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*Speaker: Honourable Tom Osborne, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

Today, I welcome to the Speaker's gallery the Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador Science Team who are the subject of a Ministerial statement. The students are Nora Boone, Noha Shehata – I hope I pronounced that relatively close – Nisarg Dave, Kurtis Collins and Aaron Sarkar. Erin Baker and Yvonne Dawe, co-chairs of Eastern NL Science Fair Council; and absent is Clara Phillips.

Welcome to the Speaker's gallery.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** In the public gallery today we have Madame Cyrilda Poirer, President of the Francophone Federation of Newfoundland and Labrador and members of the Francophone and Acadian community. They are joining us today to mark the Provincial Francophonie Day, which will be the subject of a Ministerial Statement this afternoon.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Gail Bennett, as well, is in our public gallery. She is the mother of one our Pages, Catherine Bennett.

Welcome.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would also like to point out that it's our Government House Leader's birthday today, so Happy Birthday.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would like to personally embarrass our Law Clerk today. This will be her last week serving in the Legislature. Lorna Proudfoot, QC, has advised that she will be retiring this October, so I ask all Members at some point today to bid her a farewell. She has long provided Members of the Legislature with very sound advice. I admire the advice and the

counsel that she provides to myself as Speaker, and I will miss her.

We see Lorna daily here in the House of Assembly and we all know that she brings extensive experience in drafting legislation and providing advice on parliamentary matters.

The position of Law Clerk has a long history in the British parliamentary system. As a Table Officer of the House, the Law Clerk supports the Clerk and the Clerk Assistant, and the presiding Officers, as required, as is accountable for provision of legal advice on parliamentary matters and procedures to the Speaker, Clerk, Members of the House of Assembly and the House of Assembly Management Commission. The Law Clerk also provides legal counsel to the House of Assembly service with legal issues that may arise.

Prior to the report by the Hon. J. Derek Green, *Rebuilding Confidence*, in 2007, for many years the duties of the Law Clerk of the House of Assembly in Newfoundland and Labrador were provided by the lawyers who were employed in the Office of Legislative Counsel in the Department of Justice and Public Safety who are responsible for the drafting of government legislation.

Justice Green recommended the creation of a new Law Clerk position, reporting only to the House of Assembly because of the potential conflict of interest with the Executive Branch performing this role. Lorna was the first Law Clerk recruited following the process outlined in the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* and she was appointed by resolution of the House of Assembly on November 27, 2008. She was appointed to the Queen's Counsel in September of 2014.

In 1975, Ms. Proudfoot completed her undergraduate degree at Memorial University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science Honours. In 1981, Ms. Proudfoot completed her law degree at the University of New Brunswick and was admitted to the Bar of Newfoundland and Labrador in April of 1982.

Prior to her appointment as Law Clerk to the House, Lorna worked with the Office of Legislative Counsel, the Department of Justice

for 20 years. Prior to that, she worked in private practice in the areas of real estate, corporate and family law.

Interestingly and some of the Members of the House of Assembly may know this, but for those who don't, Lorna followed in the tradition of her father, William F. Proudfoot, who was the Law Clerk with the House of Assembly from Confederation until his death in 1955.

We thank Lorna for her service to the House of Assembly. I wish her a healthy and happy retirement and hope that she gets to spend lots of days with her husband Jeff and her children Dierdre, Shannon and Kieran.

Again, Lorna, thank you very much for your service.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Some of you probably don't know, Lorna hates the spotlight, so I hope Broadcast got this.

#### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** For Members' statements today we have the Members for the Districts of Labrador West, St. John's East – Quidi Vidi, Placentia West – Bellevue, Mount Pearl North, Harbour Grace – Port de Grave, Topsail – Paradise.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

I rise in this hon. House today to once again highlight the success of competitors from Labrador West at the 2nd Annual Classic of the Newfoundland and Labrador Body Building provincial competition in Grand Falls-Windsor on May 20.

Eight athletes from Labrador West competed at the event, and as previously done, once again stole the show.

Williams Parsons, our lone male competitor, was successful in winning gold in his division, and Dana Martin-Kelly placed first in Figure Grand Masters, while Lori Butt placed a

respectable third. Taylor Ryan placed first in Figure Overall.

Other competitors included Gerri Lynn Arnold, Cordelia Richards, Julia Johnson and Kyra Louvelle, all of whom had very respectable placements.

This is believed to be the first time in bodybuilding competition in this province that a mother/daughter combination competed at the same event in Dana Martin-Kelly and Cordelia Richards. Dana recalls her proudest moment was when Cordelia rushed to the stage to congratulate her on winning first place.

Bodybuilding is a fast growing sport in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating all the participants of this year's event and wish them success as they continue to raise the profile of this sport.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I am delighted to rise today to recognize a long-time stalwart of the local acting community, also a long-time constituent and friend.

In March of this year, Arts NL announced that actor, writer and puppeteer, Mary-Lynn Bernard is the winner of the 2016 Rhonda Payne Theatre Award, and no more fitting recipient could have been found.

The award is named for groundbreaking actor, writer and director Rhonda Payne. Rhonda Payne established the \$500 cash award by dedicating royalties from the production and publication of her works to a fund to assist women theatre artists in Newfoundland and Labrador who are struggling to achieve their goals as actors or writers.

Mary-Lynn has been a fixture of the St. John's stage, film and television scene since the 1980s,

acting in everything from Chekhov productions to *Random Passage*, and has recently evolved into puppeteering.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Mary-Lynn Bernard, this year's recipient of the Rhonda Payne Award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Placentia West – Bellevue.

**MR. BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Tourism Awareness Week and la Journée de la Francophonie, it is fitting to recognize two important milestones.

Fifty years ago, the Burin Peninsula celebrated the opening of its first visitor information centre, an iconic building in the form of a lighthouse, built and operated in Marystown, and officially opened by then Premier Joseph R. Smallwood.

This is now one of three information centres on the Burin Peninsula, with centres also in Goobies, the gateway to the Burin Peninsula, and Fortune, the gateway to Saint Pierre et Miquelon.

Twenty-five years ago, tourism operators and advocates formed a formal association, the Heritage Run Tourism Association. This serves as the voice of tourism on the Burin Peninsula, and has a long and successful track record of attracting tourists into the area and capitalizing on opportunities, particularly with our French neighbours.

While there have been many volunteers and officers of the board who have helped this organization thrive, there are two who stood out for their decades of dedication and commitment to tourism. Russ Murphy, a volunteer from the mid-80s until 2014, and Albert Dober, one of the founding members of the original visitor centre, were both awarded honorary lifetime membership awards in the Heritage Run Tourism Association.

(French spoken: Mr. Speaker, please join me in saying congratulations to Mr. Dober, Mr.

Murphy, as well as the HRTA for these remarkable achievements.)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was so enthralled with the Member's statement, and I have to say to the hon. Member, I love it when you speak French. Félicitations.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the City of Mount Pearl on hosting the Focus on Youth Awards recently held to honour youth in our city.

I would like to congratulate all of the nominees and the winners of these awards. In particular, Female Youth of the Year, Andie Winsor; Male Youth of the Year, Patrick Breen; Female Athlete of the Year, Keeley Cox; Male Athlete of the Year, Evan Knight; Team of the Year, the Mount Pearl Senior High Female Grade 9 Volleyball team; Adult Volunteer working with Youth and Sports, Richard Christopher; Youth Volunteer of the Year, Emily Garlie; Official of the Year, John Mackenzie; winner of the RNC Youth in Service Award, Cassidy Rose; Youth Group of the Year, Mount Pearl Senior High Causes for Concern; Literary Arts Award winner, Hunter Richardson; winner of the Visual Arts award, Sarah Hiscock; winner of the Performing Arts award, Jack Thistle and Hunter Madden; winner of the S.T.E.M. award, Joel Hatcher; Adult Volunteer working with Youth, Tracey Dwyer; and the Performing Arts Group award was a tie between Conway, Mount Pearl Senior High Drama Club, O'Donel High Jazz Band, Mount Pearl Senior High Jazz Band, O'Donel High School *High School Musical* and the Mount Pearl Senior High Traditional Band.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this House to join me in congratulating the nominees and winners on a fantastic Focus on Youth Awards ceremony.

Thank you.

Merci beaucoup.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Bill Luffman of Harbour Grace on a lifetime of dedication to community and culture through song.

Born in Markland in 1934, he moved to Harbour Grace with his parents and siblings, travelling in the back of a pickup truck. Mr. Luffman said in those days jobs were extremely scarce, so he opened a small shoe repair business in the community where he made a living for his wife, Gladys Newman, and their three children.

Mr. Speaker, I remember visiting his shop with my mom when I was a child. Many would remember that it was a quaint little business, which displayed a large, life-sized shoe outside above the door.

Bill is affectionately known as the singing cobbler. He spent many years playing and singing to raise funds for those in need. His instrument of fame was the ugly stick.

A local favourite, Bill Luffman wrote and performed many times his own song, “The Light and Power Boys.” Recently in Harbour Grace, there was a celebration for Bill to say thank you for his many acts of kindness and support for others.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in recognizing Mr. Bill Luffman.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for Topsail – Paradise.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Avalon Dragons is a team made up of breast cancer survivors who brought dragon boating to Newfoundland and Labrador, the fastest-growing team water sport in the world.

Mr. Speaker, this past year, Paradise held its sixth annual Avalon Dragon Paddle in Paradise event which I again had the pleasure of attending. Team members have all had breast cancer and are in various stages of treatment and recovery.

The team has become a powerful source of hope and inspiration to others who are just starting their cancer journey. They promote public awareness of the importance of exercise and healthy lifestyle in preventing breast cancer and lymphedema, a common side effect of breast cancer surgery, and show that people living with breast cancer can lead full lives and active lives.

Fundraising enables the Avalon Dragons to provide dragon boat activities for breast cancer survivors throughout the region and to promote its expansion to other parts of the province. The team also contributes financially to programs and services that directly help those who are having difficulties bearing the financial burdens that undergoing cancer treatment often imposes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in recognizing the Avalon Dragons for their dedication and the fantastic support that they provide to others.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the members of our province’s very own Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador team for their outstanding performances at the 56th annual Canada-Wide Science Fair, held at the University of Regina. The competition is the largest of its kind in Canada.

Six students from the Husky Energy Eastern Newfoundland Science and Technology Fair represented this province at the event earlier this month. These students are: Nora Boone, Clara Phillips and Noha Shehata from Holy Heart,

Nisarg Dave from Gonzaga, Kurtis Collins from Waterford Valley, and Aaron Sarkar from Macdonald Drive Junior High.

All participants presented remarkable work and represented our province with pride.

Mr. Speaker, the level three student Nora Boone won a gold medal for designing a training tool for emergency brain surgery.

Ms. Boone's simulation tool is meant to train medical staff in rural areas to safely perform emergency surgery when intracranial hematomas need to be treated before a patient can be transferred to neurosurgical care in a larger centre.

In addition to her gold medal, Ms. Boone also brought home an Innovation Challenge award and a Youth Can Innovate award valued at \$1,000.

The scope and complexity of the remaining Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador team members' individual projects are truly impressive as well. Aaron Sarkar won a silver medal, Kurtis Collins, Nisarg Dave and Noha Shehata each brought home a bronze medal as well. These young people clearly have bright futures ahead of them and their extraordinary work deserves to be recognized.

I ask that all hon. Members of this House join me in congratulating Nora Boone, Clara Phillips, Noha Shehata, Nisarg Dave, Kurtis Collins and Aaron Sarkar on their tremendous successes on the national stage. I know we can look forward to more great things from these young people in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

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

I thank the hon. Member for an advance copy of his statement. It gives me immense pride to stand today and congratulate the members of the

Eastern Newfoundland team on their success at the Canada-Wide Science Fair.

The six students from the Husky Energy Eastern Newfoundland Science and Technology Fair are a great example of the talent we have in our province and the role our youth will play in the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. We congratulate Nora, Clara, Noha, Nisarg, Kurtis and Aaron and we commend them for the work they've done. They certainly have the support and pride from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This side of the House congratulates all participants on their well-deserved awards and their brilliant efforts on the national stage. We wish them well in what will, no doubt, be a bright and promising future. Congratulations to each one of you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to Nora Boone for her innovative simulation tool to train doctors to perform emergency surgery when a neurosurgeon is not available. This technology has the potential to save lives and is an exciting example of how our young people can excel in technology and serve rural communities.

I also commend the other five members of the team who received awards, all well deserved. Knowing the calibre of work presented by hundreds of students at this fair every year, we can all be extremely proud of them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

I'd like to recognize May 29 through June 2 as Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. This week, we'd like to raise awareness about the issues facing victims and survivors of crime in this province and the programs, services and laws that are in place to help victims of crimes and their families participate more fully in the criminal justice system.

Mr. Speaker, this week is also an opportunity to acknowledge the important work of service providers, such as our very own Victim Services, for their dedication to assisting victims and survivors of crime.

Mr. Speaker, since coming into this role, it has been a top priority for me to ensure the justice system works for everyone, particularly victims who need additional support.

This past fall, I had the opportunity to sit down with the staff from our Victim Services who work very hard to meet the diverse needs of survivors of crime by offering free support to assist in the healing process. Victim Services provides a wide range of services, some of which include referrals for counselling, safety planning, court preparation and assistance with completing Victim Impact Statements. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important program that helps a number of victims in our province and I'd like to thank everyone who contributes to the services.

We recognize that victims need support on many levels – and they need to know their options. Mr. Speaker, last month we announced a Sexual Assault Response Pilot program which will provide free legal advice to survivors of sexual violence. This program will give victims access to justice and empower them to make informed choices as they navigate through the system.

The experience for a victim of crime can be life altering, and the impact is profound. This week, and every week, we are committed to doing whatever we can to ensure that victims have access to justice and to help in the healing process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement today. We join with government in recognizing Victims and Survivors of Crime Week.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important that proper supports for survivors and victims of crime remain paramount within the justice system. The province has an important obligation to ensure that all necessary supports are established, but also an equally important obligation to ensure that cases have their day in court and are not dismissed as a result of delays leading to the application under Jordan.

We're fortunate to have very capable, dedicated, passionate individuals working with Victim Services and providing services to victims of crime and survivors of crime in this province, and this week we join government in celebrating the work they do to support victims and survivors as well.

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 an advance copy of his statement. I, too, thank all these fabulous folks in Victim Services who provide excellent work with passion and compassion to people who have been victims of crime. There are many ways the province can help in that work by providing more comprehensive supports such as including all kinds of medical and dental care, long-term counselling, lost wages, property damage and more.

I would also like to thank the community organizations who also provide supports in so many ways to victims.

Thank you, and bravo to one and all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. TRIMPER:** Et responsable pour des Affaires francophones also, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise in this hon. House on La Journée de la francophonie provinciale to recognize the Francophone and Acadian community in our province.

This morning I was proud to welcome the Lieutenant Governor as we joined students from École des Grands-Vents and members of the community who raised the Francophone flag here at Confederation Building.

Many others are also celebrating across our province, including in Labrador and on the Port au Port Peninsula.

Monsieur le Président, l'excellent travail de l'équipe dévouée de la Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador et des membres de la communauté a rehaussé le profil de la population francophone de notre province.

En février, le Bureau des services en français a connu un repositionnement stratégique au sein de Service TNL. Nous commençons déjà à voir les avantages de ce repositionnement des services en français sous l'égide d'un ministère axé sur le service.

Par exemple, je suis heureux d'annoncer que, des adjourd' hui, le formulaire de demande de certificat de naissance est disponible en ligne en français sur le site Web de Service TNL.

Monsieur le Président, en mars, le ministère de l'Enseignement postsecondaire, des Compétences et du Travail a lancé un plan d'action sur l'immigration grâce auquel nous établirons un partenariat avec les organismes communautaires et les fournisseurs de services. Ceci permettra d'augmenter l'attraction et la rétention des immigrants francophones.

Nous pourrions aussi atteindre l'objectif, établi dans le document *The Way Forward*, d'augmenter l'immigration de 50 pour 100 et d'accueillir environ 1 700 immigrants par année d'ici 2022.

Today, I call on all of my colleagues here in the House to join me in celebrating the rich cultural and linguistic contributions of the Francophonie throughout the year.

Bonne Journée de la francophonie provinciale!

Merci.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Je remercie le ministre pour une copie à l'avance de sa déclaration. Ma femme parle français, malheureusement pas moi!

Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais également reconnaître aujourd'hui la communauté francophone et acadienne dans notre province: la Journée de la Francophonie.

J'ai été heureux de rejoindre les nombreux autres qui se sont rassemblés au bâtiment de la Confédération ce matin pour élever le drapeau francophone. C'était vraiment un événement merveilleux et je suis certain que les autres événements dans la province auront autant de succès dans la reconnaissance de cette journée très importante.

Monsieur le Président, nous avons un riche patrimoine culturel français dans notre province et c'est en effet quelque chose à célébrer. Félicitations à la Francophonie de la province!

Merci beaucoup and et je m'excuse!

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** That was a valiant effort and better than most.

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



**MS. MICHAEL:** Merci, Monsieur le Président, mais je vais parler en Anglais.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I'm delighted to join with everyone celebrating la Journée de la francophonie. The francophone and Acadian communities have a long and acclaimed history in this place which has not always been properly recognized, much longer than the 30-year-old flag that was hoisted today.

These communities bring a vibrancy and richness to our province's culture and society. Congratulations to the francophone association of Newfoundland and Labrador. We all celebrate with you today.

I echo the minister: Bonne journée de la francophonie provincial!

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

#### Oral Questions

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

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

Mr. Speaker, recently local media has reported that sexual assault charges against a man with previous convictions will have the charges dropped due to court delays. The presiding judge said that the delay in excess of 40 months is simply too long for a relatively straightforward case, as this one was.

Can the minister explain to the people of the province why a case such as this one has been stalled so long that the charges were being dismissed by the judge?

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly we, as in every other province, have seen cases that have been dropped due to the Jordan ruling which we know came out last summer. That's a ruling that basically put hard and fast ceilings in place to have criminal matters disposed of.

Unfortunately, there's nothing we can do with actions that have been taken in the past. Basically, our department, since the time the Jordan case has come down, has taken proactive measures to ensure that these things do not happen now. We've hired extra Crown prosecutors; we've had meetings with police. We've done a number of things to work within the system, work with all parties. We had a Justice Summit where this very issue was discussed.

The fact is it's hard to go back in time and fix the issues that happened before, certainly, a number of these cases that have happened. We're actually doing very well in this province compared to other jurisdictions, but it's an issue and something that we continue to follow up on.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I can assure the minister of the province that the people are not at all comforted knowing that a convicted sex offender and others are having charges dropped because our province's court system doesn't have the resources necessary to meet the demand.

I ask the minister: Rather than finding out these stories through local media, will he now be upfront and tell the people of the province how many more very serious charges such as this are in danger of being dropped because of unnecessary court delays and the invoking of the Jordan decision?

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

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

It's hard to predict which defendants want to make Jordan applications, because the fact is that's up to each and every person. This is a decision that has received some national attention. In fact, it was considered by the Supreme Court.

Our court system has had its challenges, but I think the Member opposite will remember when he sat right there in his place during Estimates just a few weeks ago and the former Director of Public Prosecutions, who is now on the Supreme Court, looked over and reminded him of the drastic decisions made in 2013 when his administration cut court times and they also cut a number of Crown prosecutors.

So, again, I can't fix the mistakes of the past, but I will certainly do everything we can to make our system work now.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Well, we know the Liberals like to blame somebody else when something's not going their way and they like to blame the previous administration, just as the minister has just done here today with one breath, when in another breath he actually closed courts here last year, Mr. Speaker, closed four courts here in the province last year, while Jordan decision had become law in this country. He's also seeing reductions in policing in Newfoundland and Labrador, reductions they've done nothing about, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** So I ask the minister: Very simply, you've been in office for 17 months, instead of blaming someone else, when will you take responsibility for what's going on with the justice system in our province?

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

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

I appreciate the questions from the Member opposite. Certainly, we sat here for three hours and we answered every question he had during the Estimates process.

I can't help the fact the Director of Public Prosecutions blamed him squarely for the decisions that he made while he was in Cabinet. He has to live with that. We've made a number of decisions since that time. We've increased the number of Crown prosecutors. We have made no cuts to front-line policing. In fact, we're investing in studies into our courts and into HMP.

If he wants some statistics; right now we have 29 total Jordan applications, only four have been stayed, three of those are under appeal. So the fact is in this province we face challenges, but they are far less than the challenges faced in places like Quebec where murder charges are being dropped and they have over 200 applications.

Thank you.

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

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

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

He closed courts under his watch while Jordan was in effect, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while we're pleased that the Husky development has been sanctioned, we're also concerned the Liberal government may have given away key benefits and not telling the full story.

Yesterday, the minister was asked four times here in the House what work will be done outside the province. Not once did she provide an answer. She talked about what's going on inside the province, but not once will she tell us what work is going outside the province.

I ask the Premier: In the interest of openness and transparency, we've had lots of people ask the same question in the last 24 hours, will you disclose what work will be done outside of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

I have no choice but to stand and address the preamble by the Member opposite, which is factually incorrect. We had to make decisions last year, unfortunately due to the financial mess that he and his team left us in. We did make a decision to close courts. Subsequent to that, not before, subsequent to that, the Supreme Court made the Jordan ruling. After that we worked with the courts to find both the savings and keep the courts open.

I'm sorry I had to stand here. I know he's going to ask that question again, but I had to remind the Member that there are facts out there and hopefully he can put them on the floor of this House.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Eighteen months in power, we're seeing cases still thrown out because of Jordan, Mr. Speaker.

I will ask the Premier once again: In the interest of openness and transparency, will you now provide full disclosure and tell the people of the province what work will be done outside of the province?

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

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

When yesterday I was asked this question, I would have thought that the Member opposite who was involved in the former administration

would have realized what he had read in 2013 and signed, but I guess not. So I'll tell him.

In 2013, it was decided the facility support frame, which has not traditionally been done in the province, as well as the drilling equipment set, which has not been traditionally built in this province and the facility service block, which I did mention yesterday, is now being built as part of the topsides which is now being done globally as part of the topsides – not embedded in the 2013 agreement. Any of those things were not embedded in the 2013 agreement.

It allowed me to answer this question, but I did think he would have read his 2013 agreement, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Here we go again, Mr. Speaker, blame somebody else; blame somebody else.

Yesterday, the CEO of Husky said to the *National Post* that the attractiveness of the project was increased through negotiation with a motivated government. Some would say a government who's desperate for a good news story during a polling period.

I ask the Premier: What concessions did you make to close this deal?

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

**MS. COADY:** I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the former premier, who was a Minister of the Crown at the time of the 2013 agreement, would always be motivated to encourage the oil and gas industry in this province.

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

**MS. COADY:** As far as concessions, Mr. Speaker, what we did do was have a good discussion with Husky who did not need the gates in Argentina. We also talked with Argentina about this. Instead of the gates in Argentina, which are not required for this project, we have

a \$60 million economic development and innovation fund which is going to help drive the industry and help us to really put in place some of the infrastructures that are required.

Argentia is very motivated and happy to be able to have this project, Mr. Speaker, and we'll be working with them as we move forward.

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

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

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

So the gates will not be built in Argentia which was part of the original plan, if I remember correctly. Thanks to the minister for providing that information.

Can the minister tell us what the employment target percentages for female gender equality in the project are?

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

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

They have not changed since the 2007 agreement. That was done by the former administration. They are the exact same as they were. We have a full agreement in place on gender equity and that remains in place as they were in 2007.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

In 2015 and 2016, the ratio was 50 per cent under the contract. So is that still going to be in place for 2017 and onward, Minister?

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

**MS. COADY:** I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear the actual question, but I will say, as I said yesterday, there's a number of benefits to this province including 10 million person-hours of employment, which is a huge increase, Mr. Speaker, over what was discussed in 2013.

In terms of direct benefits to the province, almost 10 million which equates to about 5,000 person hours. When this project was announced by the former administration in 2013 it was about 2,800. So as you can see, the scope, the size, the development of this project is bringing increased benefits to the province including, Mr. Speaker, increased engineering.

We were able to increase the amount of engineering being done in the province on the accommodations module from the 2013 agreement which was 75 per cent to today over 95 per cent, great benefits to Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

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

The Minister of Finance indicated that government would introduce wage freezes for non-bargaining employees.

I ask the minister: Will legislation be introduced to cause wage freezes for non-bargaining employees?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member opposite for the question. As we announced in the budget this year, it is our intention to implement a wage freeze in the context of our management and non-unionized employees. We are working on the details of doing that, and we'll certainly be bringing that information to the House as soon as we're ready.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Well, we're hearing a number of things happening on the negotiation front.

I ask the minister, if they're going to ask employees to take one unpaid day off each month in order to save money?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the Member opposite for his interest in the very important issue that we are working on with our public sector employees.

Quite frankly, the question from the Member opposite is asking me to discuss things that we're discussing at the table. We have certain issues that we are working on. We are not going to bargain in public. Certainly, when we have those discussions with our public sector employees and their union leadership as to the terms and conditions of the contract that they may find suitable, we'll certainly provide that information to the House.

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

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

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

We're also hearing that government is considering decreasing the province's share and making employees pay more of their share for health and benefits for employees' compensation.

So I ask the minister: Will she commit today to negotiate an agreement and not legislating a collective agreement on hard-working public servants in Newfoundland and Labrador?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What I'll commit to is what I've committed to, and what our government has committed to right from the start of this process. We want to have a meaningful conversation with our public sector employees on the financial circumstances and situation that we're faced in this province. We encourage our public sector leadership at the union level, leadership level, to have a meaningful dialogue. We're looking for all kinds of ways to make sure that dialogue happens.

The reality is that the situation we're facing isn't going to go away and we're going to continue to work hard at the table to have those conversations, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

In October of 2015, a \$30 million commitment for community initiatives as part of the Voisey's Bay Development Agreement was announced.

Could the Premier give us a status update on these important projects?

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

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

Yes, as part of the Voisey's Bay underground agreement which was, I think, the sixth or seventh amendment that was made to that agreement – if you remember, after the Voisey's Bay deal that continues to supply many great benefits to the people of the province. It was Members opposite who thought they could drive a Mack truck through that.

Here it is even today, they are talking about the \$30 million investment they could make to communities like Happy Valley-Goose Bay and to communities like Placentia and so on. Mr. Speaker, the details of all of this and health care initiatives, these things are still being worked out. It's going through a process right now to determine how that money will be used and the things that will need to be done to get that money into the system, Mr. Speaker.

When it's ready to go, and go through the necessary processes, the money will be spent. The commitment is made to the necessary communities that are impacted by this money.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier says the details on these projects are still being worked out. They were worked out almost two years ago. This government has been in office for about 18 months; \$12 million was approved for supportive housing and health supports for vulnerable populations across the province; \$11 million for a new wellness centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay; \$4.5 million for a new aquatics facility in Placentia; and \$2.5 million in funding for a cardiovascular hybrid operating room at the Health Sciences Centre.

Again, nearly two years later, why has there been no progress? Has this government backtracked on previous commitments and are they making changes to how this funding is going to be allocated?

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is if the government at the time had done a better job in putting an agreement in place, we would not be in the position that we're in right now.

Mr. Speaker, they made a lot of announcements, let's face it. The Members opposite, who was the government at the time, they made a lot of announcements. Not a lot of detail behind it; they would go out, make announcements.

Just a few minutes ago when I listened to the Leader of the PC Party when he talked about a motivated government, Mr. Speaker, what it reminded me of: one morning speaking to a conference. I think it was a NOIA conference when the premier of the day was so motivated to make an announcement, he went down and announced that Statoil would be reaching an agreement within a couple of weeks.

Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? Statoil didn't even know anything about it.

So when you talk about making announcements, there's a difference in making announcements and putting things in action, Mr. Speaker. When it's ready to be done, when the process is completed, the money will be in place.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** The Premier never lets the facts get in the way of a good story.

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

**MR. KENT:** And his blame-the-former-government argument is getting old. People in the province are tired of hearing it and we certainly are as well. They were elected to govern and it's time for them to start doing so.

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

**MR. KENT:** Are you cancelling the previously approved projects? Yes or no?

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

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

I just find it very odd and weird that the Member is asking questions about that. When you look at the pool in Placentia, I'm after having nine meetings with the Town of Placentia. It was just last Monday myself and the Premier had a meeting with Happy Valley-Goose Bay; five meetings on the centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Guess what? Not one question, not one inquiry in the last 18 months from the Members opposite. Now, all of a sudden, they've become a concern.

I can tell the Member opposite that we're meeting with the town officials. We are getting the program in place. We are working diligently to make sure we're getting the best bang for our dollars. Each of the towns are working with us

and we're after having at least six, seven meetings with one and five with the other town to get these projects moving to satisfy all the people in the area.

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

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, we're concerned because two years have passed and this government has taken no action whatsoever. Nine meetings in Placentia: no results; five meetings in Happy Valley-Goose Bay: no action, no commitment.

We understand that Municipal Affairs and town officials from Placentia met again last week to discuss the swimming pool project. They're very frustrated that in almost two years nothing has been done regarding the project.

If you're still unable to meet commitments from the 2015 agreement for the people of Placentia and other communities, how confident can people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador be that your government can administer the Innovation and Business Development Fund recently announced?

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I find it strange not one question, not one letter, not one meeting, not one inquiry about the Placentia pool. Just for the record, just so the Member opposite doesn't stand up again and ask questions which he has no idea about, it was 14 days ago that Placentia finally put in a final cost for the pool – that Placentia put in.

It had nothing to do – because we're working through the agreement of the building. It's a massive building. You just can't take it and say we're going to go ahead and build a swimming pool. They're building a lot on to the swimming pool. They're going to look out for the swimming, exercise inside. They're going to

have walking. That takes time. That takes engineering.

We are working constantly with the town. Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago was when they came in with the final price and we're working on that price.

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

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

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

**MR. KENT:** First blame the previous government then blame the Town of Placentia.

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

**MR. KENT:** We're raising these questions, Mr. Speaker, because the people of Placentia trusted that government –

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

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

**MR. KENT:** – would follow through with its commitments. We trusted that this government would honour previous commitments and they have not; more broken promises.

I ask the minister: Didn't the Town of Placentia have completed designs 18 months ago and your department sent them back to the drawing board? Isn't that why you just received new plans in the past week or so?

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

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

I remind all hon. Members the only individual I wish to hear from is the individual recognized to speak.

The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I'll make one commitment here. When we finally get the work done for the pool in Placentia there's one commitment I'll make. It will not be like the

hospital and long-term care, making five or six announcements on the same project and never delivering.

When we get this project done, the design work that the minister is talking about will be used to put out for a project build. It will be used to put out; it will not be wasted as the Members opposite did.

I can tell you one thing; they'll have their swimming pool. I'll guarantee you that; they'll have the swimming pool. I'll guarantee you another thing, we'll have the hospital and we'll have the long-term care facility in Corner Brook. Unlike the Member opposite who made at least four commitments that it's going to start, going to be built and never delivered on one. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, never even had the design done on either one of them while making those commitments.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

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

As a recent *Telegram* story indicated, the existing legislation states only that municipalities in this province may contribute to a public library as opposed to must contribute. Your new libraries report gives a completely different direction.

I ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Is he in favour of downloading the financial responsibility for public libraries on the municipalities?

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I understand the dilemma we're in but I can guarantee you one thing, when we make a decision with the municipalities it's going to be in conjunction and in consultation with the municipality.

One thing we won't do, Mr. Speaker, is we won't have a mayor in the town up to Kent supplies get a call from the minister of Municipal Affairs and the minister of Education

offering \$225,000 a year to pay for expenses to their building so they could put a library in to help them pay the cost of the building. That's not the way to operate libraries.

When the Member opposite stands up and wants to ask questions about the libraries, think about the \$225,000 in CBS that they made from the Kent store, that two ministers called the mayor from the Kent store. When we work with municipalities – there are municipalities that want the libraries – we'll help out, but I can tell it will be in conjunction and consultation with the municipalities who are –

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

**MR. BRAZIL:** I hope it's better consultation than the downloading of firefighting costs for municipalities, road improvement costs for municipalities and recreation facilities costs for municipalities.

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** The unions representing provincial library workers were very critical of the extremely vague report. They contend this report leaves many in limbo.

When will the librarians and the general public be provided with the details of how government will proceed?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, as I said here in the House of Assembly yesterday, this is the most detailed overview of the public library system that we've had in this province for 2½ decades. It is very detailed.

Every librarian and library worker in this province who wanted to participate in that consultation did. There is a detailed road map in the report. It will be followed. The public libraries board, it's now in their hands. They will provide direction; they will consult with the



department on their future direction. We won't dictate to them as we have not in the past.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

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

Now that the minister has had time to read and consider the report, will any of the recommendations be adopted? If so, what can people expect and what time frames?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, as is customary here in the House, the Education critic for the PC Party continues to be confused with the relationships between external agencies, boards and commissions and departments of government.

Unlike the previous administration which interfered constantly in the inner workings of school boards, libraries boards and Memorial University, deciding who would be president and who would not be president and so on and so forth – unlike that meddling approach we are honouring the legislative autonomy that is afforded to public institutions in our province.

When the Public Libraries Board has an opportunity to build a road map based on what's in that report, we will work with them to build a more sustainable public library system.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

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

I must remind the minister that he commissioned this report. In principle, it's his report. He's had a copy of it. He's paid for it.

The minister stated on May 18: "When that report is released, I will provide a full accounting of what it cost." It's 12 days later. Where are the numbers, Mr. Minister?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, the day that the public libraries report was released by the Public Libraries Board, the media widely reported that it cost \$253,000. There has not been a comprehensive review of the public library system for 2½ decades.

If you look at the amount of funding that has been provided over that period of time, it approaches \$300 million. The amount of money that was paid for this report amounts for less than 1 per cent of the total amount of money, either on an annual basis or over the course of the 25 years, that there was no analysis done of the system.

This is good value for money and overall an infinitesimally small amount of money in comparison to what we are paying out every year for public library services.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Restoring Adult Basic Education to the College of the North Atlantic will ensure that students can access further programs at the college as well as student-centred support services always with the student's best interests in mind. We were assured in Estimates that government is going to make it happen.

I ask the Premier: What actions are the government taking to reinstate ABE in the public college system where it belongs?

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

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

The Member opposite and all of us would remember that Adult Basic Education was removed from the college system in 2013. I do know the minister responsible is doing a full analysis and looking at exactly what can be done with Adult Basic Education, how best to provide that service, how it should be done in this province, Mr. Speaker. He's doing a thorough analysis and when that analysis is completed, I'm sure he'll let the people of the province know what he will be doing with Adult Basic Education as it pertains to the college system.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for that information. But I would point out that the government is publicly talking about the huge potential in returning ABE to the College of the North Atlantic, citing distance learning as an example and saying the sky is the limit. I say to the minister that people want actions, not words.

I ask the Premier: Will his government commit to bringing ABE back to the public college system by September 2017?

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

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

As Members opposite would know, as the people of the province would know, there's a full modernization plan for the College of the North Atlantic that is underway. He's spoken publicly about this and tabled the report.

Mr. Speaker, the issue around Adult Basic Education is very complex and a very responsive

program to the needs of the people of this province. A thorough analysis is being done in a timely way. I think the minister has spoken about the needs of the Adult Basic Education, about the opportunities within the College of the North Atlantic, but no decision has been made at this point because the analysis is still taking place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Before the previous Conservative government so recklessly privatized the ABE program at the Waterford, it was provided by the College of the North Atlantic in partnership with Eastern Health. They incorporated comprehensive support services to help students with complex mental health needs and were extremely successful. The program was held up as a model and was the envy of the rest of Canada.

I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: Will he commit to working with the minister to having the college once again deliver the ABE program at the Waterford?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker.

As the Member opposite may recall from her time on the All-Party Committee, the discussion about wraparound services and transitions from acute care into the community are particular pressure areas that have been acknowledged across the health care system and not just in mental health or addictions. Certainly, I have been open to this concept.

The implementation group are working on the report of the All-Party Committee and I would hope that would be something that would be addressed once their report is ready. I anticipate that being out before the end of June, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, the majority of inmates in correctional facilities across the province have complex mental health needs, addictions issues and have not completed high school.

I ask the Minister of Justice: Will he commit to working with the minister to having the College of the North Atlantic deliver ABE and GED programs at correctional facilities throughout the province, with comprehensive supports to help inmates in rehabilitation and increasing their likelihood of successfully reintegrating into society?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

I thank the Member for what is a very important question. What I can confirm is that, yes, I will always commit to working with other Members of this government to ensure the best interests of the people of this province, including the people that are residents right now at our various institutions and corrections centres.

The fact is that we need to do this. It needs to be co-operation between the Departments of Health, Advanced Education, Justice and you name it.

We need to break down the silos that have previously existed. I look forward to doing that. Hopefully we can make decisions that will help everybody in this province.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### Tabling of Documents

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 5 of the *Local Authority Guarantee Act*, I wish to table the annual report of loan guarantees provided to local governments to enable them to arrange interim financing for capital projects. I'm pleased to report there were no new guarantees issued on behalf of local governments during the fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, the last report under this act was tabled on April 11, 2016, and included guarantees issued up to and including March 31, 2016. The current report covers the period from April 1, 2016, to March 31, 2017.

As well, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 49(2) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I wish to table the attached list of temporary loans that were raised under section 48 of the act since my last report to the House on April 11, 2016.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 55(3) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I wish to report that there were no guaranteed loans paid out by the province since the last report, also on April 11, 2016.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 55.1(2) of the act, I wish to report that there has been no guaranteed debt of a Crown corporation or agency assumed by the province since the April 11, 2016 report.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further tabling of documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

**MR. SPEAKER:** 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 smaller class sizes, adequate learning environment and effective curriculum are paramount to success of our youth; and

WHEREAS recent budget decisions have negatively impacted student supports, educational resources and teaching allocations; and

WHEREAS the provincial education system should ensure that each child has the ability to reach his or her full potential;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to enhance the education system in Newfoundland and Labrador, introduce initiatives which ensure smaller class sizes which will provide more sufficient personal space per child and allow more individual learning opportunities, develop effective curriculums which enable youth to develop both life skills and optimal academic achievements, provide resources to ensure a fully beneficial inclusion model is in place and to ensure all children in our province have equal standard of education in their learning environment.

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

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

The Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I've had an opportunity over the last number of months in this hon. House to present this petition and a number of other ones relevant to our education system, and some of the challenges that people are facing. Those challenges are faced by a multitude of those involved, particularly the administrators, the teachers themselves, the parents, the school councils, the district boards, but particularly the students themselves.

The lack of services and the lack of assets that are necessary indicate that our students are not going to have the ability to achieve a well-rounded, full inclusive education that they so deservedly should be entitled to. What's being outlined here is a collage of challenges and issues that have been identified by all these stakeholders that I mentioned earlier regarding how collectively we have to look at how we best fill the gaps in our education system and how we support these students in our system.

It talks about particular things: how we've become regressive around some of the approaches here. Larger class sizes are not in any way – you'll find no science that will dictate that larger class sizes are in the best interests of a student.

They're asking to go back to – for a number of years we tried to find something that was workable, but we've increased that and it becomes a challenge where in some school systems where the classroom sizes are a challenge. We need to build more facilities or upgrade the facilities themselves. The challenges around the number of teachers that are allocated and the particular extra resources we need to have to ensure that people have a well-rounded education accessible to them.

Some of the other partnerships that need to be developed; we need to look at how we better drive those types of initiatives. They talk here about optimal academic achievements and they talk about life skills training, they talk about financial training. These are all very important life skills that people will need to become better citizens and productive citizens in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to present this on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to improve our education system.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** 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 of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the US Centers for Disease Control now estimates that autism spectrum disorder affects one in 68 children, which represents a 30 per cent increase from the estimate two years ago; and

WHEREAS early diagnosis of ASD is essential because there is a critical developmental period when early intervention is vital for future success of children with ASD; and

WHEREAS in other provinces an ASD diagnosis can be made by specialists certified and trained in ADOS;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to allow other specialists trained and certified with ADOS to make the autism spectrum disorder diagnosis.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to once again be able to stand and support the petitioners with regard to their concerns around early diagnosis of children with ADS. This week is a significant week for doing it because it is Early Childhood Educators' Week. In this instance we are talking about the needs of children who, in the ones I'm going to speak to now, are not just children who are early childhood, but children who are early childhood who are on the autism spectrum.

If there is any group that needs special needs early in their lives, it is children who are on the autism spectrum. The earlier these children can be diagnosed, the earlier they can be assessed,

the earlier they can have the programs that they require the better their lives are going to be.

I cannot impress upon this House, upon the government, and the petitioners can't impress enough on us either how important it is that assessments that are done of our children here in this province are done by a child development team, a team that includes a pediatrician, a psychologist, a speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist and intake coordinator. We need a team like that in every regional health authority, Mr. Speaker, so that our children are not waiting for months to get a developmental assessment.

At the Janeway right now, according to figures from the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, the waiting time is 10 months and that's up six months from January 2016. With the Central RHA, it's six months of waiting. With the Western, it's 10 months but creeping up. In Labrador, it's 3½ months.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to take this seriously and to put in place what is needed.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** 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 provincial government has mandated the Eastern Regional Service Board to implement modern waste management practices in the eastern region; and

WHEREAS the Eastern Regional Service Board has opened a Waste Recovery Facility on Old Brigus Road in Whitbourne to receive bulk items such as: appliances, furniture, electronics, car and truck tires, construction and demolition debris, shingles, et cetera;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the

House of Assembly to urge government to insist mitigation measures be established to contain the waste held at the facility and improve esthetics surrounding the containment area.

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

Mr. Speaker, I brought this petition – this is numerous times or several times I've brought it up. It's a big issue to the residents of Whitbourne. This transshipment – I call it a transshipment facility but it's a drop-off for larger appliances, larger items. It's on the Old Brigus Road, which is directly parallel with the Trans-Canada Highway, but it's right on the border of the communities near a residential area.

There is a contract been called, tenders have been called for some fencing and some trees to cover up to try to contain this, but the problem with it is they don't feel and most of the town doesn't think that's going to be enough to solve the issue. You need covered containment areas, you need berms. It needs to be done in a more aesthetic value.

It hurts the community, the optics of a mattress blowing out on the highway. You have tourists travelling on that road. The optics of just a pile of garbage – as you enter your community, this is a pile of garbage that basically faces you as you come to the community of Whitbourne.

Residents have no issue with this facility being there, but while Eastern waste management are doing the tender, they're encouraging them or asking government to help them to expand that tender to make it more 'sightly' I guess, more aesthetically valued, better aesthetics because the people in the community have complained about this numerous times to their town and publicly about the mess this is creating in their community and they ask for government to step in and provide better mitigation measures.

Thank you very much.

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

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

I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of 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 *Budget 2015* announced a new school for the Witless Bay-Mobile school system; and

WHEREAS the planning and design of this school was underway; and

WHEREAS Statistics Canada has recognized the region as having significant growth; and

WHEREAS the project was cancelled in *Budget 2016*;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reverse its decision and construct the proposed school for the Witless Bay-Mobile school system announced in 2015.

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

Mr. Speaker, this has been an issue that I worked on with the community for the past number of years. In 2015, based on statistics, based on consultants that were paid for from the public purse, it was a clear and definitive decision that this new middle school needed to be built. It was recommended by the Eastern School District, it was confirmed by the Eastern School District and at no time have they approved the current design of nine classrooms that are underway on Mobile Central High School.

Today in Question Period, I made a comment and the minister referenced the fact if I wanted to ask questions, get up and ask questions. We've asked a lot of questions here but, unfortunately, the minister is not, has not and cannot answer the question as to why, for some reason, this Liberal government decided to cancel the middle school and come up with some scheme to put nine classrooms on Mobile Central High that today the consultant, based on

our meeting last week with the parents with TW, still aren't sure if this facility or these classrooms can even be built in Mobile Central High School.

In fact, now it's predicted it's anywhere from 30 to 50 per cent over what they originally budgeted. In fact, even with it built by 2021, the department's own numbers, the government's own numbers tell them that at that time in 2021 there are going to be capacity issues and they're going to have to build on again.

Further to that, in the meeting it was told to us that they're looking at an interim plan, a contingency plan because the timeline to do this now has been pushed out. In actual fact, we hear there are portable classrooms being ordered when in fact, if you're doing the construction of nine classrooms on Mobile Central High, there is no place to put these classrooms.

So now you have a situation where the thing is over budget, no one can rationalize. The Premier has been asked to meet with the families. He won't do that. He won't meet with the region. The minister met with us some time ago. His actual line to the people was: Well, why would they want to move up there anyway?

Now just imagine, a Minister of the Crown actually said to people in my district: Why do you think the growth is going to continue? Why are people going to move up to that region? It's unbelievable that a Minister of the Crown could sit with people from anywhere in this province and make that statement to them.

He's over there heckling now in the corner. Why doesn't he get in his seat and stand up and answer some questions. He never has and never will. It's pathetic. It's pathetic for a government minister to do that, the Minister of Education. It's disgusting, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker.

Oh, you have a petition?

Oh, sorry, I did not see the Member for St. John's Centre. Certainly she can put her petition in and hopefully it's nicer.

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

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

I would be remiss to not stand yet again and present this petition after – I've lost count how many times I've presented this petition on behalf of the good people Newfoundland and Labrador.

Here we go again. Hopefully my colleagues here in the House and the people at home will be able to hear the very strong message that people are sending through this petition.

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 government has removed the provincial point-of-sale tax rebate on books, which will raise the tax on books from 5 per cent to 15 per cent; and

WHEREAS an increase in the tax on books will reduce book sales to the detriment of local book stores, publishers and authors, and the amount collected by government must be weighed against the loss in economic activity caused by higher book prices; and

WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the lowest literacy rates in Canada, and the other provinces do not tax books because they recognize the need to encourage reading and literacy; and

WHEREAS this province has many nationally and internationally known storytellers, but we will be the only people in Canada who will have to pay our provincial government a tax to read the books of our own writers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government not to impose a provincial sales tax on books.

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

Mr. Speaker, today in this House we had a number of young people, high school students, who had won all kinds of awards in science competitions. We so proudly honoured them here today.

I would imagine, Mr. Speaker, if you asked each and every one of those young people, potential leaders in our community, brilliant young people, award winners – if you asked them whether or not it's a good idea to tax books, what do you think they would say? Absolutely they would say: No, absolutely that makes no sense to tax books. Books are a building block for the formation and education of our young people.

I would think if this government was really responsive to the needs of our young people – and they're talking about how important it is for young people to stay here. They have their innovative funds; they have their social enterprise funds.

If they were to ask the young people who they hope to be able to support through all these new programs – if they ask these young people: Do you think it's a good idea to tax books? I bet my bottom dollar that they wouldn't be able to find a single young person who is interested in the future of this province, I bet you they couldn't find a single young person to say it's a good idea to tax books. As a matter of fact, they would say it would be the most unwise decision to tax books in terms of the needs of our young people.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. KENT:** 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 *Budget 2016* implemented a regressive tax on books in this province; and

WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province in the country to have such a tax; and

WHEREAS a tax will undoubtedly affect literacy rates in this province as well as negatively impact local authors and publishers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to immediately cancel this ill-conceived book tax.

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

This petition is signed by residents of a number of communities in the province. Just like the Member for St. John's Centre just argued, this book tax is an ill-conceived regressive measure that has all kinds of unintended consequences. When this was implemented – and this is just one of 300 new taxation measures and fees that we saw in last year's budget, 299½ of which were continued into *Budget 2017* and are now in effect.

This one has had a devastating effect on multiple segments of our population. Some of the headlines at the time when this news first hit: Newfoundland and Labrador set to become first province in Canada to tax books; HST to be applied on books; Newfoundland and Labrador to become the only province to tax book purchases; book tax annoying for readers, crushing for independent store owners; Memorial students say new Newfoundland and Labrador book tax hitting them hard.

Beyond the attack on our local libraries, particularly the rural ones which we had a chance to talk about in Question Period once again today, this is an issue that will affect literacy in our province. We already have literacy rates that we should not be proud of. We have work to do in that area and this is a major step backwards. That's one unintended consequence of this book tax.

This will affect our arts community as the Member previously outlined this afternoon. It



will affect our artists, our authors and others, our publishers. This will have a huge effect on the arts community; it will have an effect on our students. Students are now paying more for their books as a result of this move. It will affect young families. It will affect seniors, many of whom are avid readers and will now have to pay more for books as well.

This is another decision that was made that is bad for people, bad for families, bad for the economy and bad for our communities. We know there are tough decisions to be made and we've presented alternatives on how to deal with some of the fiscal challenges facing Newfoundland and Labrador. It was a plan that was working.

To tax books as part of the solution, that's not a solution. It's a cop-out, it's hurtful, it's having a damaging effect on many sectors of our community and it needs to be reversed.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Orders of the Day

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I would call Order 2, third reading of Bill 11.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that Bill 11, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act, be now read the third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded by the hon. the Government House Leader that Bill 11 be now read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Those against?

Carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act. (Bill 11)

**MR. SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a third time and it is ordered that it do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 11)

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I would call Motion 1.

I would move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, Bill 13, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** What was the bill number, 13?

It is moved and seconded by the hon. the Government House Leader that he shall leave to introduce Bill 13 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Those against?

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador to introduce a bill, “An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act,” carried. (Bill 13)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act. (Bill 13)

**MR. SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a first time.

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 13 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would move Motion 3. I would move pursuant to provisional Standing Order 11(1) that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Tuesday, May 30, 2017.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the House do not adjourn at 5:30 today.

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Those against?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 12.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 12.

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Those against?

Carried.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

### Committee of the Whole

**CHAIR (Dempster):** Order, please!

We are now debating the related resolution and Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act.

### Resolution

“That it is expedient to bring in a measure further to amend *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations.”

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I’m glad to take a few moments and speak to Bill 12. Of course, this is relating to the situation with Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. I want to say from the outset that I do support this bill. It’s certainly something that I think is important.

One of the issues I’ve seen over the last day or two – and I’ve been talking to a number of people who have called me and there have been questions on social media and so on – I think there’s a lot of confusion out there, quite frankly, in the public around this bill and exactly what it means. There are people who think that basically the government is cutting a cheque for \$88 million to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper which is not true. That’s not what’s happening. But it’s important, I think, that we all do our part to get the message out because it is very important what we’re doing here today in this bill.

I don't think there's anybody in this House on either side that's going to be against what's being done. Really what is being done here, it's protecting the pensions of the workers at Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. I'm glad to see there's really no risk or any additional risk to the taxpayers as it relates to this.

This relates to an agreement which was struck back in 2014 by the former administration but supported by all parties in the House of Assembly at the time when the mill was in trouble. It wasn't unique to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. We know what's happened in Stephenville, Grand Falls-Windsor and other parts of the country. The demand for newsprint is down and there had to be ways to try to make that mill more viable because of the importance that mill has for the people of Corner Brook, for the people on the Northern Peninsula and Central Newfoundland who supply wood product to the mill, to the economy, not just of Western Newfoundland, the Northern Peninsula and Central, but to Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole.

I think we all recognize the history of the mill. We recognize the value of the mill. I think back in 2014, the government of the day – and, as I said, supported by all parties – recognized the importance to do what could be done to ensure that mill was viable because of the impact that it would have, like I said, not just on workers in that mill, but all the other people that provided supply to the mill. It was important to keep it open. We all agreed with that and we all supported that.

Now, that particular agreement at the time, what happened of course was there was a loan of \$110 million, as I understand it, and recall – and certainly from the briefing I had it kind of reminded me. There was a \$100 million loan provided to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper.

Some of that money went to the pensions because the pension had been underfunded. I believe it was because the employer wasn't paying their share into the plan. I think that's what happened or some of the money got spent, whatever.

There was a shortfall nonetheless, regardless of how it happened, in the pension plan. So there

was money gone into deal with the plan that was underfunded. There was money that went into, I think, paying off some creditors and so on and there was money that went into making some improvements, as I understand it, to the processes and to the equipment to make the mill more viable, more competitive.

As I recall, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, in terms of the actual operation itself, they had been very competitive and had a very skilled workforce, but there were things that needed to be done to upgrade, modernize the facility and, like I said, take care of some of those other obligations. At the time, \$110 million was loaned to the mill.

Up against that, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper have an asset and the asset being the Deer Lake power and Watson's Brook or Watson's creek. Forgive me if I don't get the name totally right, but Watson something – I think it's creek.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Brook.

**MR. LANE:** Brook, is it? Okay, Watson's Brook.

That's an asset that they have. Basically, the agreement of the day, back in 2014, was that there would be a valuation done on what that asset is worth and it was determined it would be \$150 million that the provincial government – should that mill shut down, the provincial government would purchase that asset for \$150 million but that would go against \$110 million loan.

So in other words, really what would happen is if it had shut down at that time, the province would receive the asset and would pay Corner Brook Pulp and Paper \$40 million because they owed us \$110 million. That's generally how it worked, as I understand it.

Of course that increased in 2017 or 2016, I think – or 2017, I think, it goes up to \$175 million and 2019 it goes up to \$200 million, or 2020 around there, it goes up to \$200 million valuation. At the end of the day, come 2020, the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador are already in, so to speak, on that \$200 million commitment. We're paying it anyway, regardless. If none of this was done, we would be on the hook for the

\$200 million based on the 2014 agreement in lieu of that asset should the mill shut down.

Right now we've loaned \$110 million and what's being proposed is to loan another \$90 million, minus the \$2 million that we're taking to look after environmental issues should they occur. So there's \$110 million that they've already had a loan of, \$2 million gets held in case there were any environmental issues should the plant close down.

The \$88 million is being held basically in trust. I think they call it a creditor's note. I forget the exact terminology but basically it's held there in a pot, so to speak, that should the plant shut down at any time – even though the pension plan is no longer underfunded, that's fine. If the plant shuts down, it's not underfunded now based on if people keep working and people keep paying in and the company keeps paying in. But if it shut down and there are no longer the company and no longer employees paying into the plan, then at some point in time, the people who are in receipt of a pension, those funds would run out before they passed away.

We need to set aside additional money to ensure that if that were ever to happen, the people who are currently receiving a pension would continue to receive their pension right up until the time they passed. That's what that's doing. That extra money is being held there against that \$200 million asset to ensure that happens.

So, no, nobody is writing a cheque for \$88 million to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. No, they can't take that money, because there is no money in theory, it's just there on paper. They can't take this \$88 million and spend it on whatever they like. That can't happen. There is no actual money, per se. All it is, it is ensuring that if they were ever to shut down, the employees would receive their full pension benefits.

There is no additional cost whatsoever or risk to the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador as it relates to what's being done here now. The only risk, one could argue, would have been in 2014 when the original deal was cut and it was decided we would pay up to \$200 million for that asset. Plus that asset, of course, gets re-evaluated when the Maritime Link comes online.

It could go higher, potentially. It was the 2014 agreement that saw us guarantee that we would purchase that asset. Nothing being done today is in any way making that any more risky or whatever to people at all.

I don't see an issue with it. I think there's no additional risk to the people whatsoever. It's taking care of the pensioners; it's making sure that they get looked after in the event that mill was ever to shut down. It's protecting the people and it's also helping the mill as well to function, operate and to eliminate that liability.

I think it's a good thing overall.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. LANE:** I'm glad the government stood up to the plate to look after the workers.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. LANE:** We all support it I'm sure.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. Member his time for speaking has expired.

The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for St. George's – Humber.

**MR. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's great to get up to have a few words on this piece of legislation.

I don't intend to belabour the issues here but I just wanted to add my voice to those in support of this motion. I think it's good to hear other Members of the House, from all sides of the House, talk in support of this motion. It's good to hear that it's getting widespread support.

Rather than tangle this legislation up with a lot of other issues I think we have to look at what's being done here on its own merits. We have to look at is this a good piece of legislation for the workers, for the mill and for the province in general? I think that's the way to judge this piece of legislation.

If it passes those tests, if the answer is, yes, it's good for the province, yes, it's good for the mill, yes, it's good for the pensioners, then we have to support it. I'm glad to hear that people around here, although they have some questions, they're supporting this piece of legislation. It's very positive for the whole province and in particular, the people who have worked at the mill and the people who are working at the mill.

This weekend in Corner Brook we saw some meetings that really brought a lot of work accumulated to a point where the government had meetings with pensioners and workers at the mill. I was happy to hear that the workers and the pensioners were very supportive of these changes. They recognized the benefits that were to come their way because of this benefit. It's generally been well received on its own merits, Madam Chair.

We all know that pulp and paper mills are facing challenging times all around the world, particularly here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We've seen two of our pulp and paper mills close down in this province. I think we have to be willing to work with unions, to work with the companies themselves as a government and to work together to see that the mill in Corner Brook continues to operate and continues to provide employment and benefits to the community.

I'm very encouraged that this whole process has come together, that we're having a positive outcome that doesn't involve any further expense by the government, that protects pension plans and addresses solvency issues, that allows the Government of Newfoundland to monitor all issues and decisions related to the trust and protect the best interests of pensioners. I'm very pleased that is the outcome of this and very supportive of this piece of legislation which will make it all happen.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Again, it's indeed a privilege to get up here today and represent the District of Cape St. Francis and the beautiful people in the District of Cape St. Francis. We're looking at Bill 12 and it's *The Loan and Guarantee Act* that we're going to talk about here today. I think most people in this Legislature will support what's happening here and will support the workers and the retirees in Corner Brook in the area working in the paper mill.

Madam Chair, when we look at our workers and the people in our province this is a good story. The money and a lot of the details have yet to be put in place, but any time anyone has some security and they – when you work your lifetime at an industry you try to set up so that your retiring years are taken care of.

I believe in this province right now, I could be corrected, but I think there's about 300 – 316 I heard yesterday – different pension plans in the province. I heard the Member for Labrador West last night get up and he talked about Wabush Mines. My heart goes out to the people in Wabush. It's devastating for them to realize they will lose their health benefits, which is something they worked all their lives for and I'm sure they worked hard for the company. To realize then down the road – it was something that was put in place, they were assured they'd get in their retirement years and won't get it. It's very unfortunate that through legislation, through everything else, that they're not getting it right now.

Also, to lose 25 per cent of their income; I'm sure a lot of those people, like most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, have a fixed income. They know exactly where those dollars are going, whether it's paying for a vehicle, whether it's paying for a home, your grocery bill, your light bill. They have budgets done up and if you take 25 per cent away from individuals, it's so difficult to be able to cope and understand what it's going – it could be paying for university or education, anything that they have to do, because they worked hard all their lives for their retirement. That's what most people do. Like I said, there are 300-or-more pension plans right now in the province.

The Member for Lab West got up yesterday and spoke about Wabush Mines. I know the deal

with Corner Brook Pulp and Paper is based on a lot of what they have is equity, and the money they have, the \$150 million right now, that's there for Deer Lake, the hydro plant in Deer Lake. They're using that as part of – if something happens there then they can always fall back.

That's what I spoke of to one of the ministers yesterday. I just asked a question, wouldn't this be something good that we could do for all pension plans so that people in the province could have some assurance that when they do retire, the work they put in, the years they put in, that they're secured the money they rightfully own and rightfully worked for and everything else.

I know there are other companies in the province where maybe we can do some kind of deal with them also to make sure our residents – because that's what we're here for. We're here as elected officials to make sure we represent all people of the province. I know the people in Corner Brook – I'm happy with this deal. I'm happy they're secured, that their pensions are secured now and in the future. It's important to those families.

All pensioners in the province, I'm sure they want to have the same security. I think government down the road; I think it's a good start for maybe looking at different pension plans right through the whole province. That we can probably see if there's some way we can secure those pension plans also and have some kind of way to show the people in the province that if something goes wrong – like what happened in Wabush and Cliffs, it just seemed like they shut down the company and just ran out of town, according to the Member for Lab West. That's not a reflection of whether you're on this side of the House or the other side of the House or you're a Member of the Third, that stuff happens.

The thing we should be doing here, as elected officials, is making sure that the workers, the people of the province, have some kind of security and they're protected. I think that's what this agreement does. It protects the retirees and it protects the people that are working there in Corner Brook right now. I'm sure they're from all over the West Coast. It's security for those people.

I support this. I understand listening to the minister yesterday about the whole financing and understanding the financing part of it and where the money is going to go, because I believe \$29 million is to go right into the fund right now to protect the pension plan. As that grows, I guess the other monies will be used for taking care of that. Those were some of the questions we had yesterday in Question Period.

I look forward to government looking at other plans. I look at the Wabush Mines situation. My heart goes out to the people in Wabush. I feel they were done badly by the company that really didn't secure their futures. I hope that something down the road – I know it's in courts now and stuff like that. I hope sometime it will be favourable for those people because they deserve the same thing that the people in Corner Brook deserve.

They worked hard all their lives to ensure they would have as their – I don't know if you call them golden years or retirement years or whatever you call them, but people work hard to make sure that as they do grow older, as they do retire, that there are some funds put in place for them. They work and they say at the end of the day when I retire, this is the lifestyle and this is my livelihood that I can depend on.

That's due to the income you can have because, again, like I said, I understand that with Wabush Mines a big concern of all the workers there was their health care program. As we get older in – my mother used to say golden years, there's no such thing as golden years. Anyway, as they retire in their retirement years, sometimes medical expenses are a lot higher than they are when you're in your younger years and mid-years. A health plan is so important to people that are retired and it's important they have some kind of protection.

So, again, I'd like to support this bill. Sometimes when bills come here before government we will debate and we'll argue over whether they're good or bad or whatever, but I think any time that we do stuff that protects the future and gives people a sense of trust, a sense of security – another thing that it really does is it takes away from the stress that people will have.

I know that when you retire you get to those later years, ages like myself, and you're looking at retirement down the road, you always want to make sure that you can still survive. I mean most retirees just want to be able to live a decent life in comfort. Hopefully this will help with the comfort of the people and down the road it will give them a sense of trust that they have a company there. We all hope that Corner Brook Pulp and Paper lasts for years and years and they don't have to go in, but at least there's some form of protection here.

That's the big thing about this bill. I'm sure the minister and government, whether you're on this side of the House or the other side of the House, if there are other pension plans that can be able to work like this so people can have that security and have that form of less stress, they know that in the future the dollars that they expect are the dollars that they're going to get down the road.

There are some details here that we asked the minister about yesterday. There were some questions that we had in Question Period, I'm sure, that he'll probably answer when this gets closed today.

I look forward to government working with companies right across this province because there are a lot of pension plans out there. I really don't want to see what's happening in Labrador right now, in Wabush and Lab City and that area with Cliffs; they just got out of town. The last people on the totem pole that gets paid are the pensioners down the road and then to know that the income that you thought that you had is gone.

It is good to be able to do this. I look forward to all the details that the minister will give. I'll be supporting this bill.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

My apologies.

**MR. PETTEN:** Try again.

**CHAIR:** The hon. Member for Conception Bay South.

My apologies to the Member.

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's a pleasure to get up this afternoon and speak on Bill 12 as my colleague just spoke. We've all genuinely spoken. It's a good thing.

We support the continued operation of the mill in Corner Brook. As we all know, it's the backbone of Corner Brook and the Greater Corner Brook area. It's been around a long time. The community was built on the mill. It's always good to see the continued prosperity of a long-standing operation like that. It's a mainstay in the area. For that reason, we are glad to see that their pensions are protected and it gives viability to the company and to the pensioners, Madam Chair. There's a lot of concern out there on the street when you're a retiree, not knowing about your pension.

As my colleague referenced, we have the situation in Wabush where it's a really sad situation. I have a lot of Wabush Mines pensioners that live in my own district. As the Member for Lab West – myself and him have spoken many times. He's well aware of that as well. They're all spread throughout the province but I do have a lot in my district. A lot have reached out to me and, collectively, we all try to make sure that, at the end of the day, the right thing happens through the court process. That's a prime example of what can go wrong.

With this new loan guarantee for the mill in Corner Brook, hopefully we don't see a repeat of what happened in Wabush happen in Corner Brook. Like I say, I do want to be on record as saying that we do sympathize and support the Wabush pensioners in their plight. We're all hoping for a positive resolution whenever the courts do rule on that because it's totally unfair to the pensioners which this bill will hopefully give the longevity to the Corner Brook mill.

On that note, Madam Chair, I'd like to go back to 2014. The former administration also stepped up to the plate when Corner Brook was faced with some downturn in their business operations and they needed help to stay operational and stay active in the community. The former administration did step up to the plate and helped basically get them over that hurdle at the

time. It's gone a long way in their continued operation within Corner Brook prior to this most recent agreement.

I sat and listened to some debate over the last day or so when this Bill 12 has been debated. I know there's a bit of back and forth and that about – the responses made across the way at this former administration. I wasn't a Member of the former administration in the House of Assembly as such, but I question why would you be critical of the former administration? They stepped up; they gave a \$110 million loan guarantee. They worked out an agreement that kept the mill operational in Corner Brook which, if anything, you should be applauding for. Every deal is done differently or people might like to see certain things in a deal, but at the end of the day, the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill stayed operational, viable and a very important part of Corner Brook. That's a good thing.

Two or three years later, we're standing in our places and saying to the government opposite that we do support this loan act. We do support the continued operation of the Corner Brook mill. There are lots of questions we asked. Our leader asked questions yesterday. We may ask questions in coming days or in coming weeks, who knows, as they become available because that's our role. That role in the Opposition is to ask questions to get the facts for the people.

Governments govern, Oppositions keep government's feet to the fire, so to speak, to get answers for the general public that can't get those answers in the timely fashion that our elected representatives are in place to do. So on this side of the House, all Opposition Members, that's their role.

I'm somewhat taken aback sometimes when I hear some of the commentary and the criticisms. I know it's part of the process, I get all that, but on situations like this, it's not a bad thing to compliment each other. I'll throw a compliment when I think it's warranted and I think that the same thing back wouldn't be a bad thing either.

I heard several times yesterday, I know the Minister of Municipal Affairs was in his place and he was giving our leader a lecture about him and the current Premier had to go and arrange meetings for Corner Brook Pulp and Paper in

order to assure that the \$110 million loan from our former minister of Natural Resources – they had to assist him. Is that something you would not do as an elected Member for your area?

If any minister across the way asked me to intervene in a corporation in my community that they're willing to help, it would be pretty naive of me to say, no, I'm not helping you. You'd be very thankful that government came to you, first of all, to help a business in your community and you'd do everything in your power to make sure that everything worked out.

Back to that comment, that stuck with me because I'm thinking should you thank the Opposition Members of the day that helped the former administration work out – get the meetings for that deal? Should you thank them or shouldn't they not be thanking the former administration for stepping up to the plate and helping assure that \$110 million loan? It's a two-way street and, yes, it's important, I think, to highlight that because this is a good thing and that was a good thing. Again, like I said, I wasn't a Member during the 2014 negotiations but it did stick with me a bit when I sat back and listened. I try to listen to most debate and that one really stuck with me.

You can make shots all you want but that was one of the ones I was like, this is a good thing. You would have been better off getting up and saying – and it was one thank you, but then it was almost like, yeah, but we had to go out and save the day. You weren't saving the day without the support of the former administration that believed in the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill. It was a good thing. Say it. There's nothing wrong with saying that. It's all right to criticize, we all do that, but I think on this one that was a joint effort at the time to make it work.

We're standing in our places today on Bill 12. We support the legislation; we support the Corner Brook mill. I guess what I don't support is some of the antics or some of the comments back and forth because I don't get it. Maybe I look at things in a different context than others. I don't get the criticism that comes across the way. The former administration came to the table and helped back in 2014, and I think the



current administration stepped up and helped them through this hurdle.

With these company towns we've seen what happened in Grand Falls with the Abitibi mill. That was a big loss to that area and a big loss to the province. Previously, over the years, we've seen fish plants close; we've seen the Stephenville mill years back close. They're very vital and important industries to all of these communities. They're the backbone of most of these communities.

I know you can't save everything. Government can't be the be-all to everyone and everything, but they can provide an environment. Sometimes in our economy – and we get up and we talk about the budget issues. You've got to provide an environment that businesses can survive. Your taxing policies, your tax base, a lot of these things are out in our economy, as we said.

Anywhere we can help out, I think it's incumbent upon any government to do so, regardless of where the business is located, what district it's in, what area of the province. These are vitally important, especially in rural Newfoundland. These are the backbone of all of these communities.

Even out in Corner Brook, even though Corner Brook is a city on the West Coast and it's the hub of activity, I've been to Corner Brook many, many times, and I tell you that mill is the centrepiece of that city. The conversation on the street – they're mill workers, they're union workers, they're blue-collar. It's a blue-collar city.

I have a great deal of respect for the people of Corner Brook and the people that have worked in that mill over the years, both current and past, because they should be proud. It's a beautiful city and it was built on the mill. It exists today largely in part because of the mill.

I want to commend government for stepping up to the plate and helping their situation in 2017, but I also think it's worthwhile to mention that in 2014, the former administration stepped up to the plate in a big way and saved the mill as well.

On that note, Madam Chair, I thank you for your time.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Ferryland.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is certainly a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957. This particular piece of legislation was debated over the past couple of days.

My colleague said it's a key part of the Corner Brook area in regard to the industry and the forestry sector and what it's meant for decades. Not only for Corner Brook but certainly for the region, as well for those that are involved in the industry, not just Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, the mill itself, but all of those supplementary businesses and activities, cutters, different companies that supply pulp to the mill and what's required.

It's an integrated industry. When you're looking at providing support to the industry, it is to an industry, it's not just to one building from that perspective. As I said, it's an integrated operation which goes wide and far on the West Coast, within Corner Brook and abroad as well.

This note looks to amend the Schedule of *The Loan and Guarantee Act*. We were provided with an order-in-council which authorized the guarantee to secure certain obligations of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited under a letter of credit up to \$88 million. We've talked about that. The order-in-council said no expiry date.

The guarantee agreement has yet to be executed. It's not provided at this time so I assume it will be sometime in the near future. Maybe the minister, when he speaks later today, could just indicate that in regard to the timeline and how this is going to transpire in regard to executing the date of the issue, when it's provided and that sort of thing. I'm sure maybe in debate he may speak to that.

As well, as I said, this is to amend *The Loan and Guarantee Act* pursuant to a letter of credit of \$88 million to assist, my understanding, primarily to make the current unfunded pension plan solvent. In the last couple of days there's

been a number, \$29 million, \$30 million – I'm not sure what the exact number is of that \$88 million that would make that solvent of that \$88 million. Which as we know, in any industry, those that have contributed to the operations of a facility like that, they've paid in, whether it's the pension component, whether it's their dental, or whether it's their health plan, those types of things are essentially crucial when people retire so they can draw that down and have those benefits that they worked towards.

In this particular case, this loan guarantee has no expiry date. The interest on the letter of credit is 0.5 per cent of the amount plus standby interest of up to 0.10 per cent of the difference between the \$88 million and the amount of the letter of credit, plus the bank's prime lending rate on all amounts unpaid. So that's the set-up for the arrangements made in regard to that security of \$88 million. Obviously there's a credit taken out, it's held, there's interest accrued on it. This would go through the interest, how it would be accrued and how it would be paid.

As I said before, the funding would allow the solvency valuation pension liability of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited. There was a news release by government which basically outlined the terms or the government's thinking in regard to moving forward with this.

Under the terms of the proposal, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited will obtain an irrevocable letter of credit from a financial institution backed by a government guarantee. Government will take security interest in the company's power assets at Deer Lake and Watson's Brook. The letter of credit will be held by a trust for the benefit of pension plan members with government and Corner Brook Pulp and Paper representatives as co-trustees.

So it will be held in a trust, and based on what would transpire – and my colleague, before me spoke, talked about 2014 and how as the former administration, which I was part of, intervened at that particular time as well and looking at the significance of the industry, what it means to the West Coast and that whole region certainly recognize the requirement to assist.

There were issues in regard to infrastructure, capital costs. At that particular time, there was

an upgrade or a capital cost expenditure plan. I think it was over a 10-year period. That money at that time, or some of it, would go towards capital costs, capital upgrades to enhance the efficiencies of the facility so the facility could pay down its liabilities. Those liabilities could be related to capital costs already carried out, infrastructure, machinery and as well the whole pension.

So a pension would be listed under one of those liabilities back in 2014, and the expectation that they would pay that down. If I remember correctly, it was paid down over a 10-year period. Corner Brook Pulp and Paper did make significant payments, my understanding, in those initial years since 2014 to pay down that pension liability and to pay down some of the costs that were associated with that.

Corner Brook Pulp and Paper will borrow to fully fund the pension plan. This will be backed by government, as I said. Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, if called by the government, will certainly have to pay it back.

If the Government of Newfoundland has to pay the loan, the amount of loan will be deducted from the purchase price of the power assets and water rights which were obligated under the 2014 loan should the mill close. That's where their security started, I guess, in 2014 was that when the loan back then of \$110 million, I believe, it was tied to the security of those two assets, those hydro-producing –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The security for that initial loan in 2014 was tied to the two generating electrical assets out there that were owned by Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. So it wasn't done with no assets, no security. The first lien went to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in relation to the amount of the loan and then how it was tied to the two assets of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper.

The details, as this goes forward, this needs to be ratified here in the House of Assembly. That's why we're here to do this because this is a new

guarantee. The guarantee is based between Service Newfoundland and Labrador, which the minister has spoken to it here in Question Period and yesterday in debate, and Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited. Service Newfoundland, I guess, is the overseer or oversight or who is one of the partners with this actual agreement under *The Loan and Guarantee Act*.

There are two pensions we're talking about here with Corner Brook Pulp and Paper: one for unionized employees and one for non-unionized employees. There are two different union funds here. The plans are fully funded on a going basis or a going concern, but on a solvency valuation it's understood that it's unfunded – I think the number is about \$29 million. This means that the plan is \$29 million short if it was to wind up today. This funding here of \$88 million, \$29 million of that will go into the fund today to make sure that it's solvent as of whenever I said earlier, that government has to indicate when it will be issued, but at that point in time that amount will go into the fund, into those two pension plans to make them solvent.

I mentioned in 2014 our administration issued a loan with a sustainability plan attached to it. That was all about the challenges that the industry was facing not only here, but certainly North America and the challenges of the industry. That was to assist the mill out there. It saw the government at the time issue a loan of \$110 million using the assets of the corporation as collateral – and that's what I talked about – in two generating facilities.

My understanding to date is that \$102 million has been drawn down from the loan. The conditions of this included, as I said before, significant capital improvements using the plan as assets, as security and as well the power purchase agreement.

On this \$102 million, \$39 million of the borrowed funds was paid into the pension plan, is my understanding, \$17 million went to capital improvements and the rest to balance the debt, restricting operations and so forth. I think \$4 million went to capital improvements at the mill and \$13 million went to capital improvements in Deer Lake. I understand some of those improvements were related to the hydro assets as well.

Madam Chair, I see my time is running down. I certainly look forward to getting up later in the debate and speaking further to Bill 12.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

It's certainly a pleasure to rise once again in this hon. House and speak in support of Bill 12 here in the House that we are debating today.

As many of my colleagues have already alluded to, this is a very, very important bill, particularly for the pensioners of the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill. On this side of the House we will be supporting the bill.

As many of my colleagues have already discussed, it is very unfortunate that the Wabush pensioner situation remains unresolved. We all look forward to hopefully some type of successful resolution on that issue when we hear back from the courts in the not-too-distant future.

There are some questions, though, that do come to mind in regard to Bill 12, and that is with respect to what other businesses with pension liabilities and assets are there that government is willing to help. We do open the door, I guess, in terms of setting a precedent. That it is something that we all have to be conscious of here in the House of Assembly.

As well, are there any provisions to make sure that the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill only uses the letter of credit to fulfill the pension liability? Can they use additional room in the letter of credit to borrow for other reasons? The current liability is only \$29 million if the company were to go insolvent today on the pension plan, but the loan guarantee is for up to \$88 million.

The final question that I would have with respect to the bill is the loan guarantee has no expiry date, so can government force the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill to put funds aside to pay off pension liabilities and the letter of credit? Some

type of a schedule by which the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill had to pay off the unfunded pension liability would be a nice thing to see included here in the bill as well.

Mr. Chair, as we're winding down in our time in the hon. House for the spring session of this sitting, I'm going to use my remaining time that I have, because it is a money bill which affords us the opportunity to discuss anything we wish, matters of importance to the people of the province. I'm going to use a few minutes today to talk about the good things in Newfoundland and Labrador. There are some fabulous things in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I was very pleased, as I was driving today, to hear about the White Rose Project and the work that's going to be bringing for the people of the province. We really do have incredible talent here in this province, we have incredible skills here in this province and we have incredible resources in this province. It's music to my ears when I finally hear us talking about being players in the global stage and exuding confidence on the global stage, the confidence that we deserve to have. We, as a people, truly do have the abilities and the resources to continue to make this place even better than what it is today.

I, for one, will always remain rooted in Newfoundland and Labrador. I can't imagine myself living anywhere else. It's okay to visit but I'm quite happy living in rural Newfoundland and Labrador actually. I see the promise each and every single day. This weekend being home looking at the fabulous activity that's happening in my district as a result of Muskrat Falls and the energy powerhouse that this province is going to be, and our ability to provide that power, not just to other places in Canada, but certainly across all of the Eastern United States. It's real potential for us to be very, very wealthy if we play our cards right over the next few years.

I know, for our part here in the House of Assembly, we will certainly be keeping government to account in ensuring that all the benefits of our resources are reaped by the people, first and foremost, of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In talking about the good news I have to mention once again the opportunity for a new road connection that links the interior Southwest Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador to the Avalon Peninsula in a meaningful way. It is something that I will be corresponding with the Cabinet Committee on Jobs about. The communities at large in my district, I believe, will be doing so as well.

We see it as a real opportunity to enhance and increase tourism, to enhance and increase agriculture. Many people probably are not aware of this but the pH factor of the soil in the Coast of Bays region and the Bay d'Espoir area is identical to the Codroy Valley. So the agricultural potential – we can grow the best root crops. We even have grape trees, I will tell you; grape trees and plums. I've eaten them on the election trail.

Agriculture opportunities abound there. As well, of course, the aquaculture opportunities we have in growing our farmed salmon, our farmed trout, our mussels and who knows what other species in the future. With a predicted significant increase in the global populations, anything and everything we can do to produce food to supply the world's peoples will certainly be an economic advantage for us.

We also need to become more self-sufficient in providing our own food. Food security for ourselves is actually a major concern. As an isolated island, should anything happen to that ferry for a long period of time, we could quickly get into trouble with the amount of food available in this province for even our livyers. So I truly believe agriculture and aquaculture need to grow significantly in this province, and I truly believe the Coast of Bays is one area that has the potential to do that.

In speaking, as I often do, with my constituents about the road – because it's something everyone's very keenly interested in – we are open to exploring every option, whether it means paying a toll to operate that highway. We're willing to look at any possible avenues that are out there to make this venture a viable one. Of course, we'd also realize a significant savings in ferry costs by removing a community that is now isolated, from isolation, and giving it

road access which could also save the government millions and millions every year.

We think it's a fabulous opportunity. It's one we will continue to advocate for from the Coast of Bays region, one we look forward to speaking with the Cabinet Committee on Jobs about.

Of course, as we leave this House for the summer months, there's a lot of work ahead of us to do. I'm sure all of us look forward to getting out and about and talking with our constituents and coming back to the House this fall with all the matters of significant importance to the people of this province.

In particular, this summer we'll be talking to people about what they see as opportunities moving forward and the types of impacts that they are feeling and continue to feel as a result of the regressive budget of 2016 which continues to negatively impact our people. Hopefully, by this time next year, we will be able to take more strides in terms of reversing some of those negative impacts.

With that, I will take my seat for the day. I am truly proud of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and truly proud of my hon. colleagues. As we wind down for this sitting of the House, I do wish all of you a fantastic summer.

Thank you so much.

**CHAIR (Warr):** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

It's good to get up to speak to Bill 12, a very important bill. I'm certainly looking forward to debate and more to come no doubt on the bill.

When I was up before I talked about some of the technical details in regard to the bill and how the amendment to amend *The Loan and Guarantee Act* is required in regard to this new agreement with Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. Because of the 2014 agreement of the loan that I referenced before, the \$110 million, if the mill was closed the Government of Newfoundland would purchase the assets. That was the two generating assets: Deer Lake and Watson's Brook had a set value. That value was from 2014 onward up to

when the Maritime Link was active which, I think, would be possibly 2019 or earlier. The evaluation or valuation of the assets would be tied to those.

I think the value started at about \$150 million and would increase to \$200 million in 2019. Between \$150 million and \$200 million from 2014 to 2019 and the value of those two assets would continue to grow. Based on that, if the company discontinued to operate, then that would set in place the calculation of what that purchase price would be for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Obviously, that's an asset in and of itself but then you've got the generating ability of that as well in terms of generating electricity.

Using the \$150 million figure, if it was \$150 million, \$110 million would go to pay off the loan to government, \$2 million to environmental liabilities and the balance would be equity for Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited. As the value of the purchase arrangement increased to \$200 million, as I said, when it started in 2014 and go to 2019, the balance would increase to \$88 million.

This is before the agreement, 2017, what we're discussing here. That was the set-up prior to what we're talking about here today, the 2017 pension agreement, what I just described there that time.

What we're doing here today would be Bill 12 to amend *The Loan and Guarantee Act*. This is the current situation that's going to flow from once this amendment is approved here in the House. Because of this 2017 pension agreement, up to \$88 million will be used to pay off the guaranteed debt related to the letter of credit.

Officials with the Department of Finance, when we had a briefing, provided some information. The maximum of \$88 million was decided upon – that's \$200 million, the amount which government would purchase the assets for and give to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. It would work out to about \$110 million to pay off the loans to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador with \$200 million for environmental liabilities and then \$88 million to pay off the credit letter, which is part of this new agreement that we're discussing here today.

If Corner Brook Pulp and Paper was to go bankrupt and cease to operate, the bank would certainly call the guarantee. The Government of Newfoundland would pay that \$88 million to the bank instead of paying it to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited.

The value of the assets may increase above \$200 million beyond 2019 because, at that time, the expectation is that the Maritime Link would be completed and would allow power to be exported. Then based on whether it's sold in the spot market or sold with a firm agreement, there could be variations with regard to what the value would be.

The credit letter would fund the pension plan and thus free up cash from Corner Brook Pulp and Paper for other things related to infrastructure capital investment. As we know, we said earlier in regard to the industry, there are challenges. It's all about efficiency and trying to hit that return on investment that allows them to obviously make a profit, employ those several hundred folks they have at their facility and continue to improve competitiveness and be competitive with other entities, both here nationally in North America and certainly around the world.

This is a very competitive market today in regard to, as we know, the use of paper and how that's evolved over the past number of years and past decades and how it's changed.

We were also made aware from officials in the Department of Finance that it has – in regard to taxpayers of the province after 2019 in regard to the purchase of \$200 million which is the figure, the change is that now instead of paying the balance to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited, as what was in 2014 or prior to this one – the change is now instead of paying that, it be paid to the lending institution if the credit letter is called. That's a difference in regard to what was initiated prior to, what's initiated now and what we're doing the amendment to in 2017.

There's also, I think, reference to possible capital upgrades and what this does to allow free up of capital for Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, new computer systems, payroll administration. I think there's a thermal system in regard to enhancements. All of these updates were to save

costs and, as I said, make operations more efficient. All of those things are needed in terms of capital improvements. I think the number for some of that was somewhere in the range of \$4 million that would be used.

In Deer Lake, I think there's ongoing work now in regard to the penstocks in regard to the generating facility. That's being worked on now. That's key to that asset in terms of upgrading the asset and making sure it can do what it needs to do. I think the cost of that was around \$13 million. So that's significant in regard to capital upgrades. That's roughly about \$17 million to \$20 million in regard to those capital upgrades that would be part of what we're talking about here today.

In the 2014 loan, the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper was not required to pay back the capital until March 31, 2019. The loan payback schedule indicates that it was paid back in 59 quarterly payments which is valued at about \$1.85 million starting on March 31, 2019. The last will be paid on December 31, 2033. Corner Brook Pulp and Paper is currently paying interest on this loan. I think it was 4 per cent for the first three years of the agreement. Per the agreement, it now becomes the provincial government cost of a 0.5 percentage point. I think they're paying 3.8 per cent in interest this particular year.

There is a monitoring committee which meets regulatory and reviews of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited and actively compared to the loan guarantee. A couple of issues that have come up in Question Period and in regard to this particular case, in regard to Wabush pensioners and the unfortunate situation we saw in Labrador with Wabush pensioners in regard to some of the challenges they had in regard to receivership. I know I have some pensioners in my actual district that retired and they're all over the province.

In regard to the scale back in their actual pension they're receiving, I think in some cases it's almost 30 per cent. That was significant enough in regard to net dollars because, obviously, a fixed income on a pension but some as well, the challenges in regard to their health benefits. You can imagine as you get older and you've paid into a program to give you a health benefit and

all of a sudden you don't have that anymore, so you have to try and re-establish or connect with a private company to get new health benefits.

When you look at as you get older and all of us in the demographics and what that cost is, it's quite significant in terms of getting that cost. Having to find a health plan later in life is certainly challenging. Some of the individuals I know, one of the pensioners and then their spouse may be covered as well, and all of a sudden that's not available. They've had huge challenges.

I know there were some questions asked at the briefing with department officials, but I think the answer was because there was already bankruptcy. Wabush had gone into bankruptcy, thus the asset is already tied. I guess the point was that with the two generating stations at Corner Brook Pulp and Paper there are, I guess we'll say – excuse the pun – concrete assets there that are generating electricity. That's well in and of itself. That would be the security and therefore that would be the case made of why Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited may be a little different. I'm not sure of the assets of Wabush Mines or what's available or what would be a part of that, but there's been some discussion about that as well.

Mr. Chair, that concludes my 10 minutes. I certainly look forward to speaking again in regard to this debate.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

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

I rise again to speak to Bill 12 on the pensioner's issue. Like my colleague from Ferryland, I, too, have many members living in my district who were impacted by the closure of Wabush and are really struggling to try and figure out how to make ends meet given that they've lost some of their pension benefits. We're all quite anxious to see what can be done to help these individuals as well.

In terms of the pulp and paper industry overall in Newfoundland and Labrador, I can certainly

speak to living down in the Coast of Bays Region, and Bay d'Espoir area in particular, what it feels like to lose such an industry. It is absolutely devastating. Even though we are two hours away from Grand Falls, when the pulp and paper mill shut down over there, the impact was felt throughout all of Central Newfoundland and Labrador. There were many people from several of my communities who relied on the pulp and paper mill for their income and for their livelihood, and several sawmills as well, all of which now have pretty much gone to the wayside.

So we're certainly, on this side of the House, very strongly supportive of measures to keep the pulp and paper industry strong and vibrant in this province, in particular the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill, and to try and alleviate any concerns with respect to insolvency of their pension plan. We truly do believe this bill will be instrumental and go a long ways in helping us get there.

Mr. Chair, as we look around this province, many fabulous opportunities. Again, today I want to talk a little bit more about positive things, because I do believe that as we depart for the summer, I think we should depart on a good note and feeling good about the potential that Newfoundland and Labrador really and truly does have.

As people go around this province this summer and take their vacations, I encourage you to pop into as many of the rural communities as you possibly can. While there, take advantage of some of the smaller restaurants and the craft stores. There are always locally produced crafts available, pretty much, as you go through communities. I know during the summer I always stock up on worsted socks for the winter, because at craft sales you can manage to capture a few, and I find they always make wonderful Christmas presents.

So I hope that many people in this province get out and about this summer and take in all of our wonderful attractions, be they in rural or urban Newfoundland. Taking the time to go off the beaten path, I do believe is truly worthwhile.

With that, Mr. Chair, I'm going to sit down and my hon. colleague is going to rise for a few minutes.

Thank you so much.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Now, Mr. Chair, you know it's the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

**CHAIR:** Absolutely.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Because I know you got a lot of friends down in Cape St. Francis also.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** He got no friends.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** He got a few friends down my way. We are very friendly people in Cape St. Francis.

It gives me great privilege to get up here again and speak to Bill 12. We're going to talk about pensions and the importance of securing pensions for people in the province because anytime we talk about pensioners, they've earned it. They've earned their pension.

They worked for a long while and the pension is something that, not only is it your wages or the benefits you get from what you do as work, no matter what it is. No matter if it's at a place like Browning Harvey or it's at the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill or if it's in Wabush, people who have pension plans – or whether here in government, public employees. People work hard and as part of the benefits, whether you're making \$15 an hour or \$20 an hour, when you have a pension plan, that's part of the work. That's part of a negotiated agreement that most unions have.

It's important that when you go into negotiations, like right now with government negotiating with our public servants, that you be fair and you respect the work those people do. I see it here every day in Confederation Building. I see it around the Confederation Building, and I see it in different departments how hard our public servants work. They deserve to be treated fairly. They deserve to be treated with respect.

When a person negotiates any kind of an agreement, whether it's Wabush Mines like they did with Cliffs industries, they negotiated their agreements, and no matter if it was what they were getting paid by the hour or their health benefits or their pension, it was all combined into one. When you're finished your work, you hope that over the years you deserve what you get down the road.

That's what retirees do. They work hard all their lives and they deserve to get what is rewarded to them, whether it's on a paycheque from the week before they worked or the week they worked, or it's on a paycheque that comes to them after they turn 65 or when they're 70 years old. That's something they earned their whole lives. Some people are fortunate that we do have pension plans.

Again, like I spoke about when I was up earlier, I think I heard yesterday that there are 316 different pension plans in the province. I think I'm correct on that. I'd like to see any person in this province who has worked, that what they worked for, what they've earned, no matter if it's the wage they earned or the benefits through health care or drug plans or whatever, no different their pension plan. At the end of the day, most workers in this province, their pension plan – people with Old Age Security and CPP have a difficult time to get by as it is. So if a person gets a small pension or a big pension, whatever it is, they worked for it all their lives so they deserve to get that.

I hope for the people in Wabush, I really do. I spoke to a couple of people from Wabush who are on the committee. They're working hard. They're very frustrated and you can understand their frustration. The frustration is that I worked all my life for this. I've worked hard, I gave to the company my all and now the company has left town and gave me a reduction. I'm the last on the list when it comes to security, when it comes to paying off their bills. That's not fair because at the end of the day, when you look at it, the people that kept that mine going – and that's a hard industry.

I heard a gentleman on the other morning talking about different cancers and stuff like that that's related to mining and dust and stuff. That's not an industry that you go into that is easy. It's very



difficult work. You put yourself in dire straits really, when you think about it, because the chances of catching industrial diseases or anything like that are huge. It's probably 10 times or 20 times more than it is probably in regular type work. The mining industry is a very difficult job, but those people worked hard for those companies. Just like they are down in IOC, the people of Labrador are working in those mines and the people in your area working down in Baie Verte.

The mining industry is not an easy industry to be involved in. People deserve protection, and probably more so when you look at what protection that a lot of these plans give you is your health care. Down the road, if you're in a mining industry, that industry I'm sure, if you looked at statistics and saw what the statistics would be for mining, it probably would show you that your health needs down the road are a whole lot more than what they are from other industries because of what you're breathing in and the environment that you're in all the time.

It's very important for those people to know that I worked my life, I worked hard, I worked in dust, I worked in conditions that probably I shouldn't have been working in and I did it for that company. Now to see a company just, I don't know, just up and say this mine is no longer good, but I believe the company is very prosperous down in the United States and has different areas in the United States where they're making lots of money. So those companies that come in here and don't protect our workers – just forget about them. They just forgot about the people of Wabush and the people of Lab City and say, okay, we got what we got out of them. That's unfair and that's why I applaud government for this.

Again, my hon. colleague for CBS talked about the agreement that we did in 2014 with Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. That was important to do that too. My question to the minister, I asked the minister this a little earlier, once there are other industries, companies in this province that have pension plans – and it's important that those pension plans too, if there's some way that we can put some kind of legislation in place or have some equity from that company that we can say if your company goes bankrupt or whatever, at least you're protected. I think that's what a lot of

workers are looking for, just like they're looking for here in the public service.

I spoke earlier about different unions. We look at the public service here in Newfoundland and Labrador and we look at all different jobs that they do, whether it's snow clearing, whether it's here working in the Confederation Building, whether it's working with Service NL in different – because there are a lot of people out there with different regulatory agencies that we have to have in place. Those people deserve what they are entitled to and that's a pension plan.

That's like right now under the negotiations that are ongoing now with government. Everybody realizes we're in a fiscal situation that sometimes you have to rein in a few things, but you also have to respect the workers. You have to respect the people who work for us. You have to respect the people who are working in this province.

Just like I talked about the dust in Wabush Mines, there are a lot of times that you'll see people in the public service that are out working on the roads, whether it's the snowplow operator that's out there in the middle of a snow storm and they're putting their lives in danger. But they worked and they negotiated a deal, whether it's their pension plan, whether it's their health benefits, whether it's their wages that are negotiated. They deserve to be treated with respect. That's what this is all about is treating people with respect.

I like this. I think it's a good thing for the people of Corner Brook. Any time that the stress comes off individual workers is a great thing. It's great to see that they'll know if – and let's say right here now, we hope Corner Brook Pulp and Paper is successful for years and years to come. It's a very important industry in our province.

I always look at my years in Millertown. I've been going back and forth moose hunting now for almost 30 years. Abitibi was in Central Newfoundland at the time. It's not only the work they do in the mill, but they put all these roads in and opened up everything in Central Newfoundland. Now, today we see all kinds of mines; see all kinds of people into prospecting and stuff like this.

So not only do they do work in the forestry industry, but they also open up our province. That's what the pulp and paper industry does because they have to build roads. We have a great resource in this province and that's our forestry. This is something that could be (inaudible).

Anyway, Mr. Chair, thank you for the time.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

It's good to get up to speak again on Bill 12. When I spoke the last time, I focused most of my attention on the importance of the mill, what it means to the economy in the City of Corner Brook, what it means to the province and current and former workers. Like I said before, it is the backbone of that community.

One issue with this mill – we talked about the mill and we talked about workers – is the spinoff effects. There are so many parts of the economy that are driven by a mill town like Corner Brook is. It's the economic engine for that city. Whether it be taxis, your grocery stores, your clothing stores, your convenient stores, your coffee shops, it is the economic driver.

I guess it was one of the more – Grand Falls, when Abitibi was in operation, I remember well that I was travelling through there and I happened to have to stay there; I was on previous work. We had spent a couple days in Grand Falls and it was during a strike at the mill. I remember going around. Grand Falls is normally a pretty active, vibrant town. It's actually a beautiful town, but I remember going out and about and there was very little activity.

I know my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Works, the Member for the area, could agree with me on this, the economic activity was slowed to a crawl. Everything was slow moving. Not really understanding, and at the time I didn't realize, I should have probably, but I didn't realize that the mill strike was actually – I had forgotten the mill was on strike. A colleague with me, actually, from Grand Falls pointed out – we were down actually visiting the striking workers that night. He pointed out that

once the mill stops, the economy stops. He said it just goes hand in hand. Shutdowns at the mills are not such a drastic impact but the shutdown periods had an impact. That's how much that drove the economy of the day.

Thankfully, Grand Falls has rebounded. They survived, which is great to see and I wish them well. In Corner Brook the same thing applies. When you look at those economies the spinoff – and I think that's something that we don't talk about a lot. We talk directly and we've talked a lot about the mill workers in general, the pensioners, the mill, what it does to the economy, but it's the spinoff effects of businesses of this sort that really drive the economy in those regions.

I won't go back to what I had mentioned earlier but the point of some of the back and forth I heard last night about what the former administration did, it's almost actually – it appeared to be somewhat critical which I couldn't understand. In my opinion – and I far from know all there is to know, but I've been around long enough to know that certain things make sense – governments should provide a climate for economies, provide a climate for optimism for businesses to grow and flourish within our economies.

As we've said in this House repeatedly, we're on record many, many times of the taxation that's been applied upon everyone in this province, business included that is no doubt slowing the economy. Regardless of what party in power, what party makes decisions, when you help big industry and you help support the local economies, which is, like I said, already stated, it's a big economic driver. I guess I'll flip it over into another form: Isn't that what governments should do? No matter who's in power, isn't that the role of government to provide that economic climate?

When any business or any group is in trouble, isn't that what government should do? Isn't that what we expect, as citizens of the province, all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians expect their government when all else fails to come to the rescue?

Like I said before, we can't be the be-all, end-all, but I think it's a very important role for

government to play, whether it be the pulp and paper mill, whether it be the fish plants, whether it be any business or any area, especially I'll state rural Newfoundland. In the Northeast Avalon area, it's still a pretty active business-based area. Fortunately enough, a great portion of the population live here and it's driving our economy provincially.

Any time government can step to the plate and help areas like this, it's a good thing. It's probably, if at all possible, what we need to do, what government should do; but, in saying that, I guess it's a slippery slope too. Government need to protect their – this is public money. On the case of the 2014 deal and now the 2017 deal, there are sureties in place with the power assets that the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper have, which will be a fallback for these agreements. That's good. There's a lien in place in every loan that's ever given by a bank.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. PETTEN:** It's important that government do that. That's all important.

Obviously, the mill in Corner Brook is putting a lot on the line to get this help. We do wish it works out, but the point I'm trying to reinforce is that we shouldn't criticize to score political points on matters of this nature. I think that's one area where we should all collectively put that aside and look at the bigger picture and what's accomplished.

Whether it's the Corner Brook mill – there are lots of other decisions we make sometimes that you can play that game with but certain times I think it's a time to put that aside and work together to find a better solution. One example – this is a smaller example obviously, but we show working together and getting good results. I was a Member of the All-party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. That actually worked. We are not talking economics or the economy; we're talking about individuals. Mental illness and drug addiction is one of the biggest social issues facing our province today.

There was a committee formed, everyone put their political stripes, so-called, by the door and

we sat down and everyone came together for the betterment of the province, for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The cause we were there to fight for, we all come together and we stood together, regardless of our own individual beliefs or whatnot, and we provided a report that's good for the people of the province.

It's no different than supporting each other on a bailout of a business to help the Corner Brook mill with their pension plan, to help the citizens of Corner Brook, whether it's the citizens of Bay de Verde with their fish plant, whatever we can do as a government, I think it's very important that we do it.

Not only are you helping the economy but you're helping people. I say this, and I can't say it enough, this is all about people. We say it sometimes and people say it's a cliché, but it's not. It's about people. Each and every one of the 40 Members in this House were elected by people in our respective ridings. People expect us to have their backs, people expect us to speak up for them, to help them with their issues, to be their voice. When we sit in this Legislature and speak in this Legislature, it's for the betterment of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's what we all should aspire to do. There are times that we're going to disagree – most times we disagree, but there are times probably we should agree and in situations like this we do.

As I'm wrapping up, Mr. Chair, my closing remark would be just that – I'll say it again – I was somewhat bothered, for want of a better word. It irritated me, I guess, is even a more fitting word, that I sensed responses coming back all yesterday about the 2014 deal was like we did something wrong. Instead, the bigger thing to do would have been to applaud what happened in 2014, as we're applauding 2017. We need questions answered. Certain questions were incumbent of asking, but I don't think we're doing anything wrong. We're doing our jobs to ask those questions. I'll repeat it again, and I'll say it again for what it's worth, we'd like to have answers to the details that were not really clear yet.

Overall, it's a good thing and I think the government opposite should recognize what this former administration did was a good thing.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

I'm just going to say a few words. I thank the Member for his comments and his statement. Just on the 2014 deal, I agree with it 100 per cent. I was even actually part of it to help because I was a liaison with the unions to help bring it in because I thought it would save – I just want to clarify something, Mr. Chair.

There was a bit of a – and I guess it was my fault. I'll take responsibility on the confusion last night when I was with the Leader of the Opposition. They did put \$39.6 million into the pension plan. When I was speaking, I was talking about bringing it up to the solvency part. So the previous government did bring \$39.6 million. When I said there was no money put in, I was saying put in to bringing up the solvency. I just wanted to clarify that. I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition because someone mentioned today that it was an error. I was thinking about solvency. You were thinking you did put money in.

I say to the Leader of the Opposition that I did say that last night. I just want to recognize that the Leader of the Opposition said that last night. I put it in there that they did put \$39.6 million in the pension plan. No, no, any time I stand up – what I was saying last night, Mr. Chair, was did they bring it up to solvency, as I read in *Hansard*. So, no, it wasn't up to solvency, but the \$39.6 million was put in by the previous government, the pension plan.

I just wanted to make that and I want that on the record before I leave the House of Assembly today. That's one of the reasons why I wanted to stand here today.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** In closing.

**MR. JOYCE:** And in closing. No, no, I just wanted to clarify that because I know the Leader of the Opposition stood last night in his place because of the misunderstanding and said the

information I said was factually incorrect. When I did say about not going into the pension plan, I meant bring it up to solvency, but he was correct when he said that there was money put in. I just wanted to make sure that's on the record before I leave the House in this session because, Mr. Chair, I have no problem – I always said the 2014 deal was a good deal. It helped the mill. What we did on the 2014 deal, we just built on that deal, Mr. Chair. That's what we did. I just wanted to recognize that.

Everybody in the House is supporting this. Gerald Parsons, Wayne Rose and a lot of other people who worked out with this here, I know the unions at the mill also, they were very supportive and worked with this. I have to say Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, when this initiative came up back probably last March, April, they were very supportive on this to help move the mill forward and help them for the pensioners.

Just for the record, I just wanted to put this out there, Mr. Chair, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper and Kruger in general, don't close plants. I'm not sure if they closed the plant and they stuck people with their pensions. I just have to put that on the record. I know sometimes they find hard times and they do drive a hard bargain, they're business people, but they supplied a lot of work, a lot of labour, not just to Corner Brook, the Bay of Islands and the area, but it's all for the forest industry in the province. This is the catalyst for all the forest industry in the province.

Mr. Chair, there are a lot of people that worked hard on this. I know myself and the Premier met with the boys from the pensioners, before the election in 2015. I know I started the ball rolling when I took over Service NL and I know the Minister of Service NL took it and brought it across the finish line in the last four or five months. I know the Minister of Finance got involved with it, Mr. Chair, to bring it all forward. I know Paul Humber and the unions at the mill worked with us over the last year or so to bring this in.

This is the type of deal – I heard some Members talking about it. This deal that we just struck will not cost the province one cent; won't cost the province one cent. This is the good thing about this. This is money that would have come to

Corner Brook Pulp and Paper if it ever closes, when it ever closes, that goes back into the pension plan. That was a commitment they made.

I'm just glad everybody is going to support this deal. I saw Gerald Parsons' piece in the paper today. Gerald is very pleased. Like Gerald said, yes, anybody can pick holes in anything, but this is a good deal. I don't think anybody is picking holes in it. I'm sure they're asking questions. I have no problem with that whatsoever, anybody asking any type of questions because we should. I know when I was in Opposition, we asked questions and that's just a part of it.

If you had to see the look on their faces and the chat from the pensioners on Sunday, you could see why people are so happy. Now there's a bit of security. It's something we could do with the existing deal from 2014 that we built on. Once we built on that deal, Mr. Chair, it's not costing the taxpayers of the province any money whatsoever.

I have to give Corner Brook Pulp and Paper – I know when I met with David Angel going back to February 2016, we had very frank discussions. They realized then that we had to collectively – unions included – find a way to get through this, and we did. We did.

Mr. Chair, when you reach a deal like this that's going to benefit everybody in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, you have to be proud. You have to be proud of the people in government, proud of the Opposition who originally got the 2014 deal in place. I say to the Premier of the province who's sitting here, we were a part of that, too. That's why we were so supportive of that 2014 deal, and we built on that.

To all the pensioners, to all the current workers, this is going to free up a lot of cash that they could put in the mill now to keep this mill going for years to come. This is a part of it. This is not just about protecting pensioners, the 500 or 600; this is about the people coming behind them. A lot of the pensioners on Sunday mentioned how they had sons and daughters working at the mill. They want to keep this running also, Mr. Chair. They want to keep this mill moving.

I look forward to the vote, and I thank everybody for supporting this. This is the kind of move that people expect from the Legislature, expect from all sides, Mr. Chair, about bringing stuff good for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I know the Member for Lab West spoke very well and very eloquently last night up in Wabush. We wish we had some way that there was an asset there that we can tap into also. I know that was a tough one for all of us. We had to fly up three days later and wind up the pension plan.

We will be working with the people in Lab West; we will be working with the people in Wabush to try to find something for that area. I know the Member for Lab West won't let us forget. I just have to recognize the work that he's doing for Lab West. I know the tough role he has with the pensioners up in his area, a lot of family and friends from him in that area also, Mr. Chair. We will work diligently to see what we can do for Wabush and that area because it is an important part of Newfoundland and Labrador also.

In closing, I just want to thank everybody that had a hand in this. I started from the pensioners; I started from all the unions in the mill, the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, all the Members on this side and the Premier. I know the Minister of Service NL, the Member for Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the Minister of Finance dug into it. When you look at a – and effort by all these people, this government and the Opposition – I have to recognize them because they're going to support this also. I recognize this. This is a good day for all of Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Western.

I say again what I said earlier about my comments last night. I just stand and had to correct that, Mr. Chair, because we were talking to two different issues. I'm sure we understand that, and I apologize again for that but it was – no, it was when we talk about the solvency.

There's one thing I'll always say, if I make a mistake or if I make a statement that's incorrect, I have no problem standing up. We were talking about two different things. When I sat down someone mentioned what you were talking

about. You were right. I was talking about the solvency part. I was right, but what you said, you guys put money in, you did put \$39.6 million in in 2014. I just want to recognize that as the contribution.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR (Dempster):** The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** What a way to come to a closing of a debate. I want to thank the minister for his comments.

I kind of chuckle when he gets up, because he always gets up and say: I'm just going to use a minute of my time because I only have one thing to say, and he never leaves a second on the clock, Madam Chair. He never leaves a second on the clock.

Today he used all of his time because at the beginning he apologized and when he got down to about 20 seconds left he apologized again. So I thank the minister for his commentary. It is an important issue.

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** I won't tell him how I felt about him last night, but the –

**MR. A. PARSONS:** (Inaudible) heard that.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** No, you didn't hear it all.

It is an important bill. I mentioned yesterday that I had the privilege of living in Corner Brook a number of years ago. I lived there by choice, and chased someone to Corner Brook and enjoyed my time while I was out there and we came back together. It was a good time out there and we have a lot of friends in Corner Brook. I fully understand and respect how important and significant the mill operation is. Not only just in Corner Brook, but the entire West Coast of the Island.

I'm not a big hunter in any way, but over my five years in Corner Brook I did spend some time in the woods with friends and so on and got

a better understanding and grasp – as you travel through the wooded areas of the West Coast you'll understand how important the mill is and how important the resources are on the West Coast to be utilized in the best interests of the economy, Corner Brook and the people that live there.

Our efforts in 2014, Madam Chair, were very honourable and very genuine. Ensuring that, first, the mill didn't shut down and that steps could be taken to make the pension plan whole, to make it solvent, because at the time it certainly wasn't that. The mill was at great risk in 2014.

I see what the government has done today by providing a loan guarantee to a letter of credit that will be provided by a financial institution as an addition to that 2014 deal. That adds to the value and benefit of not only the mill, but people on the West Coast and the entire province. Because the loss of that mill would be significant to all of Newfoundland and Labrador, not just the people of Corner Brook, not just the people of Western Newfoundland, but the entire province as well.

So I'm going to finish my comments. I'm not going to use all my time, but I thank the minister again for his commentary this afternoon. I think it has been a productive debate.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MR. TRIMPER:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank all the colleagues in the House. It's been an interesting discussion. I must say, it's interesting for myself, as a relatively new politician, to hear about the 2014 deal, the co-operation that occurred on there, the intensions at the time and then now to transform ourselves to this point in time.

What I wanted to do was just respond to some of the questions that have been raised, in particular by the Member for Topsail – Paradise and for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

So in no particular order, first of all, I'd like to talk a little bit about – we've had a little bit of

confusion around the numbers. The numbers that we're talking about – first of all, as I mentioned yesterday, there are two aspects in a pension plan. There's a going concern, which in both cases and for both of the plans here, is more than flush with cash. We are actually in a surplus mode, so everything is fine there.

The issue is around the solvency. So what happens if the company suddenly ceases operations and everybody is sort of out on the street, what happens to all those pensioners? Are there enough assets existing in those plans to cover all that people would expect from those pension plans? That's where we have the deficit.

Just so I can help clarify the numbers – and I had to do some digging to figure out what it was because I heard a number yesterday of \$29 million. Well, what we have are estimates and assessments. What I've been speaking to, when I rose yesterday, is an assessment done by an actuary based on December 31, 2016. So that number is actually some \$39 million.

I heard the number \$29 million. The \$29 million number, I believe, is based on a current estimate of the current situation. I believe that was presented in the technical briefing. So I hear and I think I understand now why those numbers are moving around a little bit. Suffice it to say that when you finally get the actuaries involved and they look at all those calculations, you can get a better handle.

The other thing that's interesting to note is how much this does fluctuate. Regardless whether it's \$29 million or \$39 million, we do have deficits. Given the challenging situation that the mill is in, it's important to have this arrangement in place, and I'm very pleased to see that it is there.

Just for the sake of calculation, what we are dealing with is some \$39 million, based on the assessment that was done in December, with a \$25 million amount that represents the arrears that Corner Brook Pulp and Paper has not been making to keep these things solvent.

The next I would like to do, and that's toward the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi – no, before I go there, there's been some allusion that perhaps what we've done here can be useful for every other pension plan in the province.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. TRIMPER:** Well, in fact, the precedent and the idea of co-operating between government, those managing the plans and the corporation at play, absolutely, that's a great opportunity; however, the unique feature here was that there were assets that had been secured through an arrangement back in 2014 that allowed this to happen. So you've got to have a lot of things in alignment and that's what arose.

I do have prepared answers to the questions that I could leave with the Members of both parties, if you'd like, or I can read from them. I'm just sort of looking for head nods. I could perhaps paraphrase. I'll paraphrase.

One was on the role and composition of the oversight committee. It's important to understand that this is not an oversight committee around the irrevocable letter of credit; this is an oversight committee that's around the loan, the \$110 million that was set aside by government back in 2014.

As I said the other day – but I'll just grab a couple of points here and you can go through in detail – it is going to be chaired by the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources and includes representation from Finance, Service NL and the Assistant Deputy Minister of Forestry and wildlife. Also, there's a representative of Nalcor that sits on that.

That oversight committee is also supported by a technical committee, this reconstituting. So it's everything around how that money is being spent and how those payments will be made when they start, as the Member indicated a few minutes ago, March 31, 2019.

In terms of timing and when is the oversight committee going to get started: this Friday. They have their first meeting this Friday. They are going to be discussing the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships of both the oversight committee and the technical committee. I can't give you the details now but as the Member asked yesterday can we at least provide the assurance that these kinds of things will be looked at, the answer is yes. We've put that on

the terms of reference for this meeting this Friday.

The next question that came up yesterday – I hope I don't run out of time – was around the composition of the trust and whether or not there could be, for example, pensioners representation on the trust. I'm just going to read a legal opinion that we used when we were preparing this.

Essentially the way the trust works is two trustees: there's one from the company and there's one from my department and it's the Assistant Deputy Minister of Regulatory Affairs. Those would be the two trustees. The beauty of the way the deal is set up is that the government representative will have the authority to override. If in the event of a disagreement, government will control how this will proceed. If in the event the company shuts down and we need to access that irrevocable letter of credit, government will have control.

I want to read the point: The trust concept was proposed by legal counsel for government by McInnes Cooper. It gives added protection to the pension plans in the event that Corner Brook Pulp and Paper files for bankruptcy protection or creditor protection.

It also provides for an intermediary vehicle separate from pension plans for depositing proceeds from the letter of credit to avoid a situation where excess funds are paid to the plans, resulting in a proposed arrangement being offside with a permissible pension contribution rules under the *Income Tax Act*. That's what guided us in terms of setting it up. So you can't have third parties come in there and act as trustees; the legal obligation is between government and the company.

What I can assure the Member opposite is that we will set up an appropriate monitoring structure and we are certainly more than willing to respond to any kinds of inquiries from the leadership of the two pension plans to report back to them as often as they like and in the manner that they like. I hope that helps in some way with your concern.

The evaluation methodology, as indicated by those who were around in 2014, there is a rising

value of the power assets. Currently, it's fixed at \$150 million. That will go up and so on. But, most importantly, people were wondering how we evaluate the price of those assets when the Maritime Link comes on. This is a future present value calculation. What you do is you project what your earnings are going to be over the next 30 years, you discount them back to a present situation, and that's the number that you're going to come up with when you're comparing with what government has said is the minimum value. I got a little bit of detail in this answer here that I'll provide those Members and it can help with that.

The final point that I heard about was in the idea of what happens if the mill closes before the Maritime Link comes on; I think that was your final point. I see an affirmative. It's interesting, and we've accessed this before, during Dark – I like to call it NF because it was only dark here; it wasn't dark in Labrador, but DarkNL as it became known. Actually, those assets were used to funnel additional electricity into the grid. That capability exists now and is actually happening now. So the markets are there. In fact, it's a very lucrative one because they can actually make quite a bit of money when they feed it back in the grid, and it's less expensive than what we pay at Holyrood.

There are some answers I have written – I can provide those to both parties and so on. I did want to end with a couple of points. As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment and my colleague for Humber – St. George's – I always forget it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** St. George's – Humber.

**MR. TRIMPER:** St. George's – Humber, thank you. I am trying to avoid his name. We had the pleasure of meeting with the folks last week on Sunday. I want to make three key points, just to read into the record. One was it was extremely impressive the sophistication and knowledge of the leaders of those two plans. They knew what they were talking about. They were very concerned about what they're dealing with. I was very impressed. I had been well briefed to go in there, but I must say, that was quite a marathon going through them and the questions. They know what they're doing.



I was also equally appreciative of the concern they have for the ongoing operation of the mill. There are a lot of folks that are certainly not in retirement stage, a lot of people employed at that site and there was equal concern for both the pensioners and the active workers.

Frankly, and finally, I just want to say it was also remarkable before, during and after the meetings to hear from so many people who expressed concern for my colleague's point of view, the Wabush pensioners and their support across the province for other workers who have not been as fortunate to have an arrangement like this.

Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

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

**CHAIR:** Is the hon. Member speaking to the motion?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 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:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957.

**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 Bill 12 carried without amendment?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the resolution and a bill consequent thereto, carried.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Deputy House Leader.

**MS. COADY:** Madam Chair, I move the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 12.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 12 carried without amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER (Osborne):** The hon. Deputy Speaker.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed her to report a certain resolution.

When shall the report be received?

**MS. COADY:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Placentia West – Bellevue that the resolution be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the resolution be now read a first time.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

**CLERK:** Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:

“That it is expedient to bring in a measure further to amend *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations.”

On motion, resolution read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, that the resolution be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

**CLERK:** Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:

“That it is expedient to bring in a measure further to amend *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations.”

On motion, resolution read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled – relating to the advancing or guaranteeing of certain loans made under *The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957*, Bill 12, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

I'll correct the name of the bill, An Act To Amend The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957.

Thank you.

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

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

It is moved and seconded by the hon. Deputy Government House Leader that Bill 12 be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957," carried. (Bill 12)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 12)

On motion, Bill 12 read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 12 be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 12 be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 12)

On motion, Bill 12 read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, that Bill 12 be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 12 be now read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 12)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 12 has now been read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 12)

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

I believe it's come to that time in the spring session that we're about to recess for the summer. So I am going to call on Members of the Legislature. I ask the Premier if he would like to make a few remarks, followed by the Leader of the Opposition and the House Leader of the Third Party.

The hon. the Premier.

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

Yes, it's been – obviously, this session of the House of Assembly and on a late day in May and the direction coming to actually finish up this session. Certainly it's been a good robust session with lots of good, healthy debate. I want to thank you for the leadership in your Chair, sometimes from tempering some of that debate. I know it's been challenging from time to time.

On this side of the House, of course, we went through our second budget and certainly pleased to be able to offer a much better budget for the progress that's been made within the province this year. Much of that work and the direction comes from the support we have from our government caucus. I want to thank all my colleagues on this side of the House for the work they've done in supporting us in getting through the session.

Also, for the Leader of the Opposition; I sat in that chair for quite some time and I understand the roles that the Leader of the Opposition, of course, and his caucus would play in making sure the questions are asked. We do the best job we can in getting that information back to the people of the province, either through Question Period or through other means.

To the leader of the Third Party, someone who's been a veteran in that seat, has been there for some time, I appreciate the role that she plays in a lot of ways making sure that the social element – we should never forget no matter when we make decisions, there is a social lens that we need to look at and make sure we do the best job we can in providing the services for the people of our province.

Also to our Independent Member who's actually been part of much of the debate and his participation in the debate within this province,

sometimes it got into some late session and so on, doing his job as well of weighing in and making his opinions known on certain issues that's important to him.

So I thank everyone for their commitment during this session. We all recognize, as elected officials in this House, that we are here for one reason and we should never lose sight of this. We are here elected for the people we serve, people who are back in our districts who are watching us and realizing the responsibility on us in this Legislature is important to them. It impacts their lives. It's important to us that we should never forget that.

Also to the people, the Table Officers – I mentioned the Speaker and sometimes the challenging role the Speaker would sit in but also to the members who support the Speaker, our Table Officers and our Pages. All those people who sit through hours and hours and watch us as elected officials stand in debate in this House. You're there making sure that the information is in front of us, making sure that you have us properly fueled up with good, cold drinking water from time to time. I would say, when you look at the spirit of some of the debate, a little dose of cold water is certainly welcomed at some point. We appreciate the work that you do.

Also for the people who sit often quietly in the back of this Legislature and support us and somewhat there to protect us, as they say: the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Commissionaires, the security and the RNC officers who are available to each and every one of us throughout the Confederation Building.

The world is a much different place, Mr. Speaker, as we've seen just recently. We should never take the security and our safety for granted. It's important for us to always remember there are people in uniform, whether here in this Confederation Building, in this Legislature, or other parts of the world, protecting democracy in action. So we should never, ever forget that.

The group of people who are not widely known to individuals around the province yet, these are the people who get the information. They report the proceedings in this House of Assembly.

These are people in Hansard, people from our Broadcast staff. They do a tremendous job. I often get calls from people in my own district as they watched one of our Cabinet Members, one of our caucus Members or people in the Opposition – they watch us closely, as they should. We should never forget that behind the scenes there is someone actually producing that information for people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Of course, our friends in the media, they do their job as well. Our staff at the Legislative Library, who actually help individuals and some of our caucus as we go look for some of the historical information that is critically important to us. Our House Leaders – and, today, of course, it's a day to celebrate for the House Leader for the government; this is actually his birthday, as we mentioned prior to when the session opened today. But our House Leaders, our Deputy House Leader, our House Leader on the government side, but also those House Leaders and Deputy House Leaders in the Opposition as well, so thank you for the work that you do making sure that we actually get through all the information that we put through. The legislation that goes through this House of Assembly requires a co-operation from our House Leaders and we really appreciate the professionalism that occurs in people that sit in those chairs.

Mr. Speaker, you would never get legislation through a legislature without having people in your caucuses making and keeping you accountable, keeping you in your chairs. Of course these are the people that have been known through the Legislature, those people with Whips. Now they're not necessarily Whips. In some cases, they use BlackBerries. In some cases, they send out notes. These are the Whips that we have within the Legislature, making sure that our Members are in their seats, attentive to the debate that's occurring in the House of Assembly, making sure that they are there for the necessary votes and so on.

To all the staff that we have in our departments that put in place the necessary briefing sessions, that would help the Opposition and get the information out to people that want to have their input into legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this June 11 to 17 will be Public Service Week. We should never forget that behind all of us and supporting the people in this province we have a great public sector workforce that's delivering some very valuable services, whether it's people in health care, if it's people in our educators. Throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, I would say that in every single community there's a public sector worker involved and attached to the services that are critical to the people in our province. So we'll be celebrating and proud to do so with our public sector week in just a few days. They are the people who really are the backbone and makes government successful.

All of us too, as we spend a lot of time in this Legislature, supported by family and friends back in our districts – for many people that actually represent rural districts, in some cases, you're away from your friends and family for a long, long time. They're there, in some cases, doing the work on our behalf in some of those districts, so we thank them for their continued support.

Looking forward to the summer, a busy summer it will be for government as we get around the province, and I'm sure for Members of the Opposition, they'll be doing the same thing as well. Because it's important for all of us – it helps us be grounded, I would say. We sometimes forget that in this fishbowl of a Legislature that we spend a lot of time, there are people in our communities that are looking to actually have a good, meaningful discussion with us. I'm really looking forward to this summer in getting around Newfoundland and Labrador, anticipating a very strong tourism season as we continue to promote the province in the way that we all do as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, making sure that we spread the word to everyone around the world how great a place this is to come to visit but, more importantly, for anyone looking for a safe and secure place to live.

I wish everyone good health and safe travels. But before I conclude my remarks, I've been in this Legislature now I think it's probably going on nearly seven years, when you total it all up. There has been a consistent face that's been in this Legislature and it has been mentioned already that face that we've come to know. This

is Lorna Proudfoot that I'm talking about, who sits at that table just a few feet from where we often stand and sit.

Lorna is leaving us and I just want to be on the public record of especially thanking Lorna for the work that she's done and I certainly wish her a very happy and a very healthy retirement. We wish her all the best. It's deserving and I really appreciate the work that she's done. Someone that would not be widely recognized, I'm sure, by people of our province, but I can assure you the work that she's done has been impactful to people in our province. So to Lorna and her family, I wish her all the best in her retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks, I look forward to being back here in the fall. I wish everyone a very great summer and wish you all the best in our travels and bring us all back safely in the fall of this year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'll follow up on the last point the Premier made. He talked about officials and staff here in the House of Assembly. He also talked just a moment ago about Ms. Proudfoot leaving. I'm going to tell you a funny story about her. She doesn't know the story, but I'm going to tell you the funny story about her. You don't know the story – you don't.

As all of here in the House can see, Lorna Proudfoot sits here as counsel for the House of Assembly in a chair that's directly in front of me, facing directly at me. When I first took a position here in the Opposition chair I was a few days trying to figure out: Why is she staring at me? She sits and she staring, but then one day I looked at her, kind of nodded and looked, she didn't respond, but she's not looking at me. I think she's looking at a spot on the wall or the pictures behind me or something, but for the first few days I was wondering why is she staring, but she's just listening and taking it all in and focused on her job.

Ms. Proudfoot has been in this House and done a great job I know, for you, Mr. Speaker, for Members of the House and past as well. Just a few minutes ago, the last bit of debate that happened in her last day in the House, she had to run to the Deputy House Leader and provide her assistance to make she got done properly what was supposed to be done. We all saw that happen, but I think it was very fitting and appropriate that you'd have to jump out of your seat and come to the rescue of a Member of the House, as you've done probably hundreds of times before.

Congratulations to you. We wish you, sincerely, all the very, very best in your retirement and in your future. That's going to leave two of your colleagues here at the Table, and I'm sure they'll miss you as well. Even though the three of you sit there for hours, but you never seem to have much conversation with other. You don't talk to each other. You just continue sit there.

I don't know, it's certainly not a place for a politician to sit. To sit in the House for hours and not have anything to say or heckle or comment or anything, but you certainly do that. I know that you're an important part of what happens here in the House and to the Speaker as well.

To the Clerk, I ask you to pass along to your staff, to all of your staff in the House of Assembly, those who work in your offices in behind here and upstairs, those in the Broadcast Centre and people who do work in Hansard. *Hansard* is probably the longest standing formal record of what happens in a Legislature. They work every single day behind the scenes to create and form those records.

The Premier mentioned as well some of the security and Commissionaires, the Sergeant-at-Arms who sits quietly here every day as well. The RNC who are – there are always RNC at the House or outside the House or within the precinct of the House when the House is open, and for all the work they do. They're all greatly appreciated. Our Pages do a great job as well.

I know one of them had her mom in the gallery today, which I'm sure was a proud day and a nice day for her as well. She seemed a little stressed and tense earlier when you mentioned

that she had her parents here, but I think it all it went well. I'm sure it's a proud moment for their families to have a chance to come to the House while their family member here is working in an honourable and historic House.

Mr. Speaker, we come here and do the work that we do every day, supported by a cast of political staff who work in the backroom who essentially go unseen by the general public and unheard from by the general public, but they certainly are a great support to us. There's a combination of political staff. They're not public servants in the traditional sense of public servants. They're not public servants, they're not seen to be, but they are political staff who work with us in the political work they do. I offer my thanks and appreciation to all of them for all parties and for the independent Member as well because we're only able to do what we do because they're in the background doing the work that they do as well.

I want to offer my thanks and appreciation to all public servants in the province. We all should be very, very proud of the public service that Newfoundland and Labrador has and the work that they do. I know from my years, I worked in the public service for many years, in a large way separated from the general public service. We were somewhat different or separated from the public service having worked in policing in my lifetime, but I knew public servants and they were there to support the work that we did back in those days.

When I got elected in 2010, I can tell you I grew a brand new respect and greater respect and understanding of the public service. I've been known in the past to come here sometimes pretty early in the morning and sometimes leave pretty late at night, I don't know if I can ever remember a time that there wasn't somebody here before me and somebody here after I went home. That's not isolated and it's not just unique to here in the Confederation Building, I know it happens in other offices around the province as well.

I want to express my appreciation to them and thank them for the work that they do for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and also to speak to the respect that we have for the public service in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the role of a politician and a career path of a politician is very different from, I think, any other career path that someone could follow. No matter if you sit in the Opposition or if you sit on government side or where you sit, when you go back to your districts, there's a role and responsibility that we all take very seriously. For me, I get great satisfaction and enjoyment out of doing my work in my district, but we also, all of us here, in some level, have family who are impacted by the work that we do.

I think I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the family and people that are closest to each and every one of us, that support us, allow us to do the work that we do every day. Sometimes for some Members from especially rural areas of the province who sometimes will leave home on a Sunday and not be seen for three weeks until they drive back. Some people have long travel. Northern Labrador has a significant amount of travel to get back and forth and some geographic areas on the Island is a long drive to get to, but also for us in here in the urban area or greater Northeast Avalon area, and closer to home, you still have to rely, and we rely heavily on the people around us and our families. So I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation for the patience and support that my family and the people who are closest to me give me and I'm sure I share that for all Members of the House.

When we go back and spend – we get the chance now when the House closes to spend more time in our districts, and the people of the province like to offer their opinion, and I like to welcome it. As long as it's done respectfully and done in good taste and so on, even though we may disagree. I look forward to those opportunities over the next few months, as I will use some of my time to travel throughout the province and meet people that I haven't met before or see people I've met in the past as well.

That's really what is sometimes the best indicator to us as politicians in the direction that all of us – government, Opposition and so on – should like to see the province take. So I look forward to those opportunities. Some people call it the barbecue circuit and the community events circuit, but they're opportunities. The reason why we go to those is because they are the greatest opportunities to speak to the largest

number of people at venues and different areas in the province.

I know the Premier and I and other ministers and MHAs, we've criss-crossed and crossed paths as we've gone to those events in the past. But I encourage people to – if they see me in a coffee shop and you want to come and sit down, come join me and have a chat. I look forward to those opportunities around the province.

To all Members of the House of Assembly, I hope you all stay healthy and safe throughout the summer. Continue to do the work that we've been elected to do and while we may disagree, we can sometimes walk away on days like this and thank each other for the way we've conducted ourselves, wish each other the very best and look forward to see each other when we get back into the matches and the fire of the House of Assembly back in the fall again.

So, again, thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you to all Members of the House of Assembly. I wish you all happy and healthy and safe travels throughout the summer.

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

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

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

I am pleased to stand this afternoon. The Premier's comment got me into doing some mathematics. This is my 31st time standing at the end of a session. So maybe I should take out the first time I spoke and read that, nobody will remember. Maybe the Speaker might because he may have been the only one who was here. So my 31st time and it's the same but never the same. I think that's what we have to recognize. It's the same but never the same.

We come here understanding who we are as politicians. We are people who've been elected by people to represent them here in this House. We also represent the parties that we are part of, and we all know, we might have different perspectives, and we do have different perspectives on various things. But I think the one thing, and I've said this before and I can say

it again because I believe it, the one thing that is the same for all of us is that we really do know that we have to be accountable to the people who elected us and that we are here representing them. Even though we might have different ways of thinking of how we do that, different ways of expressing it, at the same time I think all of us have the same goals and we do have the good of the people at heart.

We have differences; we all know that. But I think we've shown – and I deliberately said I want to do something positive when I stand this afternoon. So what are the ways in which we've shown that we can work together? Because there are sometimes one can say looking at us, can they work together? But we've done some good things together. For example, the All-Party Committee on Mental Health, the report was done. The report came out during this session of the House. We had a wonderful session or event where the report was presented.

We know that the minister has an advisory committee that will be working with him in moving forward the recommendations of that report. That report is a symbol of our ability to work together and I think it's something that we need to build on; we need to look to and say yeah, we can do that.

What else have we shown that we agree on things? The private Member's motion on pay equity, we all stood here and spoke to that and made a commitment to women and others in the province because pay equity relates more than just on a gender basis. We voted, as a House, together on that. There are other private Members' motions that we voted together on as well, but I think that was a fairly significant one.

How else have we shown that we can work together? Well, he's not here, but I want to mention the Government House Leader because I think he really gave us leadership on the Standing Orders Committee. Even though we're closing a couple of days earlier than our schedule says – it says June 1 and we're closing today. For the most part, the whole thing of coming out with a calendar, the new schedule of working on Wednesday mornings – it was used some decades ago, but for us it was new – I think that definitely did lessen the number of nights that we sat here in the House, which is



important in terms of having family-friendly schedules for us.

So we've done things that show we can work together. I think that's the message to us here today that I want to say to all of us: Let's remember those times and let's build on the ways in which we work together. The Standing Orders Committee had a meeting today. We will be having one in July, so we're not going to stop working. I'll leave it to the Chair to say the next things that we will be dealing, but by the time we finish our work, we want to deal with all the important pieces of the Standing Orders. So we're not giving up our work. I trust the way in which we work, the unanimity, the way in which we worked through things – because we didn't agree on everything in the beginning, but we worked through them – that that will continue.

So let's remember the ways in which we do work together, because sometimes we can only look or concentrate on the ways in which we don't. We have the place for that here in the House and we do our debates and we point out the ways in which we disagree – and that's our job, and we all know that. Sometimes Opposition gets criticized, but Opposition has a role to play, just like government has a role to play, and we do that. But we work together at the same time.

So I say all that just as a reminder to us. It's a tremendous responsibility and a tremendous experience to stand in this House and to be part of the House of Assembly. We should all carry that, respect it. Respect it and respect what it means for us to be here.

As we go off into the summer, like the Opposition House Leader just said and the Premier said as well, we'll have a summer of meeting our constituents, of getting more time with our constituents. Because especially during the spring session, it's really hard because of the budget and we have to have the Estimates meetings, and 14-hour days aren't pleasant. Now obviously, with only two Members of our caucus, we're covering all of the Committees. So yeah, we had a number of 14-hour days; meetings in the morning, the afternoon, then meetings at night. But we made it through and we will continue to do that. So it is a heavy time,

the spring session, but we did it and we do it all the time, and we will continue to do it.

We don't do it alone, so I just want to go into the thank-yous, because the thank-yous are important. Maybe we'll say, well I don't need to repeat them all over again, but I think we need to and I shall, because we don't do it alone. This building in particular is filled with people who shore up government, who make sure good government happens, that the administration of government happens, and the general public, as has been indicated by the Premier and the Opposition House Leader, don't see those people. The general public doesn't see the people in our offices, for example, the caucus offices. They don't see the people in Hansard who are making sure that every word we say is absolutely correctly reported for history. They don't see the people in the Broadcast Centre who make sure that the public gets to see us and hear us as we debate here in the House of Assembly.

They may every now and again see a Page running around the floor; they know you're there. We know you're there. I thank you for keeping my water glass filled all the time by the way, without ice, which makes a little bit of extra touch that they take care of.

The general public sees the Sergeant-at-Arms; they don't know the way in which he keeps the temperature in the place going well for us. Yesterday it's really cold here. He fixes it. They don't see that. They see the formal piece; we see the personal piece. The Commissionaires, who are here all the time – I have to go to my list to make sure I don't forget anybody – the security as well is extremely important.

Of course the people in the Legislative Library, what would we do without them in our research? They're amazing. They're absolutely amazing whether it's as MHAs doing research, the researchers in our caucus offices or the work of our committees. So for example, Standing Orders, we're looking at things that happen across Canada in the different jurisdictions. All we have to say to the staff of the House of Assembly is: Can you do a jurisdictional search? They'll get all that information of how do other jurisdictions across the country do their

calendars, for example. They do that work for us.

We have our Table Officers. The Table Officers, I think it's very significant they sit in the middle of us because they are at the heart of what we do, both the Clerk, the Clerk's Assistant, the Law Clerk and the people behind them because there's another whole load of people behind them who do the work as well.

That leads me, of course, straight to Lorna. We're going to miss you, Lorna Proudfoot. You've been an amazing person in your role as Law Clerk. Some people will laugh or we'll all laugh when I say this: How could we have done filibusters without Lorna? I don't know how. Getting the language correct for amendments, for motions, she just knew that stuff inside out. It's not an easy job and there's nobody to replace her. This is the thing. If we're here for hours and hours, like in filibusters, there's no other Lorna; there's no assistant to the Law Clerk. So I don't think she got very much sleep at those times. We thought we didn't; she got less. We will always remember that. We're going to miss you sitting at that table and I do wish you all the best, to you and your family.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think I have said enough, but I do want to wish my colleagues all the best for this summer. We will, I'm sure, bump into each other.

Just a personal note; I didn't bump into many people last summer because I couldn't, but I'm looking forward to another summer now as an MHA who is in good health and able to take on this summer enjoying my constituency, my constituents and everything that goes on.

Best wishes to everybody.

Thank you to you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I thank the party leaders for your comments. I wanted to thank the individuals that make my job a little bit easier as well. The Commissionaires, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the RNC, and the sessional security as well that help make sure our Legislature

operates and the Members of the Legislature are safe, because it is a different world.

Our Pages help make sure that the House runs efficiently. The Table Officers, Broadcast, Hansard, the Legislative Library and the numbers of individuals up in the House of Assembly service, I wanted to thank all of them for making my job easier and ensuring the functioning of the House of Assembly.

A thank you as well to all Members of the House of Assembly. We have 40 individuals in the House, 40 different personalities, different caucuses with different viewpoints. It's not often easy to be able to keep order and decorum because of different views on different issues but you've done well. It's a different Legislature now then it was two or three years ago. We do have a much greater level of order and decorum, and that wouldn't happen without the co-operation of Members of the Legislature as well.

I remember when I sat as an independent a number of years ago, and about to break for summer break saying that – any of you that are old enough to remember the Road Runner program, it's like the Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote, you're at each other when the clock is on but when you punch out on the clock we're all people with families and we have our lives and people get along.

The Members of the Legislature, while it looks like very heated debate inside the Legislature, generally outside the Legislature everybody gets along. That's something that's often overlooked by the general public, the fact that we are people with families and not just here fighting while the Legislature is open.

I wanted to wish everybody a safe and happy summer session, or summer holiday. I know your work doesn't stop. Members are very busy even during the summer. Enjoy your work, enjoy your constituencies, and we'll see you in the Legislature again in November.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

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

On that very positive note, I move, seconded by the Member for Torngat Mountains, that we adjourn to the call of the Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that we adjourn to the call of the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, 'nay.'

This House stands adjourned to the Call of the Chair.

On motion, the House adjourned to the Call of the Chair.