is the reason why we have a strong drama presence in Labrador West. In fact, I don't know of anywhere else in the province probably other than St. John's where you would have two theatre groups operating out of the same facility.

We have the Carol Players and we have the Northern Lights Theatre Company.

Mr. Speaker, the point I'm trying to make is that arts is a very important part of our everyday culture, everyday economic survival and feasibility and viability. It's something that we need to pay very close attention to.

I just want to mention a couple of more people in Labrador that have gotten national recognition and, in some cases, international recognition for their contribution to the arts. One of those people I think that we need to mention is Harry Martin, a great folk singer, who has written many songs about his life and the life of a trapper in Labrador.

As a wildlife conservation officer, he would have had good exposure to that and he certainly took that knowledge and turned it into art. He has become a very, very successful singer and songwriter. Of course, many of the songs that we hear today – "This Is My Home" is the one that comes to mind, which is probably one of his most famous songs, a song that is well-known and certainly often played by many outlets.

When you talk about the arts, and not only in the paintings, but photography itself is a great art. When you look at Labrador and all the scenery that has been taken – people like Geoff Goodyear, for instance, who captured the scenes of Northern Labrador and the Torngats, and has produced a book of pictures from the Torngats itself, from Northern Labrador. It's people like that who certainly have made – whether they've made a living on it is not important; it's the fact that they've been able to contribute to the culture of our region.

People like Larry Jenkins, a self-taught photographer, who is known for his Northern Lights prints and pictures. If you see his collection, it's just amazing how he can portray the great Northern Lights that we are so famous for. So there are people like that.

There's Scott Pynn, another artist from Labrador, who has a unique style of painting. He started at a very young age and he was being taught from his grandfather. Scott's art is inspired by the beautiful Labrador landscapes, the trees, the snow and how the cold air

magnifies the sun. Most of Scott's paintings exist in the area right between night and day, so I've never been able to tell if the sun is coming up or going down. It's just a unique culture that these people have acquired over the years and they put their own stamp on their work.

Of course there are people like Shirley Montague, who has become a world-renowned singer as well. She now lives in Gros Morne. She's the founder of the annual Trails, Tales and Tunes Festival that I'm sure the minister has attended on occasion. She's managed to carry her expertise, her experience and knowledge away from Labrador, being a Labradorian herself. She's moved on, but she hasn't forgotten her heritage, she hasn't forgotten her culture and being able to share it with the other people of this province – that's something that's she's very proud of.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put that Labrador perspective on what we're trying to do here today with this bill because it's not something that we can take frivolously; it's an important bill. It's a bill that allows those people to now become sustainable in their own right with the work that they love to do and that they continue to do. But this bill will give them some security in their work and certainly allow them to continue on to do the work that people appreciate and respect them for it.

What's the definition of an artist? When you look at it, that can include many things. In the act, the definition as established by this act is similar to the definitions in Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan in their Status of the Artist acts: individuals who create, perform or give creative expression. Mr. Speaker, that's a pretty broad definition when you talk about singing, acting, painting and carving. That's what those people do; they create an expression that people really appreciate.

This includes the literary arts, the visual arts and crafts, digital and multimedia arts, as well as performing arts such as theatre, opera, dance and music. It's a pretty broad definition and there are a lot of people – if I were to name everyone, not only in the province, but in Labrador, we'd be here for a long time. That's what happens when you start naming people, there's always somebody you forget. There are a lot of people

in this province who could be put into that classification. We all know who they are and we're all eager to support them in what they do.

This is an inclusive definition and it's consistent with the definition of the *Arts Council Act*. This definition may also include individuals who receive compensation through income. That's what this act is all about. It's about securing these people, securing their income.

Receive public or peer recognition, and the minister also alluded to that. There are people who receive recognition, not only on the national stage, but on the world stage for the work they do.

Presented work to the public; you look throughout government offices, these government buildings, the art that's displayed in those, and in The Rooms for instance. There are a lot of people who have presented their work to the public, to the public galleries and for public viewing. There are a lot of people.

Represented by a dealer, agent or publisher and receive professional training or designation.

Mr. Speaker, this act really goes a long way to identifying who the artists are and who needs to be recognized in this act. We think we've done a very good job of identifying the people who need to be recognized and need to be recognized in this act.

This has not been done haphazardly, as the minister again alluded to. There were a lot of consultations done in developing this act. In the fall of 2016, the ArtsNL and the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee were consulted.

We heard during Question Period, as well, Members of the Third Party referred to that the artists weren't happy with this act. Well, the ArtsNL were quite eager today to come out and support the work that the minister is doing. There were other people at that news conference this morning. Stan Hill, for instance, was there. They complimented government on moving forward with this *Status of the Artist Act*. So to say the artists and the people who are affected by this don't respect this and don't appreciate this, I think it needs to be corrected.

In January 2017, for instance, the arts stakeholder round table consultation was held. In the winter of 2017, the online questionnaire was provided through the department which had 256 responses – 256, Mr. Speaker. So to say that people weren't consulted, I beg to differ.

From these consultations, there were seven themes of importance that had been incorporated into the act. This is from our consultations. Recognition of the arts as an important profession, and it is an important profession. The definition of professional artist, we've done that.

Fair payment guidelines and improved benefits; that's what this is all about, Mr. Speaker, is to make this industry sustainable. It's an industry that we want to maintain. It's an industry that we need. It's an industry that's needed in this province, and this act allows that to happen.

Importance of using written contracts; again, something we've addressed. Purchasing local artistic goods and services; again, if you look at what's in this act, the people of this province who provide that service should be recognized and should be compensated for their work. Awareness and community engagement is another one that came out of the consultations.

The commitments from this act: this act would honour scale agreements of artists' associations; honour protocols respecting artists' working conditions; gives consideration to purchase cultural products produced in the province; provide investment for artists and arts associations in the province; support awareness of artistic activity; encourage public recognition; seek input from artists on matters of culture; and conduct research benefiting arts and culture.

Mr. Speaker, I think this act is a good and a great step forward. I commend the minister and the department for moving ahead with this. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, this was a commitment we made in 2015 during the election. It's a commitment we reconfirmed in *The Way Forward* document, and it's a commitment, Mr. Speaker, that we're fulfilling here today by the implementation of Bill 22, which is the *Status of the Artist Act*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very happy to stand and speak to Bill 22, *Status of the Artist Act*.

I would like the Members of this House just for a minute to imagine – just imagine now – that our House will probably close at 5:30 this afternoon, this evening, and that if we all had to go change our clothes and go to our paid job, that we weren't really paid well for this, but this is what we were passionate about doing because we were committed to it.

We went to school, we took out student loans to be educated so we could do this work, but as soon as the House is closed, we leave. We change our clothes because we're going to work in a restaurant, or we're going to work in a bar, or we're going to go clean houses, or we're going to go do child care, or we're going to go deliver pizza.

That is the life for most of our artists in Newfoundland and Labrador. They have incurred incredible amounts of student loans. Our artists are among the most educated people in our province – as a matter of fact, in the country – yet the lowest earners. Many are in such precarious employment in order to do the artistic work that they have trained all their lives to do. If they don't do that, they can't afford rent, they can't afford lights.

People in this House would be astonished if I were to tell you a friend of mine who was in the arts, who was a very, very famous performer, had his lights cut off. Someone that people in this province loved, they listened to his music, but he had his lights cut off because he could not afford them. That is not unusual for many people in the arts, and then they have to make decisions.

If you're a musician or if you're writing a book, maybe it would take a pen and paper, maybe it would take your computer, but you still have to feed yourself, clothe yourself, put a roof over your head. If you're a musician, you need your

instrument. If you're an artist or a potter, you need your supplies, you need a studio. If you're a musician or a dancer or an actor or in the theatre, you need a space in order to be able to rehearse. Not easily come by. If you're a dancer, you need lots of space in order to practice your art.

Some people take out loans. They have student loans. They can't afford to buy houses. Some can't afford to have children. They have no pensions. Some get their lights cut off – yet all of us are beneficiaries of the work they do.

So I ask the Members in this House to just imagine that, having to leave doing this work that perhaps many of us love and feel that we have trained ourselves to do, done everything we could possibly do so we could do this work the best that we could, but that we're not paid very much. We never know when we're going to get paid. We never know when we're going to get called to the House. Then we go off to deliver pizza or work in a restaurant or work in a bar until 3 in the morning, so that we could do the work that we feel we really are committed to and what we want to do. That is the life of many of our artists.

Luckily enough, there are some artists, people in the arts community who have a good, solid income. Some who are part of ACTRA or musicians who have paid into pension plans, but the majority of people in the arts in our province do not have that luxury. It's not a luxury; actually, it's a right.

Mr. Speaker, that's what I ask people to keep in mind when we're looking at *Status of the Artist Act*. Really, what is the status of our artists in our community? How do we treat our artists? How do we ensure they have what they need in order to fully practice their art which, again, if we also could imagine what our communities, what our society would be without art.

You wouldn't have any of these paintings of former Speakers on the wall. We wouldn't have music. We wouldn't have television. We wouldn't have movies. We wouldn't have Netflix – God forbid, we wouldn't have Netflix. We wouldn't have – well, we all know what. We wouldn't have paintings on our walls. We wouldn't have theatre to go to. We wouldn't

have dance recitals to go to. We wouldn't have beautiful pottery.

We all know that if we really imagine what our world without art would be and what our world without artists would be who challenge us. They don't just make pretty things or create songs that sound good and make us feel good. Their role is also to challenge us as a society, to challenge the way we think about ourselves, the way we think about our world. How very important they are.

I'd like to thank the officials from the department for their very thorough briefing. They were very excited to present this legislation. I believe it is a first step, but, Mr. Speaker, I tell you the number of artists that I have spoken with who are so disappointed. Really, it's a bill that says government should – doesn't have to, but government should – pay them scale rates from their particular professions for any time the government hires them.

There are fair compensation guidelines and then there's some information about what constitutes a really good contract. That will be online as well, the kinds of contracts that artists should have when they are engaged or hired by government.

Again, government is not saying you have to; government is saying you really should. Let's keep in mind what we get from our artists, both in pleasure and also the challenges they put before us and how tough it is in this current climate to be an artist.

Artists aren't well paid actors. Oftentimes our actors here in town may only have three or four gigs a year. That doesn't give you enough to live on.

I just want to speak to a few facts. The culture and heritage sector, so we're looking at people who have precarious employment. For the most part they never know when their next gig is, and for the most part do not have pensions, but they too will grow old. Many can't afford places where they live or they can't afford to buy a house. Many consider whether or not they're going to be able to afford to have children; yet, they give us so much. So let's keep that in mind.

The culture and heritage sectors account for up to \$500 million and 7,000 jobs in the provincial economy. That's pretty significant, Mr. Speaker. Every dollar of government investment in culture and heritage generates \$3 in spending on goods and services. That's quite an investment. So every dollar that's invested generates an additional \$3 in spending on goods and services, and even more in the case of a TV series like the *Republic of Doyle*. So, Mr. Speaker, that is really important.

I'm sure the Minister of Culture probably would like to listen to what I have to say rather than him trying to tell you what your job is. I'd say that's probably a little more important right now. I'm sure you know what your job is and I'm sure he should listen to what I have to say, not because I'm saying it, but because I've consulted with so many arts organizations and artists in the province.

Cultural industries such as film, publishing, recording and interactive media rely on visual artists, writers and musicians for new creative material. That's who this bill is talking about, Mr. Speaker. This bill is talking about people who are working in these cultural industries, but most of these artists don't have lucrative careers. Only 10 per cent make a living solely from their art, and we are happy that 10 per cent of artists can make a living solely from their art, but that means 90 per cent cannot; again, when we look at \$500 million in that industry and 7,000 jobs.

I bet you most people here in this House don't know what the medium income is for an artist in Newfoundland and Labrador. I bet you if we polled people, they would really be surprised. The medium income is \$10,200. That's half the national average for artists in the country.

This Status of the Artist legislation is so incredibly important. If we really look at what the status of the artist is in our province, it's so incredibly precarious; yet, we are so proud of the artists in our province. If we want to put it crassly, consumers of art – whether we're listening to music, watching shows, going to theatre, going to dance, watching movies, putting paintings on our walls, we are all consumers of art.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, which is not mentioned in this legislation but it's now called ArtsNL, is the chief source of provincial money for artistic creation. Why is that important? Because it's the research and development phase of the cultural sector. It means when you see a TV show or when you see a movie made in Newfoundland and Labrador, oftentimes – or if you see a play on the stage at the Resource Centre for the Arts or one of our Arts and Culture Centres, the genesis of that project, more than not, started from a small grant from the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council or ArtsNL. That's why that is so important, from a very small grant.

We have among the smallest grants per artist in the whole country. That's part of the status of our artists. We have among the smallest grants per artist that is awarded through our cultural agency, ArtsNL, given to the artist who earned the least amount of money from their artistic endeavours in the country. They earn the least amount in the country and we have the smallest grants per artist in the country. It doesn't make for comfortable living for sure.

The current budget for ArtsNL is the same as the budget was in 2009. Now, we all know that the cost of living has gone up for all of us. In eight years, the budget that they're working with right now is the same as the budget they worked with eight years ago, but the cost of rental space, the cost of heat and light, the cost of everything for artists and arts organizations has skyrocketed in that time.

We have a perfect storm to make it very, very difficult for the arts and for artists here in our province, yet that small amount of money that people get from the Arts Council, a grant of about \$4,000 which is well below all of the other provinces, helps artists leverage other funds like, for instance, the Canada Council.

Although we also know that artists in Newfoundland and Labrador do not leverage as much Canada Council money per capita as artists in other parts of the country because our grants from our provincial agency are so small and also because less than 50 per cent of those who apply for the grants, actually get the grants. So that, again, is the status of the artists in our province. The minister announced that there's

going to be a cultural and heritage strategy and plan that will be coming. I'm hoping that it's going to take all of this in mind.

The minister also referred to increases in money spent in music and in film, in other organizations, not through Arts NL. That's very important. That, again, generates a lot of money in the economy, but it's not geared towards that very beginning phase of research and development that artists need.

That's where our stories come from. That's where the thought of a song comes from. That's where a poem comes from. That's where the story, the seed that may eventually be made into a movie or eventually be made into a TV series, or has absolutely no economic or commercial goal at all. Not all art is about commerce and not all art belongs in the category of industry. So that's about the status of our artists as well.

I think we've all heard stories of the starving artists. It's true. For the most part they're not starving, but for the most part life is very difficult financially. We can do better. We can do better about that. One of the things, Mr. Speaker, a number of artists that I've spoken with since this legislation came out last Friday; they were very surprised that the legislation was being tabled because they felt, in fact, that they hadn't been consulted.

The minister talked about the consultation happening last January that 70 people attended from the arts community. I can't remember now if it was December or January. Then he also talked about online surveys, but true consultation means engagement. Once you hear from people, then it's your responsibility to get back to them and say this is what I heard and this is what you asked for and this is what we're going to do, or we're not going to do this and this is why we're not going to do it. So the artists do not feel they were fully consulted. They were surprised that this came out. This was the first they had heard of it, that this legislation was ready and prepared to be tabled in the House.

We see that as well with the bill that deals with the *Prescription Monitoring Act*. The same kind of complaint that people had initially spoken with the departments months and months ago or

almost a year ago and never heard back and were never engaged in any further dialogue about we're going to try this or we're not going to do this and this is why. To even let them see a draft of the legislation before bringing it to the House, that would be true consultation, but that didn't happen.

So there are a few things I believe that this legislation could do, besides just looking at government may or perhaps should, but not must pay scale fees for artists that they employ and the fact that they're going to help artists with contracts.

A few other stronger measures can be put into this, and I'm hoping – I know the minister said they're going to continue to go forward on this and here are some of the issues that I think they could consider in their Status of the Artist measures. We would like to see stronger measures requiring government agencies to pay artists fairly via contracts. So requiring – not saying to government departments that they should or that they could or wouldn't be nice, but absolutely requiring it.

Government can look at provincial tax incentives. In Quebec, if you're an artist and you have a project that takes you four years, maybe in the first year it's all about the idea and writing about the issue and you get very, very little money for that. You don't earn any money. Maybe in the second year, you workshop it and you still don't get paid very much money.

Maybe you were writing a film script and in the third year they start to film it. You are getting paid for your copyright. You're getting paid for the story that you wrote; the script that the film is based on. So that year your income goes way up, whereas the two previous years you really haven't earned anything or maybe you've earned some money delivering pizza.

Then the fourth year, maybe, you start to get parts of the box office hits or maybe you're going to direct it or maybe you're one of the producers and you make more money. Quebec legislation allows you, as an artist, to average that income over the life of the project, so that you're not hit with huge taxes in the year that you earn a lot of money, that in fact you can average that out over the four-year program. I'm

hoping those are the kinds of things that government will look at and that the minister will look at as he goes forward.

We really do need higher funding per capita with ArtsNL. Again, it's the beginning of many projects and without that seed funding, our local artists cannot leverage funding from federal organizations or other funding bodies. And keep in mind again, Mr. Speaker, how important the arts and artists are to our communities, to our society and that the Status of the Artist should acknowledge it's not right that they live in poverty, that there are better ways of doing this.

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

**MS. ROGERS:** And I believe that we can. Those artists have given recommendations, and it is my hope that the minister will (inaudible) –

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

The hon. Member's time has expired.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West – Bellevue.

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

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

It is delightful to stand in the House of Assembly to speak to the second reading of the *Status of the Artist Act*. I have to say after listening to the Member for St. John's Centre, she must not have been listening at the press conference this morning when one of the performers who was there to perform for the opening – in fact, he got up, from Rube & Rake, and the first comment he made was that I'm from British Columbia and we would never get this kind of support in British Columbia.

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

**MR. BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, so we're hearing from artists across this province. The minister and I make a special effort to ensure that we have outreach with the arts community – something that I encourage the Member opposite to do on a more regular basis.

I can tell the Member opposite that we hear from artists all of the time and we hear that they're very happy that this government is finally taking the step to bring forth Status of the Artist legislation – something that I don't recall the Members opposite calling for or suggesting, Mr. Speaker, but today they seem to have so many issues with it.

This is a good step that the arts community is applauding and I'm just not going to stand here, Mr. Speaker, and allow the Members opposite to make the case that somehow this is a bad story or that we're not doing something, I can guarantee you of that.

I'll also comment on the Member's commentary with respect to arts funding. In the NDP platform, Mr. Speaker, they were going to put in a \$526,000 increase to arts; this government just increased it by \$2 million in this year's budget.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** How much?

**MR. BROWNE:** Two million dollars, Mr. Speaker; yet, there's no funding to arts. There's nothing happening in the arts community.

I suggest the Member for St. John's Centre go out into the arts community, attend some of their functions and you'll hear from the arts community that they are pleased with the actions this government has taken, including giving the recognition of the Status of the Artist because people should not be bartering with artists, people shouldn't be asking them to lower and be paid less than what they're worth. As a province and as a culture, we need to value the arts in this province, Mr. Speaker, which we are – which is precisely why we're bringing forth Status of the Artist legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to join the minister this morning at the Arts and Culture Centre, as I mentioned, to officially recognize the important role professional artists play in our province. I am very proud that this was a commitment that was made during the last election. It was put into the minister's mandate letter. It was put into *The Way Forward*, and today we are delivering.

As the minister said this morning here in the House, the Status of the Artist means a commitment from government to continue to

invest in culture. It means honouring scale agreements, developing and using written contracts for professional artists, including work descriptions, terms of payments, dispute resolution mechanisms and rights agreements, and it means a continued dialogue on matters relating to culture with artists in this province.

Mr. Speaker, to further build on the Status of the Artist, the provincial government has also committed to strengthen the arts-supportive culture by renewing the cultural plan. This will offer artists further opportunities to explore government programming and support, and offer artists even more ways to improve the professional opportunities here at home.

Our government will lead by example in encouraging everyone to pay artists fairly and equitably based on existing industry pay scales for their genres. Our artists deserve no less, Mr. Speaker.

Today, I am pleased to talk about some of the programs and support our government is currently providing to artists. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the provincial government proudly invested over \$20 million annually in culture overall. This includes our commitment to all genres: visual arts, crafts, music, literacy and publishing, dance, theatre and film.

Based on 2014 stats, Canada Cultural Statistics, culture created over 5,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker, and contributed nearly \$450 million to Newfoundland and Labrador's economy. I would like to take a few minutes, if Members will indulge me, to speak a little about each area, beginning with visual arts, something that's extremely important to our government, Mr. Speaker.

Our government is pleased to provide \$80,000 annually to the Visual Artists association of Newfoundland and Labrador. Just last month the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation and the Minister of Veterans Affairs announced investments totalling close to \$260,000 for the Resource Centre for the Arts to improve its facilities and implement a development plan to enhance its sustainability and nurture the development of the province's cultural and tourism industry.

The Resource Centre for the Arts, which is housed in the LSPU Hall, creates, produces and provides space for a variety of artistic works. The LSPU Hall provides performance and visual arts spaces for theatre productions, dance and film festivals, awards, events, symposiums and workshops, reading concerts, as well as art shows and forums providing significant multidisciplinary cultural programming for the benefit of diverse audiences.

Mr. Speaker, in reference to the LSPU Hall, it wasn't that long ago that I was there for an event. It's a beautiful facility. It's something that we cherish here in St. John's and for the whole province. Through this project, the Resource Centre for the Arts will enhance various systems and equipment in the LSPU Hall, helping improve production values and operational efficiency. It will also implement a professional marketing rebranding and audience development plan.

The Art Bank collection, which is managed by The Rooms, encompasses close to 3,000 works of art by over 250 Newfoundland and Labrador artists. Last night, Mr. Speaker, I joined the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, along with the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills and the parliamentary secretary for Health and Community Services, hosting a reception for the Canada-France joint commission with the French delegation.

You can see in Government House, Mr. Speaker, the tremendous visual arts that are displayed by artists in our province. It was absolutely beautiful. It is part of the new selections that the Lieutenant Governor gets the first kick at the can with the Art Bank. It was quite beautiful, not only the artwork on the walls, the number of sculptures that are there as well. There's so much to celebrate within our artistic community.

Artworks that are part of the collection may be exhibited at The Rooms and are also installed in government offices in public buildings across the province. Mr. Speaker, for example, the minister and I toured the Colonial Building recently. Perhaps there will be opportunities to further display visual art in the Colonial Building, in one of our most historic buildings.

Our government is proud to support ArtsNL and its ongoing work to foster and promote the creation and enjoyment of the arts for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We were pleased to have the chair of the board, Stan Hill, speak today about government's strong engagement with ArtsNL and the professional arts community on the creation of this significant piece of legislation. In fact, his words today were also very complimentary of this bold step. I encourage the Member opposite to maybe speak with Mr. Hill and further gain insight on the perspective of ArtsNL, something that clearly doesn't seem to have occurred to date.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to support the music industry through MusicNL. We were fortunate this morning to hear a performance by the dynamic roots duo, Rube & Rake. I think I would be doing the group a disservice if I didn't aptly describe the harmony and the guitar playing and the absolute eloquence with which they performed. This is an up-and-coming group. We're very happy to support them. As one of the bandmates, Josh Sandu, who's originally from British Columbia, said, and I'll repeat it again – he said he would never have this kind of support from the government with the arts community in British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very telling comment from a musician. It's really recognition of the work that is being done here in Newfoundland and Labrador within the arts community; recognition that bringing forth this Status of the Artist is a very bold step.

Just last month, we recognized the 25th anniversary of MusicNL. I had the fortune to join with the chair of MusicNL for the announcement of the nominees for their awards gala back in late August. In fact, it happened at Fred's Records, which is another cultural institution in the province in its own respect.

A couple of nights later – one of the nominees, actually, has roots on the Burin Peninsula. Her mother comes from Point May, the hometown of the Member for Burin – Grand Bank. Both she and I had the opportunity to attend her CD launch, Mr. Speaker, further supporting arts. It's important that we as a government, the minister and I, as parliamentary secretary, attend these functions to show our artists, to show our up-

and-coming artists particularly, that we value the arts greatly. Their role in our society in both tangible and intangible ways can never be understated.

With respect to MusicNL, what started as a group of musicians recognizing a need for a formal structure, it has evolved into an organization that continues to promote, develop and advocate for the music industry in our province. The minister and I had the pleasure to attend the annual award show in October, which capped off an exciting week of performances, showcases in training and opportunities.

If any of the Members opposite had attended that function, they would have known the last act was Shanneyganock, Mr. Speaker. Out comes Bud Davidge with Shanneyganock and the whole crowd went up, singing "Music & Friends." It epitomized the cultural scene here in Newfoundland and Labrador, blending the old with the new, and it was a terrific, terrific celebration of music in the province.

This year's MusicNL week focused on export development, assisting our musicians and performers with export opportunities, including buyer education and business development training. Our musicians had a chance to perform for buyers from North America and Europe, helping them to gain exposure, learn about the industry and grow an audience base.

Mr. Speaker, the musical talent that exists in Newfoundland and Labrador is second to none, and artists from this province deserve opportunities to reach as broad an audience as possible. That is why the provincial government proudly invests \$350,000 annually in MusicNL and proudly contributed \$34,000 to help make MusicNL expand on its robust export development program this year. By helping local musicians foster their talents and business skills, our government continues to cultivate a culture and style that is all our own, while contributing to the growth of the music sector.

The music sector in this province is unparalleled. If anyone tuned in to *CBC News* this morning, they would have seen stories that have gone viral of what happened in Pearson International Airport in Toronto. There was a group of travellers that had a delayed flight.

There were two musicians in the audience, an accordion player and a guitar player, and out they broke the instruments and the terminal broke out into songs of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This is how important our arts sector and our culture sector are, both in an economic and a social sense. It contributes greatly to jobs and economic prosperity and growth but, at the same time – perhaps more importantly even – it reminds us of who we are. It reminds us of our cultural identity, which is why it's so important we continue to support the arts.

One of the musicians, of course, was Sean Sullivan of Sullivan's Songhouse. This is an example of a very talented – we all know of the talents of the Sullivan family musically in Calvert, Mr. Speaker. He took the talents that he has learned over the years and he created Sullivan's Songhouse. It's just a simple concept: people come into his kitchen for a kitchen party. It's been a raving success – another example of the positive things happening in the arts community.

I certainly hope to take it in. Perhaps the minister and I and the Member for Ferryland can go together, join together and enjoy the performance at Sullivan's Songhouse. It would be quite an interesting evening, I'm sure, celebrating the arts. By having local musicians foster their talents and business skills, our government continues to cultivate the culture and style of the music sector.

Also, this morning we were pleased to hear Sharon Bala read a passage from her short story, "Butter Tea at Starbucks." Sharon recently was a Journey Prize finalist at the 2017 Writer's Trust Awards and is a three-time Arts and Letters Awards recipient for short fiction.

Our government is pleased to provide \$80,000 in annual operational funding, which has been provided to the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador, WANL, through the provincial government's Cultural Economic Development Program. We are pleased to support the Writers' Alliance and their continued work with our province's literary talent. The Writers' Alliance showcases our province's writers and literature provincially,

nationally and internationally, thereby increasing economic benefits to authors through increased book sales, awards, invitations to readings, literary festivals and other events.

The Writers' Alliance is a not-for-profit organization, founded in 1987. So, Mr. Speaker, you can see the roots within the arts and culture sector grow very deep. They early on formalize structures within each genre, Mr. Speaker, to better advocate and to better grow every sector and every piece of the arts and culture sector. It is a member-based organization – this is the Writers' Alliance now I'm referring to – with a membership of approximately 300 people.

The Writers' Alliance is dedicated to enhancing the economic well-being of local writers, the professionalization of writing and publishing in the province and a celebration of our writers and literature in increasing public awareness and appreciation of literary arts.

The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation recently attended the opening night of the Neighbourhood Dance Works 2017 Festival of New Dance in October. Again, I reiterate how important it is as legislators, as leaders, to support our arts community. Our government provides \$35,000 through the Cultural Economic Development Program to assist with the production of that annual festival. The art of dancing is an important venue for cultural expression and our government is pleased to support the development and advancement of up-and-coming and established dancers, as well as those working in the dance industry.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud to support the film industry in this province, an industry that is a generator of well-paid, skilled jobs and continues to leverage new investment from sources outside our province. In fact, in 2015 the industry accounted for more than \$46 million in total production activity, creating more than 600 full-time equivalencies.

We proudly increased the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation Equity Investment Fund by an additional \$2 million, Mr. Speaker. This additional funding is helping the film and television industry continue to grow production activity and employment. Since

1997, the film and television industry in Newfoundland and Labrador has seen total production activity of over \$359 million and has leveraged over \$250 million in new money to the province. That's very important, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government is supportive of theatre. Just last week our Premier joined with the Member of Parliament for Long Range Mountains to announce \$500,000 to support Theatre Newfoundland and Labrador in the construction of a new multi-functional theatre complex in Cow Head. The Governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada are investing a total of \$4.2 million towards Theatre Newfoundland and Labrador's new 2,000-square-metre theatre complex, which will include a 178-seat venue for the Gros Morne Theatre Festival dinner theatre.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to theatre, it was just, I would say, late September I attended *A Call to Arms*, a theatre musical production at Holy Heart Theatre. Perhaps some of the Members opposite were there. It was the story of a soldier in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, Stephen Norris. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I've been to Broadway. You wouldn't find any better on Broadway. It was an absolute joy. It was an absolutely professional production that you would find anywhere in this world, from London to New York. It is a true reflection of the artistic community and where it has come.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation is one of the province's largest operators of tourism, culture and heritage facilities, which includes The Rooms, the Arts and Cultures Centres and the Provincial Historic Sites. I think, in closing, I will say with respect to some of the comments that I've heard so far – and I will continue to listen very closely and we can further discuss some of this in Committee. I will agree with the Member for St. John's Centre in saying that arts is not always about monetary value. The expression of art is very important. That cannot be underscored.

We want artists in this province to come forward and express and present our art and our culture, tell those stories, Mr. Speaker, whether it be through writing, through song, through dance,

through theatre, through film. There are many adaptations that can take. It's a truly remarkable sector in an economic and a social sense.

I have to say, this is something that artists have been calling on for a long, long time. I'm very pleased that this government has delivered in bringing forth Status of the Artist legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

It's a pleasure to get up and speak on Bill 22, the *Status of the Artist Act*. It's interesting, listening to my colleague opposite. I don't know what the word is. He's professing to the House his love for the artists. I think we all agree on that. We all support the artists. There's nothing he said there that's new to any of us. We're proud of our culture and our heritage here in Newfoundland.

It's probably one of the best gems we have as a province of a half a million people, our artists and our – not so much the best kept secret now, but for a long time they were. People come here and when they leave they're totally amazed.

I had the fortune of working in the former Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, which included Culture, for several years with the former minister. I got to meet a lot of these individuals and I got to hear a lot of their concerns. So this legislation was something I know the artists have been lobbying for, for a long time.

It's not the legislation. I guess they're pleased with this legislation, but it will never fully meet the needs of those people, what they're looking for, but I guess sometimes half a loaf is better than no loaf at all.

I have a few comments. I have lots of time to speak on it, obviously. I guess I would be remiss if I didn't say, hearing the Member opposite getting up and lecturing the Member for St. John's Centre on the artists and what she knows about artists and her attachment to the artists. I

think I can safely say in this House of Assembly, there is no one else in this House who has more attachment to the artists than the Member for St. John's Centre.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** I'd be remiss if I never said that. I think the Member opposite should at least acknowledge that when he gets up. Show some respect.

That's a fact, because you hear some of that stuff and that's one of the ones where we shouldn't go and I'm not going there. I think she should be applauded for her support of those people.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** They struggle to make a living. It's not an easy life.

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. PETTEN:** The Member for Bay of Islands has woke up again, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for Bay of Islands, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, is lecturing me now because I'm giving credit to a Member who supported the artists all of her life. She's a performing artist herself –

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible.)

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

**MR. PETTEN:** – and now she's a Member of this House of Assembly and she supports – and what's wrong with complimenting her? Then you're getting lectured by someone over there that probably – well, I won't go there, maybe I won't go there. I won't go there because I could go down the road, if it's going to make me miss what I have to say.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Mr. Speaker, I got my 20 minutes and I'd like to use it, thank you.

Thank you very much.

So this legislation, as we're saying, it's not entirely what the artists want. I guess you need to speak about the artists. It's been discussed about the economic struggles that artists go through in their careers and it's not an easy way to make a living.

We get lots of people who go and get their given trade, they go to university or trades and there's a set pay scale. They go to work for whomever and they make a living to support their families. Most people, not everyone, but I guess the majority of people do stuff that they love, but they get rewarded for that financially.

Artists do the same thing. There's no difference what artists do and what we do here in this House of Assembly. You love politics, you like representing the people in your districts, we come in here and we get a salary. They do the same thing, Mr. Speaker, in their other forms of whatever it is: visual, staged, musical, what have you, all the broad range. But it's not the same; it's a struggle. Anyone that's been around the arts community will tell you, anyone in the arts community will tell you, they struggle. They struggle on a daily basis.

They need the extra supports. I don't know the answer to that. You don't just open the vault – I understand that. Maybe we need to be more creative and work on partnerships. There has to be a way to try to support the artists in what they do, because it's not your run-of-the-mill regular job. It's not your 9-to-5 job. Some of these artists don't go to work, performing artists, sometimes until 10 or 11 o'clock every night. That's their thing. They do their gigs, as they term them, to try to pay the bills. It's not an easy life.

Again, I don't have the answer to figuring out how you solve this problem, but I think some of the criticism of this legislation is not unfounded and it's probably a valid argument. How you get there, I think it's worthy of more discussion, more collaboration, to find out there has to be a way. Where there's a will there's a way, Mr. Speaker, and I'm a believer of that. In the case of this legislation, I think there is a way we can make this better.

I was going to talk some more about the bill. Another point I'd make, too – my colleague for

Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune mentioned it earlier today. It's good to see that government is taking the artists' concerns and looking in to this Bill 22, but I'd like to remind them opposite, too, they took culture out of the name and there was a huge uproar; but that's done now and it was put back in. I'm not about that, that's not my point, but I remember sitting back and taking in the uproar from the arts community when that change happened. I'm sure the minister opposite, the minister responsible, can attest to the same thing.

I was in the department. I had the pleasure of working there and I knew a lot of them. I understood how important it was. It drove the point home to me when that happened, just how important it actually was. They caused an awful lot of noise. At the end of the day, government did include culture in the name, which I commend them for doing. My point of bringing it up is the fact that they just showed their passion for what they do, the passion for who they are.

I remember actually just on the sidelines watching and listening. Lots of group emails, we'll say. It hit me and I said, you know, I commend them for – sometimes the smallest number of people can make the biggest impact. That was a case in point there. I think they really showed the power of their desire and their passion to fight for what they believe in. I guess they wouldn't be in existence now if they weren't survivors, because that's what they do.

These people we take for granted. You go and take in a show, you go and look at artwork, if it's performances, all variety of different shows. We're all over – the Member opposite mentioned Cow Head. I've had the fortune of being there.

I've actually attended a lot of theatre festivals throughout the province. It's top-notch quality. You speak to tourists and tourists will rave about what we have. We have a very talented population. Rural Newfoundland is, to my mind, one of the biggest assets when you go out in rural Newfoundland.

This past summer I had the pleasure of travelling across the province. It's never lost. As a matter of fact, I ended up in the minister's neck of the

woods, up around Gros Morne area and the Great Northern Peninsula. It's absolutely amazing. It never ceases to amaze every time you go there, and going there knowing what to expect, you come back and you're that much more impressed. Even though you're going there waiting, looking for it, and when you leave you're just in awe of what an impression it is.

We are very fortunate to have them in our society. On the flip side, I think it's incumbent upon us as a Legislature and for government to probably give some consideration to finding other ways or means around trying to support the artists because it is a challenging career. I think the economic benefit they create – we look at our tourism industry, which is something I've been around a long time, too, and I have a fair knowledge of. There are a lot of things that make up that tourism dollar.

There are a lot of bases, foundations, a lot of our natural heritage – the Find Yourself Here campaign was a brilliant move that was brought in. It was created when this former administration was in, but it was done by a group of individuals, professionals, marketing – they just got it together.

We weren't Disneyland, we don't have theme parks; we were into let's sell ourselves for what we are. We are who we are. We have a rugged terrain. The people, the backgrounds, the landscapes – sell us for what we are. We're magical because we're natural.

That Find Yourself campaign is after winning numerous – I mean, the minister can probably give me the number. I used to have the number; it's a lot of awards. It's one of the most successful tourism campaigns in the country and probably in North America, if I'm not mistaken. I commend this administration and I give thanks to the current government for continuing on with the great work. Credit all around for that. I want that to be on record for that, Mr. Speaker.

In saying the tourism industry is as good as it is, I think we owe a lot of that credit to the artists. People come for the Gros Morne Theatre Festival. All over the province you see performing arts everywhere. During the summertime, you go to any community – you go to the Fish Fun and Folk Festival out in

Twillingate, which I've had the opportunity to go there; you go to Trinity theatre, Trinity Pageant, that's amazing. We take it for granted when we live here and sometimes we don't even know what's in our own backyard.

Speaking of artists and their struggles, this past summer, BonTours that operates down in Bonne Bay down in Norris Point – again, I've been down there numerous times and I was there again this summer. I know a lot of the people that work there and they're doing two jobs.

In the nighttime they play – I know the minister is nodding because he's seen it himself – in the Cat Stop, they play at all of the writers' festivals or the Trails Tails Tunes; they're all performing artists. In the daytime, they're operating boats; they're working in the bar. They're supporting the tourism industry out there. They're doing all various jobs. A lot of them are doing a lot of the boat tours and whatnot. That's how they live.

They have a full-time job in the daytime. They were hired on as musicians, but they've got their licence to drive the boat. So you're going out for a day on the bay on a boat tour, they're driving the boat, and in the nighttime they're playing in the bar. That's how they live. It's incredible.

I tell you, on that note, it's worth anyone's while to go down there and take that in. I think it's something that I've loved. I've gone there now at least four to five times. I know everyone down there by first names, so I'm hoping to go back again. It's something that we all, as a province, should be proud of.

In saying the artist struggles, I think the point I'm getting to with the Gros Morne festival is when I talk to some of these guys that are working down there on the boats and performing in the nighttime, 75 per cent of the people who come there are from out of province, which is good when you look at tourism numbers, but there is a good chunk of people in our province who do not know they exist. I think that is a sad statement. You wish it wasn't that way. I know my time in Tourism, it was always that struggle. It's the in-province people not knowing what's around us.

Like the staycation has become more popular over the last couple of years. I did it this past

year and I totally enjoyed it. I'm looking forward to doing it again next year because what we have to offer in this province, as a people, our tourism and our arts community, it's second to none, Mr. Speaker.

When you leave the province – I did that in the second part of my summer this year, I left the province on personal business, but I had the opportunity to travel to some Atlantic provinces. They offer certain things. They have decent product, but when you look at the artists and you look at quality outside of this province, I think we have the gem. We have it.

We have a tourism campaign that's after, in my opinion, hitting it out of the park and a lot of it is to do with the arts community. A big part of it is the arts community and our natural beauty, our rugged beauty. It's who we are. You see those ads. I've watched them a thousand times and every time I watch them, it's like the first time I've watched them.

In a lot of those ads, you'll see a lot of these artists; the performing artists are part of those ads. That's an income. They're working to make an income, but they're also working to support their future income. It's a struggle and I think everyone here in this House – or at least I hope everyone here – would know that if you look around, it's something that we should never lose sight of. If there is anything we can do to assist them, I think it's incumbent upon us to do that.

Mr. Speaker, in the legislation under the professional artists, I know there's legislation – and without getting into great detail, but in my last couple of minutes I just wanted to refer to some of the bill. I was speaking about this earlier today, identifying how a person can be considered a professional artist, the criteria to meet to be a professional artist. I guess I kind of compare this, for analogy purposes, I think it's a lot similar to the TAP that Tourism offers now. It's a Tourism Assurance Program. We had started it and it's continuing on.

You look in the tourism guide and you're looking for an accommodation and it has a rating, but when you go there, it's not what you had bargained for, not as was advertised. Under this Assurance Program, it's meant to step up everyone's game, get a base criteria, better

scoring policy. You know what you're getting into. When you call and make a booking, you know what you're going to get when you get there.

The same sort of analogy can apply to being a professional artist, because not all of them are professionals in the true sense of the word. Some people do it and they can learn it from scratch and become professional, but I think the criteria for having a professional artist is a great idea. Having it listed: A person receives or had received compensation which can be included in professional or business income. There are three; you have to have one of those three. The other one is: A person has a record of income or loss relevant to the history of his work or her work and appropriate to the span of his or her artistic career. The third one being: The person has received public or peer recognition by publicly disseminated critical reviews or appraisal or by a similar means.

You have to have four criteria, but you can have at least one of those three. I think that's good. From what I'm gathering, I read the news release and I know the chair of the Resource Centre for the Arts, Berni Stapleton, her quote – and they're very pleased with this legislation. We have no problem with this legislation, but I think that the criticism of the legislation and some of the critique of it is not lost.

Personally, again, I just told my stories of some around the province. I'll use one more. When I was speaking just then around the Trinity Pageant, they'd come in down there, they're living down there, they're not making – they come in to work in that pageant; they love what they do. They are great performers.

I had the opportunity to speak to a lot of them. It's not a life of luxury. It's a hard, hard slog. They're not on *Come From Away* at Broadway. They're not down in New York City, but they love what they do and their product out there is phenomenal.

I spoke to them and that's probably one of the biggest challenges they find. In saying that, there was this actor who was out there – I can't remember the role; it was a Beaumont-Hamel story, actually. He was a real great character in the show. I ran into him probably a year ago and

I just happened to meet him and I kind of formed a bit of a friendship, chatting with him. He had to give it up; he is truck driving. I thought it was so sad because this person has amazing talent.

When you look at this legislation and some of the critiques, that's the point that drives you home. There is nothing there. It's a struggle for them to survive. What do you do? You go where the money is. Newfoundlanders are known for it. We're all over the world because we go where the work is, we go where the money is, you have to make a living – survival, actually.

When I spoke to this individual, it did hit home. I actually knew his talents and it was really sad. On the flip side, when I was out around the same time, this other person was there and they were after doing the same thing: just left and went to work and had to come back to the theatre because they love it. So this guy is driving a truck; he doesn't love that. Obviously, he wants to be out acting, but he has to feed his family. He has to look after himself. It's the reality we all face.

I have no problem with the legislation and I've expressed my concern and backed up some of the concerns on the depth of the bill with the funding, the pay. You can add to the bill. Maybe there's another piece of legislation or maybe there are other programs they can do. I think there is stuff you can do.

It's something that you think outside of the box. I think there are a lot of approaches, because they are a gem and they're a treasure. Those people are treasures to our province. We're one of the most fortunate places in the world. When you look at per capita, the talent we have as a people and what we have to showcase here in this province, we should support them. I hope government does give that some consideration.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

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

I'm glad to have an opportunity now to take my 20 minutes and speak to Bill 22. I believe the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island may want to speak on this as well. I look forward to his words as we finish up the afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, the first thing I want to say, of course, is that I definitely support this bill. I think it's a good piece of legislation for sure. I have heard some of the concerns that have been raised by some of my colleagues here and I'll give my perspective on those as well.

First, I just want to speak to the intent of the bill. If we look through the Explanatory Notes here with the bill, basically what it says: "This Bill would acknowledge the important and dynamic contributions that artists make to the economic and social well-being of the province; define professional artist; set out certain government undertakings with respect to artists in the province; and recognize the importance of continued improvement to the lives and working conditions of professional artists."

I think that's a very laudable goal or purpose. I think it's good to enshrine in legislation our commitment as a province to our artists, to our arts community. When we talk about the arts community and so on, as we know, it covers so many different genres, if you will, because we have the performing arts, of course. I've heard Members speak to it, the various festivals that we have, the various dinner shows and so on.

I'm sure we've all here in the House of Assembly had an opportunity, for example, to go to some of the Spirit of Newfoundland productions and the tremendous shows that they put on, whether it be the acting, whether it be singing, throw in a little bit of comedy and so on. They put on a show that I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, would stack up against any show that you would see anywhere, including New York.

The talent we have here is absolutely amazing. We look at, for example, every year we have the *Revue* series, which, of course, is a satirical look at the House of Assembly, quite frankly, of us as Members, of a number of the top stories, a number of the controversies that happened over the year, and we see that brought to light in the

form of a performance. It travels across the province in all the Arts and Culture Centres and so on. We have tremendous actors, singers and so on that participate in it.

We think about writing, which is an art, and all of the writers that we have here throughout the province, and the importance of the work that they do in telling our story as a province and telling our story as a people. We have such a great history and such a great story to tell from all across the province.

Certainly here, we're the oldest city in North America. We have such great history here throughout the province, whether it be at Cupids, Brigus and so on. We have such great history and culture throughout Labrador with our Indigenous communities. We have so many traditions and these stories have to be told. They have been told, Mr. Speaker, over the years, and continue to be told by our very talented people.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that this continue because we are a very unique province. We are a very unique people, our culture, our traditions, our dialects, from different parts of the province, the different dialects, the different sayings and expressions. It's important that we preserve this, it's important that we treasure this because that's what makes us unique, it's what makes us special; and if we don't support the arts community, then I fear that that tradition, that culture, will be lost. Because it gets passed on from generation to generation and we want to be ourselves. We want to be unique. We don't want everybody walking around just like any other big city on the mainland and so on, without that unique culture. We want to preserve that.

It's really the artists through song, through writing, through acting, through satire and comedy and so on, through music, through visual arts, it's how we keep that alive, and it's these people that do it and we need to support them. We need to support them and we also need to foster the growth of this and we need to make sure that our up-and-coming generation are supported, our new generation is supported.

I know even in my district, which is not necessarily steeped in the history that some parts of the province will have – although, we do have a unique history. At the Admiralty House

Museum, there's a story to be told there and the Pearl estates and so on. But it's not necessarily the first place that comes to mind when you think arts and culture, per se. Although, we do have a group in Mount Pearl, the Association for the Arts in Mount Pearl that are doing a great job in promoting the arts in our community.

When I look at performances and so on in our community, whether it be through the high schools with the ETCETERA show and the Mount Pearl Show Choir, when I look at our focus on youth awards and the young people that we have that are excelling in music, that are excelling in visual arts and so on, and we have these things, as the minister says, that get displayed at the Frosty Festival as well, it's important that for these young people that have the desire to continue with our traditions, with our songs, with our arts, it's important we set a framework for them so that they can continue on where other artists have left off. So they can continue to tell our story. So they can continue to contribute to our culture, to our uniqueness, because it's very important, as a people, that we maintain it. It's important we do it to maintain it for ourselves, so that we can always stay connected to who we are, to where we came from.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, there's a great economic opportunity for our province in doing that. I see it as sort of a two-part thing. One is maintaining the culture, the heritage and so on for ourselves, for our own identity, but the second piece is from a tourist point of view.

We've seen a lot of parts of our province, particularly in our rural areas that unfortunately have declined over the years, primarily due to the cod moratorium and other issues around the fishery and even other resources. We had some mills shut down, and towns that fed into that in terms of logging and so on. We've had challenges in a number of areas throughout the province in terms of that and in terms of the creation of employment and wealth and sustainability.

One of the opportunities we have, I believe, I think all Members would agree, is this treasure we have in terms of our culture, our heritage, and we have a product, a product that people from throughout the country, throughout the

world, are willing to come and pay good money to see, willing to come to pay good money to experience. Yes, it's about our history, it's about our natural environment, the beauty of our province, but it's also about our people. It's about selling that experience to tourists.

The people who are primarily the ambassadors, if you will, for selling that experience – which it's all about – to tourists said they will return. When they go back home to wherever they came from, they will tell their family, tell their friends, tell their neighbours, tell their co-workers, tell them: You really have to go to Newfoundland and Labrador, you have to see this place, you have to experience this place.

Much of the experience they receive when they come here is through the hard work and dedication of our arts community. It really is. Our songs, our shows, our acting, our art and so on, our crafts, these are the things that people, when they come to this province, they remember us for. It's so important that we do all we can as a province to support our arts community.

To bring it back to this piece of legislation, really that's what this is doing; it's establishing the Status of the Artist as it should be. It's enshrining it in legislation. It's saying to the arts community that we value your contribution. We value what you do for our province as a people. We value the contribution you make to our tourist industry and we want to enshrine this in legislation.

In doing so, we want to bring in measures, through this piece of legislation, that will not just say that artists are important, but also to bring in some measures to help ensure that when artists are being utilized by government, by municipalities and other government boards and agencies, to ensure they are paid fairly for the work they do, to ensure they have a safe working environment to work, do their craft, that they know they can work safely and with respect that they deserve and, like I said, they get a fair wage when they're doing it.

I think that's a very laudable goal. Other provinces have done it, as I understand. Our province is now doing it. I absolutely support it. I commend the minister and the government for doing this, I really do. I have no criticism of it.

Now, getting back to a couple of the points I heard from some of my colleagues here. Some of these points are valid points. I don't necessarily think, though, it has to be tied to this piece of legislation. We can certainly talk about it because you have some latitude when you speak to these bills, if it's things that are related to it. We can talk about the fact that perhaps there should be – we need more funding for artists. Perhaps some of the programs, some of the grant programs we have and other things, perhaps they could be enhanced and so on.

I don't think supporting this bill is in any way suggesting that we don't support enhancements for our artists. I'm sure the minister would agree – we can all agree this is a good piece of legislation and if there are other programs that need to be tweaked, that need to be enhanced, we can certainly do that. We can speak to that and we can support that.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I again will reiterate that I think it's a –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. LANE:** The Member is saying to carry on. He's enjoying what I have to say so much, he's saying carry on.

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the Member for Bay of Islands agrees. He wants me to carry on as well. He's enjoying what I have to say. I'm glad to hear that. He's very supportive of what I have to say.

Mr. Speaker, I could talk about this forever. I could go on and on, but at the end of the day I'm joining with the Member for Bay of Islands in supporting what he and his government are doing. I'm excited about it; I know he's excited about it. I know he's a big supporter of the arts. I know there's a lot of arts and culture in the Bay of Islands, a lot of great singers have come out of that area. I know he's enthusiastic about it and I'm also enthusiastic about it, Mr. Speaker.

We can take any bill, whatever it is, and we can pick it apart, but I really don't think there's anything here –

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

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

**MR. LANE:** I don't think there's anything here really to be critical of. I think the piece of legislation that we have here, I think the intent is good. Now, are there things that could be done with any of the clauses perhaps that could strengthen it? Perhaps so. Personally, I don't really see any issues with it, but I would say to my colleague for St. John's Centre, there were a couple of clauses where she had some concern. Just like the other bill that we're doing on the opioids, I would certainly invite her to bring forth some amendments in Committee. If she can bring forth amendments that make sense and can strengthen this bill, then I'm certainly prepared, as one Member of the House, to have a look at and possibly support it. I'm sure the minister would be willing to do that as well.

Beyond that, I don't see a big problem with the bill. I think it's a good piece of legislation. As I said, anything that we can do in this province to support our artists, whether that be visual arts, whether that be our songwriters, whether that be our performers, our dancers, our writers and so on, anything that we can do in this House of Assembly to send a strong message to them that we get it. We realize the value that you bring to this province and we want to work with you. We don't want to work against you. We want to work with you. We want to support you in your endeavours. I think there's nobody in this House of Assembly that would be against that. I think we would all be in unanimous support.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take my chair and I look forward to the minister's comments on this. I'm not sure if the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island will be speaking or not.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. LANE:** I think it's all been said. I think he knows he would also have the support of the Member for Bay of Islands. I think that he's on board because that Member's on board and they all share in the enthusiasm for what's being done here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation speaks now, he will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

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

I listened with intent to all my colleagues on this side of the House and across the House. I certainly thank the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands for his contribution just now. I think it identifies very clearly the intent of the legislation to support our artists that are professional, when it comes to raising their profile from an economic and social perspective. There are steps and measures here which government is taking to improve that status, but there's also an incredible amount of work that we will continue to do, that we will lead by example in Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation to support our arts community and also work across government.

There are many programs and services that exist, I say to the Member, the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, if there are professional artists there's a self-employment assistance program which can help somebody get into business for their very first year to help de-risk that and many artists avail of this program. Maybe we can do a better job of promoting it. There are other things that we can and we will certainly do. We'll look at creative solutions as to moving forward.

I appreciated the Member for Conception Bay South for talking about how the tourism program, advertising – advertising and market access is key and that's certainly something that has been done and continues to happen. Something our government has done is to implement a Provincial Tourism Product Development Plan, which engages artists, where businesses see how supporting the arts are very important.

The same way that business and the arts – I've been to a number of their events and this collaborative group is reaching out to the private

sector to support the artists. We have to lead by example. Government has to lead by example. We are encouraging the agencies, boards and commissions and all of the province to follow the rules that have been put forward in this legislation.

It's a good piece of legislation that is certainly a step of advancing the Status of the Artist. This was something that was put forward in my mandate letter and also in *The Way Forward*. Today is a great day that we put forward this legislation.

I want to say that we really need to inspire our young people, talk about the diversity, talk about the great success stories like the Rising Tide Theatre or the Bonavista Biennale and how contemporary art that's normally done in an urban centre was placed in 24 locations on the Bonavista Peninsula and engaged artists from in province, nationally and internationally. It's very exciting to see what we can do when we work together, to see that the Stephenville Theatre Festival is going into its 40th year – one of the longest running theatre festivals in the world.

The importance of the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council can't be understated. They are our entry point for all of our artists for expression and for development. I hear the Member for St. John's Centre and I'll certainly continue to work with the Arts Council. We've had a number of suggestions as to how we can work with all the programs that we have in TCII to better support them.

That's why we're moving forward with our cultural plan and framework. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will close debate on second reading.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 22 be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against?

This motion is carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, Status Of The Artist Act. (Bill 22)

**MR. SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a second time.

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "Status Of The Artist Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 22)

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Innovation – Industry and Innovation, all of that stuff – that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 22.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider the said bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against?

This motion is carried.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, the Speaker left the Chair.

**Committee of the Whole**

**CHAIR (Warr):** Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 22, Status Of The Artist Act.

A bill, "Status Of The Artist Act." (Bill 22)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Those against?

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 2 through 8 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 through 8 inclusive carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to ask a few quick questions here in Committee. We were looking in terms of some clarification with the legislation, it seems to speak directly to the Crown in terms of ensuring that the price paid is on the scale and that contracts are required.

Can the minister elaborate how they're going to try and enforce ABCs and any other groups who receive government funding to follow these recommendations you have outlined in legislation?

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the Member opposite for her question. Through the legislation, the provincial government encourages everyone, as I've stated, with government departments and agencies to actually lead by example to ensure that the pay for artists is fairly and equitably based on the existing industry standards or on union pay scales based on their genre, for example, visual artists, writers and musicians. This is something that the department of TCII does and we're going to strongly encourage our agencies, boards and commissions to do so, but also the whole of government, the Crown, to implement this.

Obviously, this is a first-step piece of legislation that we're moving forward with and that there is going to take an educational process. We'll be doing programming and packaging to reach out across government as to what this means to ensure that we reach compliance to the industry standards so that everybody is online. But this is really a first step when it comes to recognizing the fair pay and equity when it comes to Status of the Artist.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you, Minister, I appreciate that information.

Could the minister also elaborate for us in terms of some of the types of supports that you're going to be including in the online tool?

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would say that the legislation will enhance the recognition and support for all professional artists throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. It outlines commitments and areas of focus for government to guide our programs and investments. It is intended to enhance the recognition and support of professional artists to ensure that they're going to receive fair compensation.

Through the act, the provincial government encourages everyone with government

departments and agencies, leading by example, to pay artists fairly and equitably based on the existing pay scale for their genre. TCII supports the artistic community through numerous programs and agency funding such as: the Arts Council, the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation, the province's Arts and Culture Centres, The Rooms Corporation; funding programs including: Cultural Economic Development Program, Publishers Assistance, Cultural Events Funds, the Arts and Letters Awards, partnerships with industry development, annual grant, MusicNL, and the annual grant to the Lawrence O'Brien Arts Centre.

We also use our Regional Development Fund and our business development supports to help with export development and growth. The legislation as well will help with the contract and help with that aspect of making sure that they are getting into a good agreement and providing that professional service.

We will work with the industry associations as well, such as the MusicNL, VANL and others, to work with their members.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I heard the minister say that government will lead by example. I would like to hear from the minister their justification for not compelling government to do this and not compelling all ABCs to do this. That's my first question.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 through 8 inclusive carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

**MS. ROGERS:** I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, that the minister has not responded to my question, it's –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS. ROGERS:** It certainly wasn't a hostile question.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, it certainly wasn't a hostile question. It's a question – I am curious and I believe that it warrants a response and an answer why the legislation wouldn't compel government to pay scale to artists and why the government wouldn't compel ABCs. This is the people's money and the government has articulated very clearly their support for the arts community and for artists and the integrity of artists' work.

I am curious as to why the minister would not stand and respond to that question. That's a question that a number of artists have posed to me as well. So I would look forward to an answer from the minister. I'm astounded that he wouldn't stand and answer that.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 through 8 inclusive carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Minister, in the act here it says that draft contracts are going to be available, but there are no concrete actions that are really contained in the legislation with respect to deliverables.

Can the minister explain how success of this act will be measured without deliverables?

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to respond to the questions put forward by the Member for St.

John's Centre and also the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

There are situations of which government processes may need to be considered, such as the *Public Tender Act*, which would require reasonable and appropriate analysis. When it comes to the matter of deliverables and measurable, we're always establishing benchmarks and targets as we put forward in *The Way Forward*.

We're going to be continuing to work with our artists, as we renew our cultural plan, and continue to find ways of which they can be supported, both economically and socially.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the minister answering my question. I do have another question and it is: Does he see any conflict or any work that will need to be done with the *Procurement Act* to align what he has identified here in how artists will be paid with the *Procurement Act*? Is there any dissidence there or does it align?

Again, I'm wondering why he wouldn't also compel ABCs to do this as well.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Status of the Artist legislation that's been put forward is directed towards the Crown and the departments within government to pay fair wage and to pay equitable, based on either the union pay scales or what the industry standard is. We're certainly encouraging the agencies, boards and commissions to comply to that standard and also everybody in the public.

This is not a point in time where we feel it is acceptable, myself, as Minister of Culture, to be

bartering for art. People need to be compensated fairly for the work they do. These are professionals, and I agree that we must be doing everything we can to support them. This piece of legislation is certainly a first step as we move forward to advancing the status of the artist here in this province.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 through 8 inclusive carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Those against?

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 8 carried.

**CLERK:** Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows.

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Those against?

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** An Act Respecting The Status Of Artists In The Province.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the bill carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Thank you.

I move, Mr. Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 22.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 22.

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** The hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay, Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 22 carried without amendment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have

directed him to report Bill 22 without amendment.

When shall the report be received? Now?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** When shall the said bill be read a third time?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, given the hour of the day, I would move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** In accordance with provisional Standing Order 9(2), this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 10 a.m.