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HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

Wednesday

May 23, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, third reading of Bill 10.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 10, An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997 be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill 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.'

This motion is carried.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997. (Bill 10)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill is now 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 Schools Act, 1997," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 10)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 3, third reading of Bill 15.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 15, An Act Respecting Tenancies Of Residential Premises be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill 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.'

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Tenancies Of Residential Premises. (Bill 15)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill is now 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 Respecting Tenancies Of Residential Premises," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 15)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 5, second reading of Bill 16.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 16, An Act To Amend The Court Security Act, 2010 be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 16, An Act To Amend The Court Security Act, 2010 be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act To Amend The Court Security Act, 2010.” (Bill 16)

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

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

Today, we stand here in this House to debate Bill 16, which is an Act to Amend the Court Security Act, 2010, which as you can see from its title, came into force in 2010, actually on October 1.

Basically, this legislation is the statutory basis on which sheriff’s officers provide security for a significant portion of our court facilities, whether it’s the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court or Provincial Court. This legislation allows them to handle the security program within these facilities.

It deals with methods of screening, it deals with access to restricted areas, authorization to relieve individuals of weapons, prevent them from entering a courthouse or court areas if they do not comply, and it also makes an offence for anybody but authorized personnel to possess a weapon in a court area, to enter such an area after being refused entry and to refuse to leave a court area after being asked to do so.

When we talk about courts in general, and I’ve spent a fair bit of time in most of the courts in the province, and depending on the level of court, security can be an issue. Courts are places often filled with emotion and high emotion. If you look at our unified family court over on Kings Bridge Road and, again, depending on the jurisdiction, family court is something that, depending on where you are, if you’re in Labrador or Central, it has dual jurisdiction in that it’s Supreme Court or Provincial. On the West Coast and here on the Avalon, it’s governing by our Trial Division, our Supreme Court as it’s now referred.

Family court is something that has a tremendous amount of emotion. When we look at Provincial Court especially, or recently in Supreme Court

where we’ve had an explosion really in the number of jury trials. These are places filled with – when you look at the subject matter we’re dealing with, it’s emotion on all sides. It’s difficult.

That’s why we do have the need for security in these buildings. Unfortunately, I’ve seen situations where there’s been hostility, tense moments and I’ve seen, unfortunately, members of our court security be assaulted at times. It can be an extremely difficult place to work.

I think this is the right juncture. This is my first time speaking to Court Security in the House. I wasn’t around in 2010, but what I would say is this is an opportunity for me to say thank you to our sheriff’s officers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: They are tremendous men and women who, again, all over this province, who have very tough jobs. I’ve had an opportunity to meet with them on a number of occasions.

We have a High Sheriff, a gentleman named Dan Chafe, who’s been on the job for about three years or so now, who I think has done a tremendous job. He’s working with a group of people that really handle very trying circumstances, handle people at the height, or the depths, of their emotions, we’ll say. It’s a trying environment. The need for security, I think, is crucial; it’s important and we recognize that.

The purpose of the amendment that we’re making here today, which when you look at it is not significant in terms of the number of sections that are being amended, but it’s a change that basically we’re expanding the definition of a court area to include a building, a part of a building, land or space used by an inquiry.

So when this was first brought in we dealt with courtrooms, but we all know – and it’s not just something that we’ve been dealing with recently – inquiries are events that have been happening for some time. In many cases, inquiries are dealt with, not in court space, but often in space that’s

outside of a court but it really is a court-like atmosphere.

It often has the presence of a judge, staff, lawyers, witnesses and can often be tense. You look back through our history at the subject matter that we've done inquiries in, these are things that people have a high emotional connection to. In many cases, we're dealing with tragedy. People can have a very strong opinion one way or the other, and that's fine.

What we're discussing here today is an amendment that will, basically – it's also going to have a House, I guess, clean-up provision here, where recently we made changes to our Court of Appeal to allow it to be its own division.

So what we're doing is replacing all the references to Trial Division with Supreme Court. There's a little clean-up section there. So under paragraph 2(a) court now means the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court and the Provincial Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, where before it may have said Supreme Court, Appeal Division and Trial Division.

The other thing is that we're changing paragraph 2(b) to discuss what a court area encompasses. This is just basically adding a section there that says any building, space or land that is used by a court or inquiry and designated as a court area or regulation. Then we further go into what an inquiry means. An “‘inquiry’ means a commission of inquiry established under Part I of the *Public Inquiries Act, 2006* or an inquiry conducted under Part II of the *Public Inquiries Act, 2006*.”

So what this is, is we had a request come in from Justice LeBlanc and his team, which was, we know where the inquiry's being held. They wanted to specifically have the provision of security provided by the sheriff's officers, which I think is a tremendous vote of confidence for these individuals.

Having security at an inquiry is certainly not an issue that I have any problem with. I think that we have to do everything to ensure that our inquiries proceed on an orderly basis and that security is protected for all. Again, this inquiry will be no different than the others in the sense

that it is something that has a significant amount of public interest.

We have a number of opinions in many cases. Certainly, we're not dealing with a loss of life as we've had to deal with in other inquiries, but this is something that holds a significant amount of importance as it relates to just about every individual in this province. There's a lot of public discussion about it and there's probably going to be a lot of public interest – again, people going into this space.

During this process, Justice LeBlanc and his team indicated that they wanted the provision of security to be done by sheriff's officers. The High Sheriff, Mr. Chafe, indicated that this would not be an issue. There was money allotted for this and allowed under the budget to ensure that we had the presence of security provided by the sheriff's officers at this inquiry.

The reason that we're not just saying a particular space is that this inquiry will have meetings not only here in St. John's, but also in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the sheriff's officers will be on site in both locations. In order to facilitate or to allow that, we need to make a change to this act to allow for sheriff's officers to provide their services. As I've outlined earlier, what the act already does, in order to allow them to do this at an inquiry or in a non-court space, we had to add an inquiry to that definition.

So it's a pretty simple amendment that we're making here. I think I've indicated the reasons why we're doing this. This was upon the request of Justice LeBlanc. I thank him and his staff for taking on this really significant task for the people of this province. I mean, this is not something that – it's a long-term commitment and there's a significant amount of work that's already gone in and we haven't even started the hearing process. We announced the inquiry back in November and we know that the work is going to go on up to or before December 31, 2019.

We know that it's the commissioner's intention to conduct public hearings starting sometime, they figure, in September 2018 up to June 2019. We know the inquiry is located here in St. John's and they will be holding public hearings in Happy Valley-Goose Bay at a space that's

undetermined as of yet. Wherever that space is going to be will be covered off by the amendment that we're making here today.

Without this legislative authority, the inquiry would have to go out and retain private security services and they would not have the same authority that sheriff's officers carry under the *Court Security Act*, which is again one of the reasons that we're making this amendment here today.

Having the ability to use reasonable force to remove a person that may cause a disturbance or refuse entry and to rely on police, they would have to rely on police. So not only would you have security but you also have to have, possibly, the provision of police. We have people that handle security. We trust their decisions, we trust their discretion and we trust their ability to do assessments and analysis of each situation.

Also, sheriff's officers in this province are not issued fire arms, but they do wear vests, have batons, OC spray and stuff like this. They have different authorities and powers that are not conveyed to private security, plus whatever the cost would be for private security to do something like this.

I think the main point that I want to stress here is this was the request that came from the commissioner. This was something that the commissioner wanted. It seems to me a reasonable request. Each commissioner will make decisions as to how their inquiry will proceed. In this case, there was a request to have sheriff's officers do this. In order to facilitate that, we are here in this House today to discuss this amendment to the *Court Security Act*, which certainly we will be supporting. We will do everything in our power to ensure that this inquiry not only happens, as we've called it, but we want to make sure that it happens in a timely fashion and with the people and the participants that are involved feeling that they are secure at all times during this very important work that they are doing.

On that note, I look forward to the debate and to the Committee stage. Hopefully, I can answer questions as they come in.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 16, An Act to Amend the *Court Security Act*, 2010. The minister has taken us through some of the rationale for the particular amendment, the allowance for the amendment and what it would involve, and certainly the authority or the direction now that would be given to the sheriff's officers in regard to providing security services.

In addition to what they currently do related to the court facilities, the act does define or redefine the court area meaning a building, part of a building, land or space used by a court or inquiry and designated as a court area by regulation. Regulation means that following this amendment, regulations will be drawn up and approved by the Executive Council related to that definition of the court area.

The minister said when he introduced the amendment – he spoke to the request from Justice LeBlanc and he related it to the upcoming inquiry, and a means to provide security services in that particular environment. From my understanding of what he said, that came directly from Justice LeBlanc.

While that may have precipitated the discussion we're having here today, this is more broad reaching, I guess, than that particular inquiry. It would be all future inquiries and as well would be anything related to the court area as defined in the amendment and would be further defined with regulations that come in at some point in time.

Maybe the minister could speak to that – we'll probably ask a couple of questions when we get to Committee in regard to that and what his vision is in those regulations and further defining the court area as suggested in the amendment.

The bill also changes the phrase “Trial Division” to “Supreme Court,” in line with the changes made by the *Court of Appeal Act* previously amended. As was talked about, the sheriff’s officers can only provide security at services to the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court and Provincial Court. This is asking, through this amendment, to expand their role and the security services they would provide in particular environments as related to an inquiry where they may not always be stationary or in one location. There could be activities right around the province in regard to hearings or engagement sessions to deal with the general public on a particular topic or a particular inquiry.

So what this is suggesting is that in those cases that security service through the sheriff’s officer would be provided and would be part of that inquiry and part of the commissioner at the time who’s appointed to oversee the security of particular happenings of that inquiry.

I know in the briefing there was indications that the use of sheriff’s officers in previous inquiries has been inconsistent. So it would be good, too, in Committee if we heard from the minister what’s transpired in the past in regard to the services that were provided. What were the difficulties with that? What were the challenges with that? While there’s a request coming from Judge LeBlanc, it certainly would be nice to hear what we’re transitioning from to get to this amendment we’re talking about here today. What were some of the challenges that were experienced in the past? How were they dealt with? How some of those challenges could be certainly improved or not received based on the amendment we got here and what we’re talking about in this particular amendment.

I think the minister talked about budgeting. Obviously, there’s additional time allotted, human resources for an activity like this related to an inquiry. I think he indicated that the Sheriff’s Office indicated that budgeting was allocated or it’s within their capacity to do that. Any amendments or any regulatory change that affects human resources, it’s always important that there’s some discussion on the ability to finance that, where that financing needs to come from and what the cost is predicted to be; recognizing, obviously, that this is related to one inquiry. You may be able to estimate what costs

would be for this particular inquiry based on travel, based on the number of days that the Commissioner expects to sit. In some fiscal year, if there was an inquiry or some other activity that’s outside the norm that required the security services, it may be something at that particular time would have to be dealt with, because it may not have been predicted in a fiscal year that it would occur.

As well, there was discussion about the fact that it’s been requested, the security services. In the past, if inquiries were used, there would have been a requirement to do it through private security firms. There was some discussion too from the minister about the authority and the power of the sheriff’s officers and what they can exercise in their activities as opposed to a private security firm and what they would be able to do and what their authority would allow them to do.

What I understand from the minister is that recognizing the request, recognizing the power of the sheriff’s officers, you’re suggesting they would be best suited to deal with the particular request that’s been asked for here. Obviously, it’s in accordance with the judicial system and the role that the sheriff’s officers now play and then expanding that to inquiries by a Supreme Court judge that would oversee as Commissioner, an inquiry.

The conduit for the security services from the Sheriff’s Office obviously would be consistent in this case. If you went outside and had to hire a private security firm you get into – certainly, reasonably to get into issues of experience, experiences of that firm dealing with this particular environment. Obviously a sheriff’s officer, I guess you could assume would have that continuity in terms of the type of security, the environment and the things that may or may not be encountered.

From the environment point of view in terms of the reason for this, at times, as was mentioned, emotions could run high. I guess one issue we need to discuss and talk about is the right for people to express their concerns whether in protest or some other means, but as long as that doesn’t infringe on processes and the function or activity at the time and is in keeping with normal protocol in regard to demonstrations and those

types of things. I think what this talks about is a unique situation, just to ensure that security is maintained in an environment that's been suggested.

We'll have some questions for the minister when we go through Committee, just on some of the references in the amendment, particularly related to the court area and is referenced by regulation, how that would be defined. As well, if there are any thoughts outside of an inquiry, where this security services may be required. Taking into account the new definition of court and court area, well particular court area where there would be other incidents where it could be foreseen that these services would be required and would have to be executed based on an inquiry, but based on any other activity that may be foreseen that would require this type of security.

We'll look forward to hearing further debate, and certainly look forward to going into Committee and asking a few questions in regard to the amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

We are, as stated by my colleagues, debating –

AN HON. MEMBER: Bill 16.

MS. ROGERS: – Bill 16, the Court Security Act. Thank you very much.

It's An Act to Amend the Court Security Act. The bill amends the Court Security Act to expand the definition of a court area to include a building, part of a building, land or space used by an inquiry. I'd like to thank the good folks from the Department of Justice who prepared us and gave us a briefing on this bill.

It's an interesting time to receive the request to amend this bill. From what we hear from the Minister of Justice, in fact the request to have the Sheriff's Office provide the security for the inquiry on Muskrat Falls came from the Commissioner, from Justice LeBlanc. I would imagine he made an assessment and with his assessment decided that this is the way he would like to be able to proceed with his inquiry by engaging the Sheriff's Office. Now we don't know from either the briefing or what has been said to date, whether that means a constant presence of sheriff's officers during the inquiry but we will be able to ask the minister that.

The amendment to the bill replaces all references to Trial Division with Supreme Court. Officials within the department confirm that the commissioner of the Muskrat Falls inquiry has requested that security for the Muskrat Falls inquiry and that it be conducted by the Sheriff's Office. We know we can rely on the personnel of the Sheriff's Office. They are well trained; they have a very clear mandate. They have been doing court security for years. It's a very well-oiled machine. We can trust their expertise and their skills. In many ways it makes sense that should security be required for inquiries, that, in fact, it makes sense that we would have the Sheriff's Office provide that security.

The Court Security Act legislates the role of the Sheriff's Office in providing court security. The act makes it an offence – we know within court buildings the act makes it an offence to have a weapon in a court area, enter a court area after being refused entry and refusing to leave a court area after being told to.

That's so important, Mr. Speaker, in our courts where very important business is undertaken on behalf of the whole concept of justice in our province. Often in a court proceeding, it's intense what happens at trial. It's very intense what happens in our court area. Sometimes that's also the case in the inquiries.

The current Sheriff's Office operates in Court of Appeal, Supreme Court and Provincial Court. This amendment adds public inquiries as defined under the *Public Inquiries Act, 2006* to the definition of court areas under the Court Security Act. That means wherever the business of an inquiry is taking place that can be

considered the same as a court area. It expands the mandate and the ability of the Sheriff's Office to provide security for work that's being undertaken on behalf of the people of the province.

When providing security, private firms have to call the police for issues; whereas under this amendment, any public inquiry can request the services of the Sheriff's Office to provide security.

There's also a housekeeping amendment in this bill. That replaces the words Trial Division with Supreme Court, which is in keeping with recent passing of the Court of Appeal legislation which we handled and dealt with a little over a month ago here in the House.

There hasn't appeared to have been any real pressing need for additional security at the most recent public inquiries. Also inquiries where there were issues that would have been very intense, when we had the inquiry in the shooting death of Mr. Dunphy.

One would have thought there would have been a request for security and that because of the public outcry and the protests that happened around that area. What's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that I believe Justice LeBlanc's request has come from a base of knowledge and in order to be able to fulfill the work that he's been asked to do on behalf of the people.

We must ensure that the public spaces of an inquiry are not foreboding, that they're not difficult to access. When we look at what has happened with Muskrat Falls, the frustration level of the people of the province is so high. It's so high because of the way Muskrat Falls was rammed through our House of Assembly, the way decisions were made, the way the previous administration took Muskrat Falls out from under the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Board where they ignored much of the Environmental Impact Statement.

People are already very, very frustrated and feel so shut out of the process of mandating Muskrat Falls. We have to make sure, Mr. Speaker, it's the very reason that we have an inquiry, because of the people's dissatisfaction with how Muskrat Falls was sanctioned. We have to ensure the

inquiry is an open process where the people of the province feel welcomed, where the people of the province are not intimidated, where there is no atmosphere whatsoever of foreboding or prohibition that would give the people of the province any feeling whatsoever that they are not welcomed into the space where the inquiry is happening.

This is a public inquiry that is brought about because of the mishandling of the Muskrat Falls file and the mishandling of the sanctioning of Muskrat Falls. It's really important that everything is done to make that space open, accessible and welcoming, and that it proves that there will be accountability and transparency in every step of the way that this inquiry is undertaken.

We learned in Estimates, Mr. Speaker, the RCMP had spent over \$8.9 million in protecting the movement of transformers destined for the Muskrat Falls Project – \$8.9 million and possibly more. All of that will be charged to the province, all of that the people's money. There are many in the area in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and areas where they felt totally intimidated by the abundance of RCMP officers, of police in their communities. There were no incidents, there was no threat.

We have to be careful, Mr. Speaker. I think we have to be judicious about the types of security that are needed, particularly around the area of Muskrat Falls, around the issue of Muskrat Falls. We must be very, very cautious to protect that atmosphere of openness and welcome. That's what's at risk here. It is my hope that Justice LeBlanc and his team will choose to have the presence of the sheriff's officers as a way to ensure a smooth operation, as a way to ensure the people of the province are welcomed to all spaces where the inquiry is undertaken. If not, then it perpetuates once again the missteps that we have seen, almost the injustice that we have seen in the sanctioning and the ramming through of Muskrat Falls on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I look forward to asking questions in Committee about the specific details of the intention of how the Sheriff's Office will be used, at what times, under what circumstances or whether it will be continuous during every process of the inquiry. I

haven't heard about any incidents so far in any of the operations of the inquiry whether or not there have been any threats. I believe that if security is required, to use the Sheriff's Office is the appropriate security to use because they are well trained, because they are hired by the people of the province to ensure safe and smooth operations of anything that relates to justice.

I will take my seat, Mr. Speaker. My concern is to ensure a spirit of openness, of welcoming is always present in every aspect of the inquiry on the issue of Muskrat Falls.

Thank you very much.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to have an opportunity once again to speak and this time to Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Court Security Act.

Mr. Speaker, I could, for the most part, just say ditto to what the Member for St. John's Centre just said. I will, for the record I suppose, just convey my own thoughts, although they're very similar if not identical to what the Member just said really.

Obviously, what we're doing here is we're going to be allowing for the sheriff's officers to provide security at not just the Muskrat Falls inquiry but all future inquiries. It would give the ability for the Department of Justice, when we have inquiries in the future, to actually have the sheriff's officers present providing security services. Now, obviously, the impetus for this is the Muskrat Falls inquiry and a request from Commissioner LeBlanc. If we're going to have security it does make sense that it would be the Sheriff's Office, given the fact that the Sheriff's Office is already providing security at the courts as we know.

All we're doing in this bill, of course, is we're going to define a court area – make an amendment, we're going to define a court area meaning a building, part of a building, land, space used by a court or inquiry and designated as a court area by regulation. In other words, we can now say that if we're having an inquiry and

that inquiry is not taking place in an actual courthouse – they rent a building somewhere or property somewhere to hold that inquiry – then that would be designated a court area; therefore, the sheriff's officers could be used as security.

My understanding is they would simply be there to screen people – and this is how I understand it, I guess the minister will clarify – as they're coming in. As I understand it, we were told they would have those metal detectors like they have at the courthouse now, like we have here in the House of Assembly that people would walk through. Attached to that metal detector will be some sort of an X-ray machine for bags to go through to make sure there are no weapons concealed in a bag or whatever. Once people get inside the inquiry space, then the sheriffs would be there to maintain order and to ensure that nobody acts inappropriately or bursts out into some kind of violent rage or whatever the case might be, and to remove individuals if necessary.

Of course, by having the sheriff's officers there as opposed to a private security firm, the sheriff's officers would actually have the ability to sort of take the matter, a hands-on approach, if it was deemed necessary, to deal a violent individual and so on if that were to happen.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that in principle and in general I certainly support the concept of having security at our courts. I support the concept of having security here at this House of Assembly. I support the concept of having security at an inquiry because it is very important that when we have these public proceedings that people can go, they can participate, and they can feel comfortable – all parties can feel comfortable that their health and safety are not going to be placed in jeopardy.

We know that there are people out there, for whatever reason, that could be a threat. That's reality. There are people out there that could be a threat to the health, safety and security of people involved in a court proceeding or involved in an inquiry such as this. It's important that we put measures in place to ensure that everybody is safe. That's what this is about; it's about safety. I support that 100 per cent.

With that said, I would agree again with my colleague from St. John's Centre that we know that there are a lot of people who have very strong views as it relates to this particular inquiry, certainly all inquiries, with strong views I'm sure with the ER/PR or with the Dunphy inquiry and so on. The Muskrat Falls inquiry, we have seen protests and different things that have occurred. And I can understand where there would be a fear that somebody could just go in there and put the place up. We need to make sure that doesn't happen.

By the same token we also need to ensure that – and this is the only piece where I see a little bit of concern is when it says court area means a building, part of a building, land and space used by the court. My only concern would be, and I would hope that when we're talking land and space – say if the Labrador Land Protectors or people who are supportive of it decided that they were going to hold a little protest, vigil, rally – call it what you will – outside of the building, and assuming that they are not destroying property or threatening people but they are just having a peaceful protest, I would hope that the sheriff's officers are not going to come and kick them off the property, or tell them that they don't have the right to free speech and so on.

Now, I'm sure that's not the intent, I'm sure it's not. But where it says land, so it's not specific to just inside that inquiry space, inside that building, it says the land. As long as people are assembling peacefully, I would just hope and assume that if they want to hold a rally or whatever they want to do, to have their opinions heard on the matter that we're not going to shut down free speech. I'm sure the minister has no intentions of doing that. I'm not suggesting he does. I'm sure he doesn't actually, but the way it's written that someone could conclude that, I suppose, potentially.

Barring that, as long as the inquiry is open to the public – and it should be open for any member of the public to be able to go and listen to the proceedings and so on. I understand that will be the case. As long as people can come in and have that ability and they're not going to be hampered in any way, they're not going to be harassed, they're not going to be intimidated and all that kind of stuff, which I'm sure they're not, then I see no problem whatsoever in having

security there to make sure everybody is safe. Because that's what it's about, it's about the safety of all, regardless what side of the coin you may fall on in terms of the Muskrat Falls inquiry, whether you're pro-Muskrat, anti-Muskrat, whatever your issues may be, it's about providing a safe space for everybody.

If that would appear to be the intent of this, and with that in mind, I have some questions that I just sort of indicated and they're similar to what my other colleagues have raised. Perhaps they'll get to it in Committee before I do and I won't need to ask questions; that's fine enough. But as long as those two principles are there, focus on safety but, by the same token, allowing open access for people and not trying to trample people's rights and that fair balance is there and it's done properly, then I have no issue with it whatsoever.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety speaks now, he will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

I appreciate the commentary from my colleagues across the way. I'm sure they'll have questions during Committee stage, which I'll try my best to answer. In regard to the one point, I will try my best to address it now while it's fresh, is the commentary from the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands – just a couple of points. I believe that the reason that you would have land and space, not only would it be a legislative term to make sure that we cover off everything, but I would assume that part of inquiry space is the ability to get into said inquiry space. I don't think there was any thought process behind somebody having their Charter rights infringed in relation to assembly, free speech and whatnot, but everybody also has a right to get to these spaces. I understand where the Member is going, so I think I've covered that off. That's why the terminology would be as it is.

The second part, I just want to correct him because he said – I know he didn't mean it this

way, but again, we are doing this on the record and somebody might look back and the Member said I don't believe the minister would do that. What we need to understand is that the commission is independent. I have no say in how this commission of inquiry is going to proceed. It was handed over to Justice LeBlanc. He and his team are now in charge. What we are doing here today is bringing forward legislation that will cover off a request that's been made for this inquiry or some inquiry down the road.

As it relates to the security requirements of this inquiry or any of the procedures of this inquiry that would fall upon the commissioner, what we are doing is facilitating a request to allow for the security for this inquiry and going forward.

On that note, I'll move on to the Committee stage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 16 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.'

This motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Court Security Act, 2010. (Bill 16)

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

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House?

Now?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Court Security Act, 2010," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 16)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister and Community Services, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 16.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill.

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.'

This motion is carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 16, An Act To Amend The Court Security Act, 2010.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Court Security Act, 2010." (Bill 16)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just for the minister, I wonder if he could comment on the definition "'court area' means a

building, part of a building, land or space used by a court” or inquiry “and designated as a court area by regulation.”

Obviously, security now ties to services related to court facilities. This is an exercise in attaching it to inquiries. Does he foresee any other area where there could be expansion in these services or is this just, in his view, tied to commission of inquiry and the space that would be involved today and in the future?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

There’s no intention, that’s been identified to me, that this would be applied elsewhere. This was specifically a request that’s come in. Now what I can say, because I think this was brought up earlier, sheriff’s officers have been used at inquiries in the past but there’s no rule basically as to what’s been done.

I think in the past there’s been police presence; there have been officials with Transportation and Works presence; there can be private security presence, and there’s been sheriff’s presence. In this case, since the *Court Security Act, 2010* came in where we designate court areas and we’ve had the request come in now for sheriff’s officers to be used, that’s why we needed to change court area.

Again, going forward, it’s up to the commissioner of any inquiry to figure out how they want to run that and security presence that would be put in place. This would cover that off into the future.

If there was some other request that came in as it relates to any security in any court facility, I’m always willing to hear that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A question in regard to the financing and the funds to cover such services; I think the minister in his commentary in debate mentioned about funds were already available.

Would there be, in the future, allocations of funds of a line item for this service or would you expect that it would be covered off in current budget of an annual basis in a fiscal year?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. A. PARSONS: This particular cost was covered off. It is \$89,340 to cover off three officers for which there were the human resources that were available. This would be covered off under the inquiry budget.

When they do up the inquiry they come forward with a proposed budget, and this would be a very small portion of that cost. Usually it’s: what is the technology cost? What is the legal cost? What is the salary cost, and everything else? This would be something that would be put into – this was already allotted for. They had anticipated security costs. Going forward, it depends on how much security they would want to avail of depending on the inquiry.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John’s Centre.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I’d like to ask the minister: Does he know whether or not this is a continuous presence of security at the inquiry, or is it periodic? Does he have any idea of that?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

That would be a decision of the commissioner. I haven’t specifically had that indicated. My guess is it would be continuous. Any time that it is open to the public their presence would be there, whether it’s in Labrador or here in St. John’s. That’s my guess. That would be a better question for the commissioner.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John’s Centre.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

I ask the minister: Would this require any new hires for the Sheriff's Office?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. A. PARSONS: No. The High Sheriff has indicated they have sufficient human resources to handle this so that there were no hires necessary.

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

When the commission of inquiry meets in Happy Valley-Goose Bay would they be using sheriff's officers who are already in Happy Valley-Goose Bay or would there be a contingent that would travel with them?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. A. PARSONS: That would be a decision of the High Sheriff, but I would hope they would have the resources in Labrador to cover this just to save on the travel costs that would be there. It would be a much more cost-effective move to have it done in Labrador. My understanding is that won't be an issue but that will be a Dan Chafe question.

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clause 2.

CHAIR: Clause 2.

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 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, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Court Security Act, 2010.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, Mr. Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 16.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 16.

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 16 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 16 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time on tomorrow.

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

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

I move, from the Order Paper, Order 6, second reading of Bill 18.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that Bill 18, An Act To Amend The Corporations Act, be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 18, An Act To Amend The Corporations Act, be now read a second time.

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to stand today to speak to Bill 18, which is An Act To Amend The Corporations Act. All of us have a role to play in increasing immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador, ensuring that more newcomers choose to settle in this province and build a brighter future for themselves, our communities and the province.

Our government, Mr. Speaker, is focused on ensuring that Newfoundland and Labrador become a destination of choice for immigrants and their families, while also encouraging Newfoundlanders and Labradorian abroad to move back home. In *The Way Forward: A vision for sustainability and growth in Newfoundland and Labrador* a provincial government committed, our government committed to developing a five-year plan to increase immigration by 50 per cent and welcoming approximately 1,700 immigrants annually by 2022.

Collaboration, engagement and partnership are integral to the immigration action plan in recognition that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians play a role in immigrant attraction and retention. We must strengthen community partnerships and maximize pathways to

immigration, improve immigration retention and celebrate the multiculturalism and diversity of our province.

Working towards the goals of increasing immigration and strengthening our economy, Mr. Speaker, I'm in the process of expanding the Provincial Nominee Program to include two new business immigration categories under our Provincial Nominee Program, and they are the international entrepreneur and the international graduate entrepreneur.

The Provincial Nominee Program allows Newfoundland and Labrador to nominate applicants who qualify under provincially established criteria for permanent resident status. It does this, Mr. Speaker, by offering a quicker immigration process for qualified skilled workers, international graduates and their families who wish to settle permanently in Newfoundland and Labrador, and offering assistance from provincial program officers who are able and available to explain the program requirements and the processes.

The objectives of introducing business immigration categories support an advanced entrepreneurship and innovation in the province. They support labour market growth. They assist in advancing the province's business innovation agenda. They strengthen the province's ties to the global economy and they grow the province's economy and help address demographic challenges.

While I make further descriptions, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, we've had discussions. It became clear in our discussions that for the program to fully meet potential in increasing immigration and business activity the *Corporations Act*, which is administered by Service NL, should be amended to allow participants in the new categories to more easily incorporate a business.

Mr. Speaker, incorporating a business provides additional legal protections that a sole proprietorship does not have. The act of incorporating creates a new legal entity which has broader rights and obligations under Canadian law. Such an entity can act to acquire assets, obtain a loan, enter into contracts, sue or

be sued and can even be found guilty of committing a crime.

Incorporation limits the liability of a corporation's shareholders. Corporations are taxed separately from their owners. This means that individuals may gain certain fiscal advantages by incorporating, especially if revenues pass a certain point.

Also, raising money is often easier for corporations than it is for other forms of business. For example, a corporation would have the option of issuing bonds and share certificates to investors. Corporations are also often able to borrow money at lower rates than the rates offered to other types of businesses.

Service NL maintains a registry of companies which can be accessed through the Companies and Deeds Online or CADO, for short. Corporations are required to provide the annual filings and you can look up any company on the CADO to determine if they are in good standing and being compliant. Sole proprietorship and partnerships are not required to be listed in the registry.

As the legislation currently stands, temporary residents are not eligible to incorporate a business on their own, as at least 25 per cent of directors must be Canadians as defined by the act. Similar to Newfoundland and Labrador's existing requirements, the federal government as well as Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario require that a minimum of 25 per cent of the directors of a corporation be residents of Canada. Other jurisdictions are considering whether to introduce a similar residency requirement.

The federal government, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario qualify the minimum number of directors required to be Canadian residents when the number of directors is four or less. In these instances, at least one director must be a Canadian resident. Therefore, participants in the program would not be able to incorporate on their own or with other participants without seeking out resident Canadians to serve as directors.

Mr. Speaker, this can be difficult as, oftentimes, immigrants do not have ties to resident

Canadians willing to act as a director. From a regulatory perspective, the residency requirement is key to reduce the potential of fraud, negligence, flight risk and increase accountability. If directors are resident Canadians under the act, there are likely to be local assets from which judgments can be satisfied.

Given, Mr. Speaker, the regulatory concerns, I propose to broaden the incorporation abilities only as far as necessary. This will be done by expanding the definition of resident Canadian to include those persons that participating in the international entrepreneur and international graduate entrepreneur categories under the Provincial Nominee Program. Any participant removed from the program would cease to be a resident Canadian under the act.

In order to further mitigate any risk, participants and business operations in the program would be robustly monitored by the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour for regulatory purposes and performance monitoring. After careful consideration of the monitoring mechanisms that we'd be putting in place, Mr. Speaker, we are proposing to present Bill 18, An Act To Amend The Corporations Act, to the House today to have continued second reading on that.

Mr. Speaker, this is important for us as a government moving forward to make sure that these amendments are necessary in order for us to move forward our categories under the Provincial Nominee Program. Our government is working closely with our federal partners to introduce two new categories under the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program. These categories are international graduate entrepreneur and the international entrepreneur. Introducing these two new categories under the Provincial Nominee Program is a key commitment in *The Way Forward* on immigration for Newfoundland and Labrador, the province's collaborative, partnership-driven Immigration Action Plan.

During public and stakeholder consultations on the development of the Immigration Action Plan, we heard from the business community and international students that introducing these two new categories will help us retain

international graduates who want to stay in the province.

It only makes sense to do whatever we can to enable international graduates to invest what they have learned right here in this province. In many cases, Mr. Speaker, these international graduates have already been living in Newfoundland and Labrador for several years – four or more, depending on their degree. They have established their lives here, they have friends and they're involved in groups and activities in their communities. We have heard many times that these international graduates want to stay right here in this province, they want to work here, they want to build their lives here, but right now their options are limited.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to many of these international graduates and I might add that right now, Memorial University, for example, is depending on roughly about 16 per cent of the students at Memorial University who are international students, and one-third of our students at Memorial are actually international and Canadian from other provinces in Canada. So we're seeing a significant number of international students who are choosing Memorial University, the College of the North Atlantic and, in fact, some of our private training institutions to further their education.

Introducing the international graduate entrepreneur and the international entrepreneur categories will give them a pathway to permanent residency right here in this province. The amendments to Bill 18 are an important step in our work with the federal government to establish these new categories in Newfoundland and Labrador. These amendments update the *Corporations Act* to allow individuals in these two categories to incorporate a business in this province.

Currently, temporary residents are not eligible to incorporate a business on their own because 25 per cent of the corporations founding board of directors must be made up of permanent residents or Canadian citizens. International graduates and entrepreneurs often do not have ties to resident Canadians that are willing to act as a director.

These amendments will remove that barrier for individuals who are in Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program. It will treat a participant in the program as a resident Canadian for the purpose of being on a board, thereby more easily meeting the 25 per cent requirement.

The benefits of making this change are significant. Bill 18 will lead our government's efforts to grow the provincial workforce and the economy. The amendments will make it easier for international students and entrepreneurs to establish themselves, create businesses and jobs in our province. All of us have a role to play in increasing immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador. We want more newcomers to settle in the province and to build a brighter future for themselves, for our communities and for our province.

I am pleased to remind my hon. colleagues that 25 of the 39 initiatives of the five-year Immigration Action Plan were initiated or implemented by the end of 2017-18 fiscal year. We established the minister's round table on immigration, which held its inaugural meeting on February 7, 2018.

Mr. Speaker, nearly 50 members of the round table include representative employers, labour, community organizations and other stakeholders. We have two additional round tables that will be held in 2018, with the next coming up in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, it gave me, as minister, a great opportunity to sit around that table, and those tables, and to get a feedback from stakeholders, from front-line workers, from employers and from the labour to identify some of the concerns that they had as new immigrants to this province. It was through these discussions and the direction that was given that we felt it was important as a government and as a department to ensure that we are positioning our province to take advantage of all possible opportunities for immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador.

We also established an interdepartmental committee on immigration, which facilitates better information sharing and collaboration between departments. We want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we do this right. The way in

which we can do this to ensure that we're getting the best results is to engage in the discussions that we continue to have across departments.

This committee has met twice, to date, and discussed a number of priority areas for collaboration. This includes a focus on hiring skilled immigrants for hard-to-fill positions and initiatives to promote diversity and multiculturalism in the public service. Other ongoing initiatives include improving immigration application processing, providing supply to third parties to deliver settlement and integration services and supports, and enhancing and expanding our immigration websites. Our government has also made significant progress in providing support to third parties to deliver settlement services and support to newcomers.

All of these initiatives, Mr. Speaker, lead us into the two categories that we're going to be including in our new Provincial Nominee Program. It also includes social enterprise supports, includes informal and formal English as a second language training and provide sponsorship coordination.

In December, Mr. Speaker, we announced over \$341,000 through the Newfoundland and Labrador Settlement Integration Program for a variety of initiatives to expand settlement and integration services and supports. Again, all of these making sure that we're in line with implementing the two new categories that we're getting.

Also, in realizing that this may be an opportunity for us, in adding the two new categories to our Provincial Nominee Program, we have worked with the Association for New Canadians to open satellite offices in Labrador City, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Corner Brook and Grand Falls-Windsor so that when these categories are added, Mr. Speaker, we will have a pan-provincial scope in determining how these businesses will be set up.

Mr. Speaker, also in addition to that we introduced the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, which is the first of its kind in Canada, enabling employers to help up to 442 newcomers annually settle in Newfoundland and Labrador, stay long term and grow the local economy.

Our government allocated funding to help internationally trained workers secure employment in their fields through funding to enhance the provincial capacity to recognize foreign qualifications. Through the Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce Innovation Centre, we announced funding for Memorial University of Newfoundland's Genesis Centre to increase entrepreneurship among women and immigrants in the technology sector, and for the Association for New Canadians, in partnership with Memorial University's Grenfell Campus, to connect former refugees to the agricultural employment opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we're introducing two new programs to provide international students and graduates with the work placements to secure gainful employment and expand their professional networks, encouraging them to remain in this province.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on ensuring Newfoundland and Labrador becomes an even more attractive destination of choice for newcomers to live, to work and to raise their families. Immigration supports efforts to encourage private sector job creation and economic growth as identified in *The Way Forward*, the *Cabinet Committee on Jobs* and *The Way Forward on Immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador*. These new categories will make it easier for international students, for international graduates and for entrepreneurs to create businesses in our province and to make Newfoundland and Labrador their home.

The amendments provide a way for newcomers to establish their own businesses, creating employment for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and supporting the growth of our labour market. This creates opportunities for innovation and helps grow our economy. These new categories reflect our government's commitment to work with the federal government to address a concern that was identified by the business community and strengthen our ability to attract and retain immigrants.

We will be able to promote Newfoundland and Labrador as a destination of choice, a destination

of opportunity for potential entrepreneurs in the provincial nominee program. Only participants in the provincial nominee program will be able to take advantage of these two new categories.

This pool of potential entrepreneurs has already demonstrated a commitment to remaining in Newfoundland and Labrador. Many of them have lived here for years as international students, and as they seek the provincial government's support to obtain permanent residency in Newfoundland and Labrador, all international entrepreneurs and graduate entrepreneurs will have requested to have their business plans and finances assessed by an independent third party and will agree to having their operations monitored during and after nomination to ensure active management of businesses and residency's in the province.

Participants and business operations in the program will be robustly monitored. We want to ensure that these new categories are a way to attract individuals to live, to work and create businesses and employment opportunities in this province. The checks and balances in place, through the provincial nominee program, are a proven way to ensure the entrepreneurs in these new categories are based in this province.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to the changes to the *Corporations Act* and I ask support from my hon. colleagues.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

It's indeed a privilege to get up here this morning and speak on Bill 18. First I'd like to just talk about the purpose of this act. This is a simple act that we're adding to make the opportunity for businesses to expand in our province and for new business to start.

The purpose of the *Corporations Act* and what we're doing here this morning is to add a couple of definitions. One is the immigration

agreement, the other one is international entrepreneur and also graduate entrepreneur. It also expands the definition of a resident Canadian. That's important because – and I'll discuss that a little later. It's important because what we're trying to do here today is to open Newfoundland and Labrador up for business so that any business that can come forward and grow in our province, which is a positive thing, will happen.

The *Corporations Act* comes under Service NL. The act covers a registry of companies and requires all limited liability companies that operate in Newfoundland in Labrador are incorporated, registered to do business in our province. That's important, because what this does, liability companies are incorporated and this is to secure so that companies and stakeholder companies cannot be held personally liable for debts or financial losses. So it's important that we have corporations.

There are some benefits also; there are benefits to being incorporated. The minister already mentioned there are legal protections for liabilities and stuff like that. It's easier, once you're incorporated, to raise money and to raise funds. There's also, once you're incorporated, lots of tax advantages. Obviously, there are some benefits also for government. It provides an opportunity that they can pursue the assets of a corporation. Where a corporation fails or behaves badly, then there are options for government to step in and be able to do something in those cases.

Each province in our country has different requirements when it comes to registry and requirements basically for directors of corporations. Again, we're different in Newfoundland and Labrador. The minister mentioned several other provinces, and I'll mention them also, that have different requirements. You just can't incorporate in every separate province. You have to do it in your own province.

Directors' responsibilities are for supervising activities of the corporation and making decisions regarding those activities.

We talked and the minister mentioned also; requirements under the *Corporations Act*, in

section 174(1), and it's simple what it says here. It says: "At least 25% of the directors of a corporation shall be" residents of Canada. That's what we're doing here this morning. We're expanding the residency and opening it up so that this makes an opportunity for immigrants who want to start a company in this country to be able to do so, without just having to have this 25 per cent. Sometimes they find it very difficult. It's difficult to be able to get people to be directors in your company. Like I said, under that it required the residents in order for a company to become incorporated in our province.

Under the current *Corporations Act*, section 2(y), residents of Canada are generally defined as individuals who are Canadian citizens, or (iii) "a permanent resident within the meaning of the *Immigration Act*" who lives in Canada.

Twenty-five per cent residency requirement means that immigrants and entrepreneurs have to find Canadian partners to be established. That's where this is a problem, because if you're a new person coming in to the country, sometimes it's a job to be able to get people to go along with your idea, go along with how you want to start a company. It's the comfort that if you want to be a director or if you want to have people involved in your company, you got to have assurances that you can count on that person. Sometimes it's difficult, you're a new person; you're trying to start something. What we need in our province and what we need in our country is for people to come in with new ideas and new ventures to start something. So this is the problem that we find here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Service NL officials stated the 25 per cent rule is considered – it's a problem for a lot of people starting up these companies. It is important also when we look at what the 25 per cent residency rule was put in there in the first place. It's beneficial to companies also, because sometimes when you're coming to a new culture, a new province in a new part of the world, it's nice to see the perspective from the people, the culture that's here also. So it can be very beneficial to a company that's starting off to come and understand the ways of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, to understand our culture.

So it's important that way for them to be able to familiarize themselves with what we have and what Canadian businesses are set up for. That's the reason for it, but we also have to recognize, though, that it's difficult for immigrants who want to set up a corporation or business in our province to have the numbers of local people to be able to do that. Sometimes this is a problem. What we're going here today under this act, we're trying to make it easier for businesses to start in our province.

There are a number of provinces who've waived this – and the minister mentioned it – the corporate directors having to be residents. They include BC, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. As such, foreign individuals and business wishing to register do not have to be appointed as a Canadian director in these provinces.

While recognizing that there are some barriers created by the residency rule, Service NL acknowledged it would be practical to remove the 25 per cent requirement – and we'll have some questions on that later on. Instead, government's introducing amendments on the basis of this from Service NL working with the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, and specifically, the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism within that department.

Officials in the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism responsibilities are to administer the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program. The Nominee Program is currently a program that Canadian, Newfoundland and Labrador – it's an agreement that we have with the Government of Canada. This was introduced in 1999. It's a way for permanent residents who are skilled workers and international graduates to attempt to work and live permanently in our province.

In 2017, the program was responsible for almost 50 per cent of the immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador. So that program has been working well and it has brought a lot of people to our province. Currently under the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program, there are three applicant categories. International workers are seeking to be permanent residents here in Canada. It has expressed entry into skilled workers and international graduates.

We have to recognize in our province and in the country how important it is that we make our province a place to come, how important it is for us to be able to open our doors to international people that want to come here and work and start a business. It's so important because what it does, it just broadens everything, we get more people employed, it's great for our economy and it will attract new people to come to our province. While we look at our province these days and we're all about growth in population and ensuring that people stay here with jobs and whatnot, this is really important that we recognize how important immigration is to our province.

The labour market itself, you look at some at some businesses and sometimes I'm after hearing figures that when you start a business, the number of spinoffs that come from that business is huge. Sometimes when you start a new business it's not only that business, but it's the supplier, it's the people that work – it could be delivery and it could be anything that generates from the business. It's important that we make our doors open to the international community and to immigrants that want to come here and start a business.

This is important that we do this because we're in a competition. We're in a competition with the rest of Canada, the rest of the world. When a person outside Newfoundland and Labrador – one thing when they come and they look and they say which country do I want to go to. They look at Canada and Canada is a very positive country all over the world, and that's a place where they want to come.

Then, within Canada, we're in competition with 10 other provinces and a territory. So our province has to have the mechanisms in place to make sure that it's easy to come here and set up a business. We have to ensure that people want to come here and start a business.

I'm sure that every province in Canada – I just mentioned a number of provinces that don't even have the 25 per cent residency. In fact, I would say that's so they can attract more immigrants to come and start a business in their province.

It's very important. Like I said, what is happening here today, we're adding a couple of categories: international entrepreneur and international graduate entrepreneur, which will help establish – and this is going to be done through the Provincial Nominee Program and the person coming to a country under these categories – the change here this morning is before, like I said, what a resident was, so they are going to be put in also as a resident of Canada.

Like I said, the proposed change, basically Bill 18 is going to give us a definition of the immigrant agreement, it's going to give us the definition of international graduate entrepreneur and it's also going to expand the definition of a resident of Canada to include both of those categories.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment proposed, like I said addressed here today, officials of the Office of Immigration states that the agreement in principle introduced in these new categories will be updated by the Provincial Nominee Program and that will be released later. For this reason, Service NL is not providing an exact date of when those amendments will come into the *Corporations Act* and when this will be put into force.

Just to do a little overview of what we're talking about here today – and it's a positive thing. It's important as a province that we do everything we can to attract people to come to our province. We want our residents to stay in our province. We want our population to grow. In order to grow, we have to have businesses. In order to grow, we have to be attractive and make sure that we put mechanisms that are in place so people want to start a business here, people want to stay here, and that our population that's here now don't move away because the opportunities are not here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So it's very important that we have our *Corporations Act* that are able to set up these businesses, that they have the ability to do so. What we're doing here today is to make sure that immigrants that come to this province have the opportunity to be able to start a corporation. And if we don't do it here in this province, we don't make it attractive in this province, what

normally happens, it gets moved on to other places.

So again, just to say that the three new definitions is Immigration Agreement refers to the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Immigration Agreement, and that was done in July 7, 2016. Any amendments to this agreement is under section 2.1 of the agreement. An international entrepreneur describes an individual who is a member of the international category established in accordance with the Immigration Agreement. Again, that's under section 2, and it's (q.1). An international graduate entrepreneur refers to an individual who is a member of an international category established in accordance with the Immigration Agreement, and again that's under section 2 also.

So the other major part, like I said, is adding those definitions, and the three definitions are important. What this does, the whole thing what we're trying to do here today, is to expand what the Canadian resident is considered when it comes to our act and what they need in order to get to 25 per cent in order to start corporation of this company.

A resident Canadian currently refers to an individual who has Canadian citizenship or is a permanent resident within means of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and that's with Canada. So what we're doing today is basically we're expanding that to include international entrepreneur and international graduate entrepreneur. The act will come into force in the future and it will be proclaimed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

In a nutshell, it's a good bill. Anything that we can do in this province to increase business, any time we increase business we're increasing people coming to our province, and hopefully the spinoffs from the business – and any time you get some new ideas in any culture or any place at all, it's great to have it and people all over the world can bring new ideas and expand what we have ongoing here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It's a good opportunity. There are some questions that I will be asking when we do get into Committee, but overall it's a good move.

Maybe there are some other things we can do to make sure that our economy is growing.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

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

I am pleased to stand today and speak to Bill 18, the bill dealing with an amendment to the *Corporations Act*. The minister and the Member for Cape St. Francis have done a great job in explaining what the bill is about. I don't think I have to go through all of that again. Just to say that it's extremely important what we are doing here today, important so that people who are coming to our country and who want to remain in our country, people who are coming here to our province and who want to remain here in our province are given every assistance they can have to make sure that happens and to make sure that they can make choices to remain here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have a particular interest in it because coming from an immigrant family I understand the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in the growth of our economy here in Newfoundland and Labrador. When you go back to the early 20th century you had a couple of key groups who immigrated to Newfoundland and Labrador, people from China. There are many Chinese who came here. People from Lebanon, as my family did, Lebanon, Syria and the area. We also had European-Jewish people who came here as well.

For anybody who is old enough to remember, the early 20th century, whether one lived it or knows the history of it, the role of these immigrants, entrepreneurs and business people was key. They had businesses all over the province, not just in St. John's, but as new places grew up in the province they went there and set up businesses, immigration entrepreneurs.

When Corner Brook started getting off the ground in the 1920s, they went there. They went to Badger, they went to Carbonear, they went to Botwood. They went all over this province of ours, which was a country at that time prior to

'49, setting up their businesses. For the most part, that's what they did.

In the Lebanese community that I grew up in, in St. John's, I don't think one of the families did not have a business. I think they were all business people. So the importance of immigrants to our province is historical, very, very historical. What we're dealing with today is dealing with a current reality of immigration in our province and trying to ensure that immigrants who are entrepreneurs and want to have businesses in our province are encouraged in doing that.

Amending our *Corporations Act* so that we broaden the definition – I think that's the important thing to note, that we are broadening the definition of what a resident Canadian means in the *Corporations Act* because of the 25 per cent rule that both the minister and the Member for Cape St. Francis have spoken to that says the board of a corporation, under the *Corporations Act*, must have at least 25 per cent resident Canadians on the board.

The broadening of the definition of resident Canadian is the most important piece of this bill. So resident Canadian now does include the “Canadian citizen ordinarily resident in Canada, (ii) a Canadian citizen not ordinarily resident in Canada who is a member of a prescribed class of persons, (iii) a permanent resident within the meaning of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada)* and ordinarily resident in Canada, except a permanent resident who has been ordinarily resident in Canada for more than one year after the time at which he or she first became eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship.”

Now, very important, a resident Canadian also means “an international entrepreneur, or an international graduate entrepreneur.”

The bill has had to interpret as well what those two categories mean. An international entrepreneur, the bill says: is a member of the international entrepreneur category established in accordance with the immigration agreement. That's the immigration agreement between Canada-Newfoundland and entering into the agreement with the Government of Canada. The international entrepreneur is a member of the

international category established within that integration agreement – the immigration agreement we have with Canada – and is ordinarily a resident of Canada.

International graduate entrepreneur means an individual who is a member of the international graduate entrepreneur category established in accordance with that same agreement and who is ordinarily resident in Canada.

By broadening the definition under the *Corporations Act* of who a resident Canadian is, immigrants who are setting up a corporate body – a business has to have been incorporated and had to have a board of directors – will now have an easier time of finding people to be members of their board with this broadening of the definition. Because a lot of the people they have, a lot of their contacts are going to be people like themselves, people who are international entrepreneurs or people who are international graduate entrepreneurs. So it broadens the base for them and helps them in forming corporations and forming businesses that are incorporated.

By doing that, we are moving into an area which is extremely important because there are going to be measures, checks and balances prescribed in policy to ensure legitimacy. In some other jurisdictions in Atlantic Canada – for example, in PEI and Nova Scotia – they have had problems with fraud and flight risks, and we do know that happens. It happens outside of Atlantic Canada as well.

So it's important to make sure that while on the one hand we are really trying to make things easier for immigrants and entrepreneurs, immigrant entrepreneurs who want to set up business here, that they are doing it, number one, because they really are interested in the future of the province themselves, not just in their own businesses but they want to help the economy; and, number two, that the business they're setting up is a bona fide business and is going to be operating in the way that we would expect a business to operate under our *Corporations Act*.

Some of the checks and balances are really important. Some will include having to own the business for at least a year before it's incorporated, agreeing to an independent third party screening of the candidate to ensure

legitimacy, and regular monitoring and reviews to ensure net assets are legitimate.

This is not because we think people are deliberately going to be not legitimate or they're going to become people who commit fraud, but the reality is that has happened and that can happen. So ensuring who the persons are or who the person is, ensuring that they are legitimately doing their business, ensuring that what's going on is not as happened, for example, in PEI – an investor program that eventually had to be investigated by the RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency because it really was something that was not there for the economy of PEI, but was just there to help some people get money through investments.

These measures are very important. The agreement that the person applying under the *Corporations Act* to form a corporation has to agree to reside permanently in the province and they also have to be day-to-day manager, so they're not saying I'm living somewhere else or the manager is living somewhere else. No, the company has to be a real company in our province with no absentee management going on. The proponent also has to agree to ongoing monitoring of the business by outside agencies identified, of course, under our legislation.

These amendments and the policies that will accompany them mirror similar agreements in other provinces. I think Nova Scotia, for example, has measures like this to ensure that the program works well. It's possible that the minister talked about when the policies and regulations will be in place – I'm not sure, but if he didn't, I'm sure he'll tell us what the hope is about the timing of getting these policies in place. I would imagine as soon as the bill is promulgated, as soon as that happens, we would need the regulations. So I assume they have to be finished, if they aren't already finished.

The bill, as I've said, adds the definitions that are necessary and these amendments will address the challenge of getting directors, as I pointed out, because this has been the challenge for people who want to incorporate their businesses under the old rule which was 25 per cent Canadian participation to be on the board. Now, the 25 per cent remains but the definition of resident Canadian broadens. That broadening

is what brings in what is needed by the immigrant international entrepreneurs as they set up businesses in our province.

I'm happy to support this bill, Mr. Speaker. If I don't hear an answer from the minister at this point, it will probably happen in Committee when I will have a question about timing.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to take a few minutes to speak on this bill. I won't take my full time, but I just wanted to add a few words in support of this bill. One of the things that I did before I entered politics was I taught at the university. I taught some courses in the faculty of business and I taught some courses in organizational theory, organizational behaviour, strategic planning and change management in the MBA program.

What really struck me there was, particularly in the change management course in the MBA program that I taught, was that about half the students in my class were international students from other countries, and what really struck me was that the number of these students who were interested in starting their own companies. They were very entrepreneurial, they wanted to get things going and they were looking for opportunities in Newfoundland in terms of resources and things that they could maybe sell to their home country or another country.

Another thing that struck me was how international these students were. Like, you might have a student from China who had finished part of his or her education in China, moved to Europe, spent a couple of years in Europe, and then came here to this province. So the world was really the place where – they talked very globally about what they were doing and what types of businesses they wanted to start. So that sort of presence here in our province, their presence here in this province was an opportunity, I think, that we really have to look to for development in the future.

So I think it's very interesting that we're changing this bill to facilitate that sort of participation further in our economy here, and it's something that I really support.

Also, recently the Association for New Canadians in this province – a place that I taught for a while as a volunteer, taught English as a second language. They've had a lot of success and really grown since I worked there as a volunteer years ago.

They recently opened an office out in Corner Brook. One of the things that they're telling me is that a lot of the new arrivals to Canada want to go out, they want to see businesses and economic opportunities that are available in the area, and some people are looking at opportunities in agriculture and things like that. They come to this country with skills in terms of cheese making and things like that, that we maybe don't traditionally have here in Newfoundland. So it was interesting to hear from the office out in Corner Brook that there were some people who were interested in agriculture, interested in secondary processing related to agriculture.

There's a lot happening with people who come to this province. I think this piece of legislation is very timely in that it sort of facilitates that involvement in our economy. So I just wanted to say a few words in support of this motion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank my colleagues from Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, Cape St. Francis, St. John's East - Quidi Vidi and St. George's - Humber for contributing to this debate this morning.

MR. LANE: Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order, please, the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Mr. Speaker, is the minister going to be closing debate?

MR. SPEAKER: I didn't introduce her that way, no.

MR. LANE: You didn't? Okay, fine, I thought she brought –

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: I didn't introduce you that way.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. LANE: Okay. Sorry. Go head.

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

Okay, let's recommence. You had wanted to speak.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, please proceed with your comments and then we'll ask the minister to close debate.

MR. LANE: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Service NL wants to speak to it as well, she can go ahead. My only concern was I thought she was going to close debate and I wanted to speak. If the Minister of AES is going to close debate and the Minister of Service NL still wants to speak, then she can go ahead first. It doesn't matter to me.

MR. SPEAKER: Please proceed.

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

I apologize for the confusion. I'm not going to speak very long to this, but I did want to have a couple of words on Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Corporations Act. I think it's a good bill. I will be supporting the bill. I'm not going to get into all the details of the bill. That's now been gone over numerous times by my colleagues. I think they did a good job on diving down into all the details.

I would just say, though, that one of the issues that we're facing here in Newfoundland and Labrador is our population. We have an aging

population. Generally, we've had a shrinking population. We have just over half a million people. It would certainly be, I think, a lot easier for us here in this province to be able to have more sustainable government programs, to have more money for our existing highways and roadways, our hospitals, schools if we had more people. Part of the challenge we have is the size of our population. By growing the population we create economies of scale, we make services a lot more affordable to deliver, we have more people working and we have more people paying taxes.

We know we're just simply not having enough children to keep up with people who are passing away here in our province. That's a reality. There have been things tried over the years. We know the former administration at one point introduced this baby bonus – I don't know if it was called a baby bonus but I think it was \$1,000 to have a baby or whatever it was, former Premier Williams at the time. Ultimately, we still have that challenge.

If we want to grow our population, we have to look at other ways of doing it. Obviously, immigration is a way we can do that, that we can expand our population. If we want people to come here we have, I think, made some efforts in bringing more people to the province which is a good thing. It's one thing to bring them here and it's another thing to keep them here. That's a challenge. What we've seen is a lot of people have come to this province and become a Canadian citizen or whatnot, and after a couple of years then they all leave and they go to Toronto or Montreal or one of the bigger centres, whatever. We see that all the time.

We need to encourage people when they come here to Newfoundland and Labrador to stay here, to make it their home, to have children, for their children to have children so that we can grow our population and we can grow our economy. Ultimately, that's what we need to happen. Anything that we can do to foster that type of growth and development, while at the same time diversifying our culture, bringing new ideas and new opportunities, we need to do it.

This bill is just one step in many steps which need to be taken to help make that a reality.

With that in mind, I will be supporting this bill. It's a good piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to rise and have a few comments related to this particular bill. The amendments to the *Corporations Act*, looking at the *Corporations Act* and the means for investment coming into the province and looking at the current incorporation rules related to the 25 per cent residency requirement. Having investment allowing to be attached to someone here that has that residence requirement, and from a director's point of view, have that connection to meet the requirements that currently exist.

From the information on the bill, other jurisdictions were looked at the residency requirement and the 25 per cent. Particularly, the residency requirement in some jurisdictions do not have to appoint a resident Canadian director if they incorporated in those provinces. Now my understanding from this bill, the decision was not to go that route but to look at the current Newfoundland and Labrador, the PNP, which is a Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Immigration Agreement, to look at that as a means to try to assist in adding additional categories to allow this to happen.

Currently, the Provincial Nominee Program offers three categories, which were mentioned: Express Entry Skilled Worker, Skilled Worker and International Graduate. My understanding, this amendment will look at adding two new applicant categories of International Entrepreneur and International Graduate Entrepreneur. So it's two new applicant categories that would go through the PNP.

It will be interesting when we get into Committee to ask questions about is there preference given to these two categories in regard to the other three that currently exist, and what the amount of activity and time frame is for someone to go through the PNP now. It seems this is the avenue that's being explored, in allowing under the *Corporations Act*, for

external investment to meet the requirement of having a residency status of a director would be adding these two categories.

Now you have five categories. So the question becomes: How long does it take to get through the PNP if someone wants to make that investment and be incorporated under the *Corporations Act* here in the province? Time frames? Is there preference given to these two categories, or are they in with the other three and now become five categories, which you go under the Newfoundland PNP? It will be interesting to see what the response is in that residency requirement.

The other issue is the information itself. My understanding is the bill is an agreement in principle to introduce these categories to update the Provincial Nominee Program. My understanding, as I said earlier, is that immigration is obviously within the national jurisdiction and there are often, provincially, agreements, which the PNP is. The requirements of any change here with the two new categories would make sure they're in line with Immigration Canada, immigration laws and are respected on a national basis and then flow to provincial jurisdiction.

Interestingly enough, this actual amendment which is suggesting updates to the categories under the Provincial Nominee Program – Service Newfoundland is not providing an exact date to when these amendments to the *Corporations Act* will come into force. The question would be as we go through: Is that because the work to be done with the PNP agreement, which is a joint agreement between Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada under immigration – are there amendments that need to take place with the agreement?

What exactly is the issue it can't move forward in immigration or things not worked out with the federal government in regard to changes to the PNP? Maybe it's in regard to the two categories or other issues. It will be interesting in Committee to get information on that and why we're going through the process here now, but there's no clear indication of an exact date to when the amendments to the *Corporations Act* will come into effect.

Those are the two that we look forward to having further discussion on in regard to the two categories being added. How does that expedite or deal with the issue of the residency requirement and that 25 per cent, which now still stays, and making sure that's met in regard to investors or a company that comes into this jurisdiction or wants to incorporate? How does that facilitate it? What's the time frame for the PNP to go through that, these two new categories? We have three already, so there are five in total.

Are there issues outstanding with Immigration Canada and the federal component of this agreement that needs to be worked out, definitions changed or issues resolved before – if we approve this amendment, whether it can proceed forward? My understanding is there's no clear date given for the exact date to have these amendments in the *Corporations Act* moved and come into force.

Those are a couple of things I wanted to point out, Mr. Speaker. I certainly look forward to having detailed discussions in Committee on those particular and other items as well.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour speaks now he will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd certainly like to thank all of my colleagues from Cape St. Francis, St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, St. George's - Humber, Mount Pearl - Southlands and Ferryland for their contribution to the discussion on this amendment today.

Rather than risk trying to capture some of the comments that were made by my colleagues, rather than talk about them now, I'll leave it until the questions come up in Committee because I may miss something. I'm sure that if I do, they'll in fact bring that up. So I'm looking forward to answering those questions.

Mr. Speaker, it's certainly been a pleasure to discuss this matter in the House and as Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour I am very excited that we can see this new program come to fruition. I also want to make reference and say a big thank you to the Minister of Service NL who has been very, very supportive, and her staff, as we worked through this amendment to make sure that we're capturing and providing all of the opportunities that we can, trying to make things easier for entrepreneurs that are looking at investing and coming to Newfoundland and Labrador to live, as well as our graduates.

As I said before in my opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, we have a significant number of graduates at our post-secondary institutions that have an interest in coming to Newfoundland and Labrador. I might add that we have gotten the assurance from the Minister of Service NL that she is taking her role in protecting the public very seriously. We've had a significant amount of discussions around that and I just want to say a big thank you to the minister and her department for working with us to make sure these amendments are made.

The act's director, resident Canadian requirement of at least 25 per cent adds an important layer of regulatory oversight in the *Corporations Act*. It promotes Canadian participation in corporate decision making; it fosters compliance with an enforcement of legal obligations; it promotes Canadian participation in the decision making of multinational enterprises; and helps foreign firms to understand the economic, the political and the social environment in Canada.

Residency requirements have been adopted in Canada in part to address concerns about the amount of direct foreign investment in this country. In addition to promoting Canadian interest and ensuring a local presence on corporate boards, the director's residency requirements aim to ensure that there would be directors who reside in Canada who would be accountable to the actions of the corporation.

The residency requirements help to promote compliance with the law, particularly statutes that impose liability on directors for actions of the corporation. Furthermore, if directors must

be a resident in Canada, there is likely to be local assets from which judgments can be satisfied.

Those participating in this program will be active investors, living here and contributing to the local economy. Therefore, changing the act to broadening who can incorporate under the act is not a step that we take lightly. It is done only after careful consideration and with the development of thorough and robust monitoring and compliance mechanisms that will be in place within our departments.

These measures and these amendments will strike a proper balance between mitigating the risk and giving the tools that participants in new business immigration categories need to flourish in our province.

Mr. Speaker, all of us have a role to play in increasing immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador and, today, I am happy to be a part of supporting the program by putting this bill before the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 18 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.'

This motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Corporations Act. (Bill 18)

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

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House?

MS. COADY: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Corporations Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill 18)

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Noting the time, I moved, seconded by the Member for Labrador West, that we recess until 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that this House stand recessed until 2 p.m.

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.'

It being Wednesday, in accordance with Standing Order 9(1)(b), this House is in recess until 2 o'clock.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I would like to welcome everyone back after our recess.

We do have some visitors today. I'd like to recognize, first of all, in the Speaker's gallery, Ms. Mary Sexton. She will be the subject of a Member's statement this afternoon, and she is accompanied by Sarah Sexton and Gary Sexton.

Welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: As we like to say in the House of Assembly, we're very big on alumni. I'm very pleased to welcome back our former Page, Fatimah Rathore, she's visiting us. It's great to have her back.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Having gone through a filibuster or two, she's had her share of time in this room.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: For Members' Statements today, I will be welcoming the Members for the Districts of Conception Bay South, St. George's – Humber, Windsor Lake, Baie Verte - Green Bay and St. John's Centre.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to information my hon. colleagues about an exceptional individual from my district who was named Volunteer of the Year 2018 at the Sport Newfoundland and Labrador's 11th annual Stars and Legends Gala.

Mr. David Coates from Conception Bay South has been a long-time volunteer for baseball in our community. As an administrator of CBS Minor Baseball, David was responsible for the supervision of summer staff, administering the summer program, and serving as a liaison between the local association and town officials on facility upgrades, improvements and issues.

As a coach, David served a number of teams, including the CBS Storm in the St. John's Amateur Baseball Association, the CBS Raiders in the Junior A provincials, and the Baseball NL 15U team that competed at the 15U National Championships.

David was also the host committee chair for Baseball NL in the 13U AA Championships that were by hosted by the province in CBS. David and his host committee put off a very successful event that players, coaches and parents were complimentary of his hard work, passion and dedication to ensuring a successful event for everyone involved.

I congratulate David for his commitment and achievements, and ask all hon. Members to join with me in recognizing his contribution to our community and the province.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to let everyone know that the 2018 Codroy Valley Folk Festival will happen July 27, 28 and 29 of this year.

The Codroy Valley Folk Festival takes place in Upper Ferry (that's Route 406 off the Trans-Canada Highway) at the recreation centre behind Belanger High School. The festival was first introduced in 1982, and will celebrate its 36th year in July.

Throughout its history, the festival has played host to the best local talent the Codroy Valley has to offer, and provides a venue each year for both residents and tourists to come together and celebrate the unique culture and heritage of the area.

The Codroy Valley is one of the few areas of the province with a prominent Scottish heritage. The music of the festival includes a distinct Scottish flavour with bagpipes, Scottish dancing and fiddle playing, as well as other traditional and contemporary music. The festival will be going ahead rain or shine under a big tent.

I encourage everyone to come this year and enjoy what the festival has to offer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Windsor Lake.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize Mr. Thaddeus Dreher, a resident of the District of Windsor Lake.

An advocate for diversity and multiculturalism, Mr. Dreher led the Provincial Multiculturalism Association for more than 25 years. He is a decorated Polish war veteran who fought Nazis in the Second World War and was recently awarded the Polish Pro Patria medal for his service and volunteer efforts. A loving husband and father, Mr. Dreher has lived a life of service to his countries and his community.

As his birthplace, Poland, celebrates 100 years of regaining independence, Thaddeus Dreher also celebrates his 100th birthday in August of this year.

Mr. Dreher is quoted as saying: “World War 2 was a warning to everybody that we have to change, that we have to be different. Multiculturalism is more important than ever.”

This veteran and proud Newfoundland and Labrador citizen has personally been the catalyst for what the world aspires to be – democratic, inclusive and compassionate.

May the leadership and legacy of Mr. Dreher be reflected in the actions we take to live up to his expectations of a diverse world where we have learned from our past.

Please join me in wishing Mr. Thaddeus Dreher a very happy 100th birthday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Baie Verte - Green Bay.

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Constable Paula Strowbridge, who was recently honoured as Newfoundland and Labrador’s 2018 RCMP Police Officer of the Year.

Paula was born and raised in Springdale, the same community that she finds herself patrolling today; a model student, a fantastic athlete, an accomplished musician and daughter of very proud parents. After completing her music degree at Memorial, it was off to the RCMP Training Depot in 2004.

After graduation, Paula spent three-and-a-half years in Nanaimo, BC before transferring back

to Newfoundland and Labrador. After stints in both Placentia and Whitbourne, she decided to take leave from the force to raise her family. In 2016, she returned to active duty in her hometown and we are very fortunate, Mr. Speaker, to have her.

Today, Paula is a devoted member of her church, teaches piano lessons and is involved in the community recreation programs with her daughters. Any opportunity to volunteer, Paula will be the first in line. Driven by a sincere motivation to help others, she takes great pride in protecting those who cannot protect themselves.

I ask all my hon. colleagues to join me in congratulating Constable Paula Strowbridge, VOCCM Crime Stoppers, RCMP Police Officer of the Year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Twelve years ago, film producer Mary Sexton began her odyssey to bring *Maudie* to the big screen – and she did it. Not only did she get the story of artist Maude Lewis on screens around the world, *Maudie* won 20 international awards. Among them: Best Motion Picture at the Canadian Screen Awards, and three awards at the Irish Film & Television Academy awards.

The role of a producer is to have a vision, gather the best team possible to realize that vision and make sure that everyone has what they need to do their best to bring the story to life. The producer takes the risk and is the guiding force and the glue that holds everything and everyone together. It takes determination, skill, passion and, above all, courage – and what an incredible film Mary and her team created.

Mary Sexton is proof that despite all obstacles, beautiful, powerful films can be made.

Thank you, Mary, for the incredible gift of *Maudie* to the world. Bravo!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In March, students from this province competed in the Enactus Canada Regional Exhibition that was held in Halifax. Among them were students from the College of the North Atlantic's Grand Falls-Windsor campus.

The Enactus Grand Falls-Windsor team included many first-year students who had never competed in an exhibition before and they did exceptionally well. The team won the Scotiabank EcoLiving Green Challenge. They placed second behind Memorial University in the TD Entrepreneurship Challenge, and also took second in the Capital One Financial Education Challenge.

Winning the Scotiabank EcoLiving Green Challenge also qualified this outstanding group of students to compete in the Enactus National Exhibition held in Toronto May 14-16, where they received the Spirit Award in their respective league competition.

I am very proud to say that the President of Enactus Grand Falls-Windsor was also named HSBC Woman Leader of Tomorrow. Crystal Ford is a second-year business management student at the College of the North Atlantic, and this honour provides significant rewards for her and the team. For the next 12 months, Crystal will be paired with a woman leader to help develop her leadership skills. She has earned a prize of \$1,000 for herself and \$2,500 for Enactus Grand Falls-Windsor.

As I know many of my hon. colleagues would agree, celebrating the accomplishments and exciting potential of our province's students is one of the great rewards of our work. Education is the passport to a brighter future for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

During May and June, graduation ceremonies will be held at the College of the North Atlantic campuses throughout the province. These graduates are well educated, highly skilled and prepared to capitalize on the numerous opportunities that exist in our province today and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my hon. colleagues to join me in congratulating the students and graduates of College of the North Atlantic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Each time we, as Members of this House, have the opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of students in the province, it is indeed a great experience. We would like to acknowledge the Enactus teams from all across this province that have taken part in these important competitions and salute the winners. We offer our best to Ms. Crystal Ford on being named the HSBC Woman Leader of Tomorrow.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, we would like to formally congratulate all graduates of the College of the North Atlantic and commend them for a job well done. We wish them all the very best in the years to come.

Thank you very much.

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, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to this year's graduates of the College of the North Atlantic and congratulations also to the Enactus Grand Falls-Windsor team and their outstanding performance in regional and national Enactus

exhibitions, and as well to Crystal Ford on her recognition.

I point out to the minister, though, that while he claims to celebrate our students, who deserve acclaim, his government also made a net \$1.5 million budget cut to the college this year. This before the college's review and modernization plan is finished and before the post-secondary review has even started.

Not a good strategy for investing in our youth, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to acknowledge the recent success of two important events, one here in Newfoundland and Labrador and the other in the nation's capital, both commemorating National Seal Products Day on May 22.

National Seal Products Day acknowledges the cultural significance of the sealing industry and its ties to the economic well-being of sealers and seal product producers. The Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador have worked tirelessly to plan these events, which highlighted seal product displays and, in Ottawa, a feast was prepared by well-known chefs from this province, Todd Perrin of Mallard Cottage and Lori McCarthy of Cod Sounds.

Mr. Speaker, our sealing industry is active and growing. In 2017, landings increased by 22 per cent to approximately 81,000 with a value of approximately \$2 million and employment of over 50 processing jobs alone.

Our government supports the seal product market development through a variety of funding and grant programs. Since 2007, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador have invested \$630,000 in various projects aimed at improving the sustainability of the seal industry. We were a major sponsor of National Seal Products Day this year.

Mr. Speaker, the people of our province have a strong regard for our sealing industry, and National Seal Products Day is our country's chance to proudly share that regard with the entire world. I congratulate everyone involved in making National Seal Products Day a resounding success, and look forward to keeping that momentum going with our continued support for this proud and vital industry.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I was pleased to attend the event held in the lobby at Confederation Building last Thursday. I was happy to see that it was so well attended and the display by the craft producers was very impressive.

Mr. Speaker, sealing has strived in Newfoundland and Labrador for hundreds of years and is of deep historic significance to our province. Seal harvests continues to have an economic importance to our province, particularly in rural and coastal communities. The industry continues to produce high-quality products that are in high demand.

Throughout our term, our government promoted and invested in the seal industry to help ensure income for sealers and processing workers, and also support the long-term viability of our fish stocks. I would encourage the provincial government to do so today.

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.

I thank the minister for the copy of his statement. I congratulate everyone involved in

the recent success of National Seal Products Day, both here and in Ottawa. The industry has grown in the past few years and this is really good to see, especially for somebody who likes seal flippers.

It is one of the oldest industries in this province and has had its share of troubles, but has been resilient. Government has had a role to play in the industry upswing. We encourage government to do even more to improve the industry, expand the markets and promote the benefits of seal products worldwide.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through an access to information request, we uncovered some troubling information related to a matter in Central Health.

I ask the Minister of Health: Did you – and I quote – willingly and purposely change the composition of the board of trustees in order to change the outcome of an appeal?

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

MR. HAGGIE: The short answer, Mr. Speaker, would be no.

If you need any further context, the facts of the case are that the board members in Central were all-time expired. A request went into the Independent Appointments Commission, probably, if not the end of 2016 then early 2017, and their appointments went through that process. Their appointments were ratified and they took their place sometime before the Central Health review was announced, Mr. Speaker, but, again, the short answer was no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The appeal in question concerning the suspension of a health professional was before the board for a decision, but two days before the appeal hearing, the minister appointed a new board chair. An action that was clearly seen by many in Central Health as blatant interference by the minister in order to achieve the decision he wanted.

Can the minister confirm?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Again, the short answer would be no, Mr. Speaker.

This is purely a coincidence. The board trustees and the chair were appointed through the IAC process and that request was initiated months before that occasion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Then the days before the board was changed, a staff meeting at Central Health was cancelled because – as suggested by the document – the minister fired the board.

Why did the minister turf the board? Was that the only way you could control the decision-making process?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The gentleman opposite seems to conflate facts. The facts of the case are the old board served until the new board was appointed. The

appointment of the new board automatically terminates the old board of trustees, Mr. Speaker.

This process had been initiated months before and the gentleman is trying to join dots which do not exist.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just quoting from the document that we had received through the access to information. I can share that with the House if the minister would like.

According to Recommendation 3.3 in the recently released external review by Central Health it states: "The responsibility for Credentialing and Privileging of physicians should be a Board responsibility based on the recommendations of the RHA Credentials Committee."

Your alleged interference is a stark contradiction to this recommendation.

Does the minister plan to abide by these recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Again, the gentleman conflates to unrelated incidents. The recommendation to which the Member refers is an entirely useful and appropriate one. I have no issues with it at all. It will, however, take a bylaws change to do that. Again, he's joining dots that do not exist.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BRAZIL: That's not the appearance by the documentation that we received.

When can the Autism Society and individuals with autism, along with their families, expect to see the elimination of the IQ70 criterion?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We are working with our colleagues in other branches of government to develop a disabilities approach to home and support care. This will effectively remove the diagnosis from the issue. What we're looking at is what people need as individuals, what levels of support they need regardless of any particular issue.

Our aim is to have a system that is individually focused and focused on the needs of the individual, Mr. Speaker. That is nearly there and it will be completed by the fall.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BRAZIL: This threshold results in some people with autism not availing of recreational supports, special child welfare allowances and respite care; all this despite there being zero relationship between autism and intelligence.

How can the minister justify using such an assessment tool when he knows fully well it's unfairly disadvantaged to so many?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: I would agree with the principle, Mr. Speaker, that the Member opposite espouses. We are moving away from that.

I would point out, the gentleman opposite had 12 years to change it; we will have it done by the end of the year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BRAZIL: It's good they're sticking to the blame game, I like when they do that. It works well for them.

What is the status of the implementation of the provincial autism action plan?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: For clarity, Mr. Speaker, I believe I may have mentioned the fall twice in previous answers. It will be the fall.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BRAZIL: No doubt this side of the House, and a number of people, are looking forward to making sure that time frame is met. Almost three years into your term and no movement on the key campaign promise.

I ask the Premier: Why would you promise something to the people of the province when you apparently have no real intention of honouring those promises? Will you commit today to introduce these important changes to the autism community in the upcoming fall sitting?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Mr. Speaker, for the sake of clarity, we have been working on this plan – which they had 12 years to address, not just us. We have been working on this to produce a person-centred individualized care plan for any person with a disability regardless of their diagnosis. That is not done overnight. I want it done properly and it will be, and it will be the fall, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety has noted in the past that the legalization of marijuana will be the single largest policy shift this province and this country has seen in many years; yet, here we are just mere weeks from the legalization with what appears to be very little planning or preparation done.

I ask the minister to update the people of the province and explain what the province and the government has done to be ready for July 1.

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

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

What I would suggest to the Member opposite is just wait until the Notices of Motion section today when we go through the Order Paper.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

So here we are with such a significant policy shift, widespread implications, including what the minister has said is multiple government departments and agencies that will be involved.

Minister, I ask you: Why are you waiting until the last minute to introduce this legislation?

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

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

I guess the Member opposite would prefer we do it the other way, which is rush into it and have a piece of legislation that is not suitable to, obviously, what is a big policy change.

Again, if we put it in too fast they're going to complain. If we put it in now they're going to complain. What I would say is that we are right on track to be ready with the federal government's implementation of cannabis legalization.

There's been a tremendous amount of work that's gone into this, a tremendous amount of consultation. There are multiple departments across this government that have been meeting amongst ourselves and with our colleagues across the country. What I will say is today we will be bringing forward Notices of Motion on a number of pieces of legislation as it relates to the legalization of cannabis. We, as a province and a government, will be ready.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

There are only four regular sitting days, other than the PMR day for next week, only four days left in the parliamentary calendar for this session.

I ask the minister again: Why are you waiting until the last minute to bring this forward?

There are several pieces of legislation coming to the House, very important, most significant policy shift and change that the province and country has seen, according to the minister's own words. So why are they waiting for the last minute to bring this forward? Is it because you haven't been ready until this point in time, or are you intentionally leaving it until the last minute?

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

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

The fact is as a government we are going to take our time to be ready and have the best pieces of legislation possible put forward in this House. I could go back and remind the Members opposite of legislation that they rushed here, but the people of the public know where we got with it. What was that bill again? Oh, Bill 29 – Bill 29.

What I would suggest is that we have plenty of time. If the Members opposite require more time in this House to debate it, we will take as much time as we need to debate this piece of

legislation, the multiple pieces. We have all the time in the world to get this done and to do it right.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

Well, I can assure the minister he's correct. We'll take all the time we need to review and to debate all the legislation they have signalled they're going to be bringing forward in the last few sitting days of this session.

Mr. Speaker, residents of Freshwater in Conception Bay in the District of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde are concerned about the possibility of a new marijuana-related facility or production site being established near the community. We're receiving calls on it regularly.

Can the minister confirm for this House that what the local residents are fearing, that this will become a new production facility or operation related to the legalization of marijuana?

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

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

What I would say to the Member opposite is if any community or citizen in this province has a concern, they can certainly bring it to our attention. I have not received any correspondence, notification or any information that would indicate that there is an issue of this nature.

I look forward to hearing about it. Again, we've been working with municipalities, we've been working with citizens, we've been working with the business community to make sure that we bring this out. So I'd love to hear from anybody on this.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

Is the Minister of Justice or the Minister of TCII confirming for this House here today that the changes in development that's happening in this site in Freshwater, in the District of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde, is not related to the legalization of marijuana?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For anybody who wants to get into producing cannabis from a production point of view they would have to go through Health Canada and be appropriately licensed. There are multiple stages and steps that are required. We did not have any licensed producers here in Newfoundland and Labrador. They have to go through that process. They also have to go through municipal permitting processes.

We will engage with anybody who's looking at setting up a production facility in Newfoundland and Labrador. We've had discussion with multiple companies throughout the province, but they have to meet the criteria with all stakeholders, whether it's the municipality that would be dealing with permitting or Health Canada, to achieve their licensing.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

I appreciate the answer from the minister, but we've heard that in the House here several times. My question was specific about a location in Freshwater in Carbonear.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of TCII once again: Can he confirm or deny or tell this House, is that facility undergoing an application process; is he aware of an interest to establish an operation related to legalization of marijuana at that site?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for the question, Mr. Speaker. As the minister just outlined, there's a process in place, I think it's Health Canada, then you would have to do an environmental assessment.

But let me tell the Members opposite: Any time there's a chance for economic development in my district, in this province, I'm going to support it. If it meets the criteria – Health Canada, environmental assessment, any other regulations that would be in place – they will go through the process, but I'm happy to have economic development in my district.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The question is very simple, and we all support economic development. The question was: Is this site associated with a business that's going through a process to engage in the marijuana or cannabis business? And we have three ministers now who are refusing to answer the question; even the MHA for the district will not answer the question for his constituents who are calling us.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of TCII is on the record as saying that Newfoundland and Labrador companies can access the same benefits as were given to their hand-picked choice, Canopy Growth. Now, what other Newfoundland and Labrador companies, I ask

the minister, have been offered the same \$40 million deal to set up a production operation in Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member opposite for the question; because if Newfoundland and Labrador being the only province without a licensed producer of cannabis, once the federal government makes cannabis legal, then we would have to import all of our product and import all of that without having any production or any jobs, but have all the associated costs with cannabis in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

By being able to be open for business and have a company like Canopy come to Newfoundland and Labrador, create 145 jobs over 20 years, that's very positive. There are a number of other companies that are looking at setting up business in Newfoundland and Labrador. They have to meet the criteria, and they have to go through that particular process. I can't explain it any further than that but if the Member opposite needs a briefing I'm more than happy to provide.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

And here we are, a few days away, we've got legislation coming in and again the minister won't answer, or doesn't know the answer to the question. It was very simple: What other business has been provided the \$40 million deal similar to Canopy Growth? And the minister won't answer it.

So I'll try this one with him. I'll ask the minister: Why did he approve a marijuana storefront operation being located 600 metres from an elementary school?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to go back and actually point out that when the Member opposite is talking about a \$40 million deal, there is no cash that is changing hands here. There is no cheque that is being cut by the provincial government.

What is happening, when we're looking at production here in Newfoundland and Labrador, when we look at business attraction and growth for companies, we look at a mix of opportunities. One of the things that we've done here in the province is looking at a mix of retail and looking at incentives through reduced sales rebate.

If the company does not sell any product here in Newfoundland and Labrador, then they do not recoup their cost. They're going to make the investment. The risk is on the business owner itself. When it comes to retail production, that is something that was provided by the NLC.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

The \$40 million deal is \$40 million in tax collections they won't have to remit to the province. That's \$40 million. My question was: What other companies are being offered the same deal? And he still won't answer it.

So let's go back to the question again: Minister, are you okay with a marijuana storefront operation being 600 metres from an elementary school?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to any type of deal that we would do here in the province, we said we are open business when it comes to production. We want to develop an industry here that includes research and development, that also includes a number of other associated jobs, supply chain, export opportunities.

We have a number of other companies that we are in negotiation with and in discussion, but they have to get through licensing with Health Canada. They have to meet the criteria. There's environmental assessment. There is all of that that must be done.

We will look at the deal that was put forward with Canopy as a template, but we have to look at eligible costs and do our due diligence when it comes to any particular deal. We've had great discussions with other companies and we have not had complaints from producers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

I guess the minister doesn't want to talk about an operation being established in Conception Bay South 600 metres from an elementary school.

Minister, let me ask you this: Are you okay with a storefront operation being sent up a 450-metre walk from a junior high school?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, when we put forward the legislation when it came to production facilities in Newfoundland and Labrador, we put clear criteria in place for parameters of where of these production facilities could be put in place for zoning. That is something that will be up to the municipality to approve permitting when it comes to making sure that they're in compliance with the legislation.

What the Member opposite is talking about is not production facilities. He's talking about retail product. Some of that retail product,

whether it's a tier one or tier two, tier three or tier four store with the NLC – if it's tier one or tier two, they would not have an opportunity for anybody under the age of 19 to enter the store; tier three or tier four, no product is available for viewing.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

My question was is the minister okay with it, but he didn't want to answer that question either; that seems to be a trend here today.

Minister, how about this; there are three licenced or approved – I should say approved – storefront retail outlets that have been approved for Conception Bay South, a distance of just over two kilometres, three licences issued. Are you okay with that as well?

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask the Member opposite, who represents the community of Conception Bay South – which is the second largest municipality outside of the City of St. John's – which is having three retail outlets in its community that is going to be employing people and they're going to be selling and servicing a product.

These business owners put forward applications; they obviously see a business case there and an assessment was done independently through the NLC to determine that these amounts of locations make sense for a community the size of CBS.

I ask the Member opposite: Does he not support having businesses operating in his community that he represents?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Cape St. Francis.

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

The Eastern Newfoundland Regional Appeal Board has not reported a decision since December 2017; that's over five months.

Can the minister confirm that there is a backlog of appeals?

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

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

Certainly, I have no problem looking into this issue if people are waiting some time for appeals; I wouldn't have those statistics here in front of me. It's not an issue that's come to my attention either. So what I would suggest is that if the Member is aware of any, I certainly be happy to look into this.

What I would point out is that these boards are independent entities of government. They are not government operated. They are appointed under legislation that was put into this House during the previous administration.

But again, happy to look into it – not a problem.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Minister, I would like to remind you that these appeal boards are appointed by government and the eastern appeal board, as far as I understand, they only have two members; they're waiting for government to appoint three more.

Minister, a municipality in my district has been told that they would be unable to hear an appeal for up to 12 months. Can you confirm that?

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

MR. A. PARSONS: No, Mr. Speaker, I can't confirm that because I don't operate – these are independent entities and I haven't been contacted by the municipality.

What I would suggest is again – when it comes to any appointment under any department, we'll work our way through. Contrary to the other side, we do have an Independent Appointments Commission. So it has taken some time to ensure that we have people go through this independent process to ensure they're put in these places.

What I would suggest is that if any municipality has any issue of this nature and feels that they're waiting too long, I'm happy to look into it, but I cannot do so unless it comes to me. That being said, these are independent boards.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: I'm going to remind the minister again that they're not really independent. The department has people on those boards that work with the people to do the appeals.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: Cabinet does the appointments.

This is unacceptable. What are you doing for municipalities? Can you address their needs?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

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

I guess what the Member opposite is saying is that for the 12 years they were there they directed the operations of these Regional Service Boards. What I can suggest is that it's not what we do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. A. PARSONS: I would point out to the other side, we don't say anything when they're asking the questions; I'd appreciate the same courtesy.

What I would suggest, these are –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. A. PARSONS: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's amazing.

What I would suggest is that we would love to make sure that we have people in these positions. From what I gather, the board is still moving independently; is still handling matters. I have had no community come to me with a matter of this nature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: I remind the minister that this is an appeal board that I, as a former mayor, had many opportunities to go and present at this appeal board.

It's very important to municipalities in this province and to residents in this province that they have a place to go to be able to get the jurisdictions done when there are disputes in communities.

The Regional Appeal Board for Central has not been posting decisions since March 2017. The boards from Western and Labrador have not made a decision since the fall of 2016, that's over a year and a half.

Can the minister confirm that there's a backlog of appeals in those areas also?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

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

No, I cannot confirm any statistics at this point. It's not an issue that's been brought to my attention. What I can say is that when it comes

to boards out there, we are in the process of making appointments if it is board related.

What I would suggest to the Member opposite, as a former mayor he would realize that it's always important to let the department know if you are having issues. I was recently at Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador in Gander; spoke with a number of communities. I'm always willing to hear issues that they have to put forward.

If communities have issues, I'm willing to hear it and willing to sit down and have a chat with them about it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Minister, I understand you were out and talked to municipalities, but my understanding is that right now there are approximately 36 appeals waiting to happen in the Eastern board.

When can we expect appointments to be made on these boards in those areas?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

Again, as I pointed out earlier, and contrary to what the previous administration did, many of these boards have to go through an Independent Appointments Commission. We can't take our party campaign organizers and stick them in these plum positions. We have to go through a process where we have an independent commission that will look through it.

We're working diligently to make that happen, to ensure that these independent boards stay independent and have good, qualified people doing the work for the people of the province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: I'd like to remind the minister that there's a former Liberal candidate on one of those boards.

AN HON. MEMBER: MHA.

MR. K. PARSONS: MHA, former MHA.

Minister, can you confirm that the new boards for appeals will begin hearing soon? It's very important to municipalities in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MR. A. PARSONS: What I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is that anybody on these boards – now that we've appointed – has gone through an independent process. We didn't take our party leaders and let them run off on vacations and then put them back into independent positions. That's not going to happen on our watch.

What I would suggest is that when it comes to any of these boards under Municipal Affairs, we'll certainly work to ensure that the work is getting done. I have not had this issue brought to my attention.

Right now, I know there are positions being filled on these various boards, and we look forward to them continuing their work.

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.

Yesterday, this house debated Bill 10, which will give the school districts the right to refuse to admit to schools students whose presence is deemed to be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of students or staff. Such powers in some other jurisdictions with similar legislation have led to children with disabilities being kept out of schools.

I ask the minister: What plan does he have to ensure that such situations do not increase in our schools because of this amendment to the Schools Act?

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, it's my pleasure to speak to that question today. I think the answer I have today is really no different or not much different than it was yesterday.

I think we were very clear in the questions that were provided to me or asked during the Committee, I tried to be very, very clear that these are circumstances – people with exceptionalities are not included in that, Mr. Speaker.

The intent of the change is the amendment was put in place to ensure that if an event happened outside of the physical school and the surrounding school property that will be dealt with by, now, the CEO of the school districts.

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.

Again, the minister is referring to something in a bill that doesn't exist.

The inclusion policies for our educational system are supposed to ensure that all children can be accommodated in our schools. Some children have disabilities that may cause behavioural problems over which they have little or no control and which require extra human resources in schools for their own safety and the safety of other students and staff.

I ask the minister: What is his plan for increasing resources in our educational system to meet the challenges of maintaining inclusion for children with disabilities in school facilities and activities as defined by the Premier's task force on education?

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for the question. Again, I think I made mention yesterday, as a former teacher myself, after spending 14 years in administration, 16 years in the classroom, I know what inclusive education is all about. I know what challenges, as I mentioned yesterday, that exceptionalities within students have to face.

Mr. Speaker, we work within the school to ensure that we have inclusive education. The Premier's task force, if the Member took some time to look at the 82 recommendations that are there, will know that we are implementing them, we're working on them. We are providing special teachers that will be put in place to address (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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.

We've been told that the actual policies on refusing admission will be put in place by the two school boards based on guidelines provided by the department.

I ask the minister: Will these policies include a clear statement that legislation on policies will not be used to deny admission to children with disabilities because human resources are not available for them in the school?

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, I tried yesterday, to the best of my ability, to answer the questions when some of these were brought up and I'm repeating myself today, Mr. Speaker – if the Member opposite will give me an opportunity – as I did yesterday.

If she had taken the time to read the 82 recommendations in the Premier's task force, we are putting measures in place for more support. We are not looking at opportunities to exclude exceptionalities within our schools. We're looking at inclusive schools. We're looking at providing safe and caring schools so that students and teachers have a safe working environment, and an environment where we have programs that are provided for all students, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

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

I ask the minister: What will prevent this amendment, Bill 10, from being used to force children with disabilities out of school when services are not available for them?

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

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, sometimes it gets very difficult when you get down to the weeds in some of these situations and make it what it's not.

The intent of the amendment that was put in place yesterday is to provide safety within our schools. Mr. Speaker, it has nothing to do with addressing issues with exceptionalities. We have policies in place that provide services to students who have exceptionalities. We have made a commitment that we will continue to provide services. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, more support. We're not putting barriers up; we are removing barriers and we will continue to do that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Time for Oral Questions has ended.

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.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I am tabling two Orders in Council relating to funding pre-commitments for the fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Smoke-Free Environment Act, Bill 22.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Other Post-Employment Benefits Eligibility Modification Act, Bill 25.

I further give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Control And Sale Of Cannabis, Bill 20.

I further give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, an act to amend the liquor control act, Bill 21.

I further give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The

Restraint Of Salary And Extinguishment Of Severance Pay For Non-Represented Public Sector Employees And Statutory Officers Of The Province, Bill 24.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, Bill 23.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. PETTEN: 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 Route 60 is the main highway that runs through the Town of Conception Bay South and is a vital artery to the provincial road network; and

WHEREAS Route 60 is one of the most heavily travelled roads in the province; and

WHEREAS Route 60 has been deteriorating and requires major upgrades;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to allocate funds to upgrade Route 60.

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

I presented this petition yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and as a promise to the residents I represent in the District of CBS who – as I said yesterday, and I will say every time I present this petition, it's one of the most important issues to them because the road is in need of major upgrades and it's the fifth busiest road in the province.

After presenting that petition yesterday, the Minister of Transportation and Works stood to his feet and responded. People in my district would love to hear a response. They like to hear the minister's response and answer the questions, but what we heard yesterday was nothing short of gibberish.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: It is what it is, Mr. Speaker. That's what I can only determine. I listened to it the second time. I realize the people in my district were not too impressed, and I'm sure people in this province are probably not impressed with some of the responses you get from the minister on stuff like that.

It's a serious issue. You bring it to the House. It's filed up on a petition; it's signed by people. This is a very important part to a lot of people in your communities we represent, to bring these petitions to the House, to have them addressed, to bring them to the floor of the House of Assembly because this is the people's House. They have questions they want to ask. We as MHAs ask the questions.

As I said before, we ask questions, they're supposed to provide answers. I asked questions about the road. People want this road upgraded. It's very important to them. What we got back in the other answer wasn't an answer, Mr. Speaker. It was nothing short of gibberish.

Thank you very much.

Maybe the minister might want to get up today and give us better answers. He's right excited, he's stood to his feet but I'm not sat down yet. So maybe he'll wait until I finishes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: Maybe he'll get up today and tell the people of my District of Conception Bay South what he's planning on doing for Route 60. People don't want to hear this rhetoric. They want to get answers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: Remember, Mr. Speaker, like I said, we ask questions, they're supposed to provide answers. So I'll sit in my place and I'll expect, as the residents of my district expect to get answers from the minister.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Transportation and Works for a response, please.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. CROCKER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate the same respect from that side as we just showed for the previous speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is what I gave out yesterday was not gibberish, it was numbers. It was facts. Now I realize the Members opposite consider numbers to be gibberish. They were the ones with the Finance Minister that couldn't add.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the reality here is we understand the value of roads. We've actually met on two occasions in the last six to eight weeks with the Town of CBS. The reality is we want to work with the Town of CBS. We built a bypass road. The province built a bypass road back – I think it opened in 2013-2014.

So, Mr. Speaker, we would expect the Town of CBS to work with us for transferring Route 60 to the town, like has happened in many communities. In my district, in Carbonear -

Trinity - Bay de Verde, when the Carbonear bypass road was built, Water Street, which was the main street through Carbonear, reverted to the Town of Carbonear. That's been the practice.

Route 60 through Paradise was reverted to the Town of Paradise after Peacekeepers Way was built. Portions of Topsail Road have reverted to the City of Mount Pearl over time, Mr. Speaker. That's the natural path of roads in this province.

Our primary concern is Peacekeepers Way. It's also a concern with Route 60, Mr. Speaker.

The Member and I had many conversations about Route 60 and we'll continue to have them, but for him to say the numbers are gibberish – I'm just going to remind him quickly of the numbers. In our two years in government we have invested seven times more in Route 60 than they did in their last three years in office.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: 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 class sizes, adequate school space and healthy socialization is essential to our students receiving the best quality education; and

WHEREAS schools such as St. Francis of Assisi are without cafeteria space and students do not have the opportunity to move about during the day; and

WHEREAS schools in Newfoundland and Labrador have some of the largest cap sizes and some of the lowest rates of literacy; and

WHEREAS the education system in our province must be designed to ensure that each child has the best opportunity to fulfill his best potential;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government, and call on government to take action in our educational system and ensure smaller class sizes and provide significant space for children to allow for a higher quality of education. Take action to address issues in schools such as St. Francis of Assisi where they are without adequate space and using combined classes, and ensure students have a high quality standard of education in a quality learning environment.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners humbly pray.

Mr. Speaker, I presented this petition last week on behalf of parents of St. Francis of Assisi in my district. I want to say today that people in that community are very proud of their school. It's a great school. The teachers are fantastic. Parents are very pleased with the education their children are getting at the school but they are concerned about the size of the classrooms.

These classrooms are not the regular size classrooms either. They are a little bit smaller. When you're talking 29 children in a classroom and the possibility up to 31, that's too many students in a class. The teachers don't have the opportunity to do the one-on-one that some of these students need. It's very important that we look at this. Our children are our future. The best education that we can invest in for these children, that's what we should be doing.

In this particular school, there is no cafeteria. It's a huge problem. Socially, when you use combined classes and children are in small numbers, are away from their grades, whether it's grade four or grade five, they don't have the opportunity to mingle, to socialize with students of their own age and own group.

When we don't have the adequate space in those schools, it's important that we give them the best possible education. I feel and the parents feel in this school that combining classes is not the best

education that their children can get in this school because there is not adequate space.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, I now call on the Member for St. John's Centre to introduce the resolution standing in her name, Motion 1.

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

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

I am very happy to stand and I move:
WHEREAS while national unemployment has reached a record low, Newfoundland and Labrador's unemployment rate of 14.8 per cent in 2017 was twice the national average; and

WHEREAS the R8 unemployment rate is growing closer to 20 per cent, taking into account those who have given up looking for work or are underemployed; and

WHEREAS it is crucial for all of us to work together to address the growing unemployment crisis; and

WHEREAS we have seen the success of previous all-party committees on Northern shrimp and mental health and addictions;

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge government to create an all-party select committee on jobs to address the growing unemployment crisis in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Seconded by the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre, please proceed.

Thank you.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to stand and to speak to this private Member's motion today. I believe that we are, and we all know that we are – it's hard to use this word "crisis," but we are in a crisis situation in terms of the employment and the unemployment in Newfoundland and Labrador, affecting the whole province – some areas feeling the crunch even more so than others, and it is time now for a bold vision. The usual ways of working and addressing this issue are not working.

When we see that the R8 rate of unemployment is reaching 20 per cent in this – thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry.

MS. ROGERS: When we see that the R8 unemployment rate in the province is reaching 20 per cent – it's predicted to reach 20 per cent within this year – that means one in five people who need work in Newfoundland and Labrador will not find full-time, adequate employment. That is at a crisis proportion. We are over twice – we are over double the national average of unemployment in the country.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read from this document. It's the 1986 report of the *Summary Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment*, and it's entitled: *Building on our Strengths*. This was released in 1986. That's 32 years ago, and I think it's very interesting to hear those words in this context. Again, this is a report of a royal commission that was looking at the issue of employment and unemployment in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So 32 years later, here we go, Mr. Speaker: "The Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment does not believe that there are any easy solutions to Newfoundland's unemployment problem, but it does believe that there is much that can be done, and much that should be done, to stimulate enterprise, self-reliance and economic development, thereby creating jobs for people in our province. The Commission advocates a balanced approach to the development of a multi-sectored provincial economy, with strong goods-producing and service sectors, small-scale and large-scale

enterprises and healthy rural and urban communities. Our vision is of an up-to-date post-industrial society in which modern communications and transportation make it possible for people to live in our cities, towns and small communities while being actively engaged in productive enterprise and fully involved in a contemporary life-style.”

What we all want today, Mr. Speaker – and these are the words of a royal commission that had academics and people from industry who looked at the issue of employment and unemployment in the province 32 years ago. This reads well for today in the situation in which we find ourselves today.

They say: “To make this vision a reality, the Commission advocates an integrated strategy for stimulating enterprise and creating employment.” And they say, summing up: “Most of all, to achieve this new vision, we will need a collective act of will and a firm commitment by our whole society.”

Even then, 32 years ago, they knew that this was not a situation, as again they said: We do not believe that there are any easy solutions to Newfoundland’s unemployment problem. They reiterate that. Today we know there are no easy solutions. Again, they say: “Most of all, to achieve this new vision, we will need a collective act of will and a firm commitment by our whole society.”

“Newfoundlanders” – and Labradorians – “are an enterprising people, but our energies need to be redirected in the ways suggested in this Report. To eradicate unemployment, we need to have confidence in ourselves and build on our strengths so that, together, we may forge a strong economy and society and a new sense of self-reliance.”

Mr. Speaker, 32 years ago this report on the royal commission was released. They are words that resonate today that speak to the reality that we are experiencing today, the high unemployment. The other issue that they said: “Newfoundland’s newest resource industry, oil and gas, does have employment potential, but volatile world markets make this a very uncertain industry.” Boy, have we ever felt that in the last few years, that volatile markets make

this a very uncertain industry. We’re experiencing that.

“The Commission is cautiously optimistic, but does not believe that Newfoundland can rely upon oil and gas to solve our economic problems.” Mr. Speaker, that’s exactly what we are experiencing today, 32 years later. We know how excited the province was when there was exploration in oil and gas and when the drilling started. We did see times where we felt – where a previous premier said we were no longer a have-not province, that we were a have province. That’s not what we’re seeing today. We’re seeing this increasing crisis of unemployment with no real relief in sight. Mr. Speaker, that is why I’m bringing forward this private Member’s motion.

We know again, as stated in the report from this Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, that we all have to work together. One of the things that we are hearing across the province is that people want us to work together. People are living the reality in their lives; they’re living the reality of severe and growing unemployment. We’re seeing young folks, young families from Newfoundland and Labrador who want to live here, who want to work here, who want to live in their rural communities having to leave because they cannot find sustainable employment.

We’re seeing our graduates – and let’s not forget, every time someone graduates either with an undergraduate degree or a graduate degree from Memorial University or from our College of the North Atlantic, not only do they pay tuition and fees but their education is also subsidized by our public money. That’s as it should be; that’s a good thing.

All that investment that we have made in people so they are well educated and able to commit to the development of our province, they leave the province because they cannot find sustainable employment. We need to turn that around.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we are at a pivot point in our province. I believe that people across the province feel that. There’s a lot of despair and desolation, but I feel incredibly optimistic.

I believe that we have to come forth with a bolder vision. That we have to come forth together to build solutions but not from the top down, but to work with the people across our province. We have to work with people in rural communities, in urban communities, with municipalities, with indigenous peoples. We have to work with women, with youth and with our student activists. We have to work with people with diversity, with immigrants, with labour. We have to work with business, with academia, with non-profit organizations, with co-operatives, with social enterprise, with national and international experts, with faith groups and with banks.

I had the pleasure, Mr. Speaker, of working with and sitting on the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. It too – our mental health and addictions system – was at a crisis point. It, too, was at a tipping point and people across the province knew it. They knew how crucial it was, how critical it is and was to fix our mental health and addictions system. We had all kinds of consultations done by the Department of Health, but it didn't really relate to getting at the root causes of why our mental health and addictions system was broken and what we really needed to do.

I've said this in the House a number of times that I often believe, and community economic development experts often believe as well, that those who are closest to the problems are also often closest to the solutions. That's why I believe an all-party committee, an all-party select committee, comprised of Members from all parties in this House, an all-party select committee on jobs is crucial to the sustainability and the survival of our province.

I can continue talking about the statistics. We all know our growing unemployment stats. We don't see a lot of mitigation in place. We also know that this Premier has struck a Cabinet Committee on Jobs and they're doing important work, but what we really need to do, as shown by other all-party committees, particularly as shown by the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, is that all of us together have to work. Work with people in their communities who have visions of how they can make their communities sustainable; who have visions on what employment can look like in

their communities; who have ideas based on the reality of their communities, particularly on municipal levels, whether it be small communities or larger communities like St. John's or Corner Brook or CBS.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do something different. We have to take a qualitative leap. We have to take a bold step in order to rebuild our communities. Without a vision, without the work at a grassroots level, where communities can clearly articulate how they envision living together, how they envision working together, what do their communities need.

There are some very good examples of that happening right now when we look at Bonavista, which was championed by John Norman and the town council there. They didn't look at trying to create jobs in the tourist area. What they did was they looked at: Who are we? Who are we as the Town of Bonavista? How do we see ourselves currently? What is our vision? What is our vision for the very close future? What is our vision 10 years down the road? How do we make our communities more livable?

By making our communities more livable, by doing an assets inventory, then there is a happiness potion in that community and people are moving to Bonavista because the people in Bonavista together have built a vision of how they want to see their community grow and flourish.

That's what we have to do in conjunction with communities throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. Only then can we start building the programs, the policies and the plans to get towards those visions. Without an overarching vision – and that can't be done on the eighth floor here in Confederation Building. That has to be embedded in the communities, in the lived realities of the people who are living in our communities across the province, and only then can we build a viable plan.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the ongoing debate on this.

MR. SPEAKER: (Warr): The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, it's a pleasure for me to speak today. I find it somewhat ironic that the Members of the Third Party has now, all of a sudden, got the answers to employment when they're against the Grieg project. They're against Canopy. They want to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, when, in fact, Mr. Speaker, the jury is still out on that. We know that there are some significant issues.

As a government, we have taken – in consultation with the people in the province, including employers, the labour groups – information and we have been proactive in making sure that our minimum wage is in line with the Consumer Price Index.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Members opposite keep putting in numbers that they'd like to have or like to see. That's part of it. There are economists out there that have one view and there are economists that have other views.

Well, there are a couple of these quotes that I want to make. The Bank of Canada estimates that there will be about 60,000 fewer jobs by 2019 in Ontario due to increases in the minimum wages – I'm sorry, that would be across the country. TD bank estimates Ontario alone will lose 90,000 jobs by 2020.

We are expected to sit and really take advice or information from the Third Party when we're looking at issues like that, Mr. Speaker. For us it's important to make sure – and we are doing that – that we are positioning ourselves for employment in this province.

Mr. Speaker, in January of this year, Statistics Canada reported that Ontario lost nearly 60,000 part-time jobs as its new \$14 minimum wage came into effect. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimated Ontario's minimum wage increases would cost up to 155,900 jobs for young people. Their report noted over 60 per cent of minimum wage earners in Canada are between the ages of 15 and 24. As minimum wage increases, they become the most vulnerable group in the economy. Since then, we have seen Ontario add

jobs but decrease their amount of full-time employed citizens.

Economists are divided as to whether minimum wage increases cause job losses. There is research to suggest a reduction in jobs or hours following wage increases, but other studies, primarily in the United States, showed no long-term connection between wages and dips in employment rates. Mr. Speaker, as I said, it depends on what side of the fence you want to make those comments.

The fact remains there is a potential for negative impacts on employment in the labour market from significant increases in the minimum wage. One has to wonder why the NDP is calling for a significant increase to minimum wage to \$15 an hour, which is significantly higher than any of the Atlantic provinces, when they appear to be concerned about unemployment.

On May 17, just last week, the St. John's Board of Trade commended government for tying the minimum wage to the Consumer Price Index. The board said: "This form of measurement will provide employers and employees a predictable way to prepare for future increases."

The board's statement also said: "Arbitrarily increasing the minimum wage when it is not tied to an economic indicator creates a substantial strain on small business and would be the death nail for some business owners who are already struggling in a tough period for our province."

The Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council was also pleased with government's decision to index the minimum wage to the national Consumer Price Index. Executive director Richard Alexander described the announcement as a relief. He said: A jump to a \$15-an-hour minimum wage, when government has already significantly raised taxes to business through tax increases would have an extreme impact to employers. Both the Board of Trade and the Employers' Council said that indexing the minimum wage takes the politics out of it and bases it on actual economic indicators.

Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite, when she spoke a few minutes ago – again, it's convenient when you take numbers. She conveniently took the number R8. Now, how many people in this

province have ever heard of R8 when it comes to unemployment?

The reason they haven't heard of that is because it's not used. R8 unemployment rates include discouraged workers and also part-time workers. That's what the R8 includes. As a matter of fact, if you go on and look at the Canadian numbers – the Canadian numbers, if you use R8, are double what the normal numbers of unemployment are.

According to the Labour Force Survey, these are the real numbers. According to the Labour Force Survey annual results, the unemployment rate for 2017 was 14.8 per cent; slightly higher than the 13.4 per cent recorded in 2016. The employment rate for 2017 was 50.3 per cent, a decrease of 52.4 per cent in 2016 because we know there are an aging group that are aging out will have an impact on these numbers.

Mr. Speaker, a concern we have as a government is looking at what was in 2013 – when the peak of the megaprojects were in place, the unemployment rate was 11.6 per cent. Today, in 2017, it's 14.8 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that does in fact lead us to have concerns. That's the reason we have the Cabinet Committee on Jobs put in place, to ensure that we're looking at different sectors.

Mr. Speaker, there may be some criticism outside from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that says we shouldn't be looking at sectors. Well, I think it's important that we look at sectors because we're looking at significant sectors in this province. We're looking at opportunities in agriculture. We're looking at opportunities in technology. Now we're looking at opportunities in mining and so on and so forth to address some of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, not only that, we're also looking at and we have started discussions on a comprehensive human resources plan. In that comprehensive human resources plan, we will be looking at and engaging people within the province in looking at opportunities that might be in the province whereby we can improve and look at opportunities for further employment.

The Cabinet Committee on Jobs include: the Premier, Ministers of Finance, myself, Advanced Education, Skills and Labour,

Fisheries and Land Resources, Health and Community Services, Municipal Affairs and Environment, Natural Resources, Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation. Mr. Speaker, removing myself from that, I can say there's a lot of expertise around that table and I won't say I'm included in that, but I'm making reference to my colleagues.

There's a lot of information when we address these sectors and look at job opportunities and employment opportunities. Creating jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is key to improving our economy and achieving our vision of a stronger province.

Our government is working to address challenges and take full advantage of opportunities that are specific to sectors that have strong growth potential. Mr. Speaker, throughout the last year, year-and-a-half, we have talked about the enormous amount of land that has been made available for farmers for agriculture. That in itself is a tremendous potential.

In September 2017, the Premier and the Cabinet Committee on Jobs joined the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association to launch a work plan that creates and includes 28 different actions to promote aquaculture development. Our government and the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association share a goal of growing salmon production to 50,000 metric tons annually and mussel production to more than 10,000 tons annually. By doing this, we will more than double the number of year-round jobs in the province's aquaculture industry from 1,000 to 2,100.

In October 2017, the committee joined the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, community, academia, business leaders, university students to launch the agriculture sector work plan. It lists 43 actions that government and its partners are working through to promote new careers and bright futures in agriculture. The overall goal is to double the province's food self-sufficiency to at least 20 per cent by 2022. This will generate an additional 500 person years of employment and help our government increase the number of fruits and vegetables that are eaten in this province.

Mr. Speaker, very quickly my time is running out, so I'm going to skip a few of my notes that I wanted to talk about. I wanted to get into a comprehensive human resource plan – that's been mandated in my letter to do – to ensure that we do have that. In *The Way Forward* government has committed to “commence the development of a comprehensive human resource plan to support sector diversification and the development of a productive and knowledge-intensive economy. This plan will be informed by forecasted labour market opportunities and enhanced labour market information products to assist in workforce planning for individuals and businesses.” This work will include working with priority sectors, including the aquaculture, the agriculture, the technology, the mining, the forestry and community sectors, among others.

Mr. Speaker, we are becoming inclusive and looking at opportunities outside of the Cabinet Committee on Jobs to engage people that are working in these sectors – front-line workers, people that are engaged – so that we do have a good human resource plan in place. This commitment is included in my ministerial mandate letter. As well as working with post-secondary institutions, youth and employers to ensure appropriate skills training programs are available; identifying the skills, the qualifications, the training required by the oil and gas industry and other priority sectors; and strengthening apprenticeship programs.

The development of a comprehensive human resource plan involves significant collaboration with sector associations, industry groups, to better respond to their private sector labour market needs, and support the industry diversification. The comprehensive human resource plan will be informed by forecasted labour market opportunities and enhanced labour market information products, assisting workforce planning for individuals and for businesses. This will include, Mr. Speaker, program planning for post-secondary institutions and enhancing the K to 12 system to better prepare our youth for advanced education and career decision making.

The comprehensive human resource plan will also consider the needs of underrepresented groups in the labour market, such as persons

with disabilities, youth, indigenous people, older workers and newcomers to this province. Mr. Speaker, we are working to ensure that we provide an environment and an economic climate so we're engaging many of these associations and groups.

We're not excluding people; we're giving people an opportunity to have input. The Members of the Third Party, as well, can have input into where we're going. As the labour market information is an overarching component of this plan, in spring of 2017, government established the LMI governance committee. The governance committee has assisted in understanding the current labour market environment in order to plan and prepare individuals for employment opportunities.

On January 9, 2018 the governance committee hosted a full-day LMI forum, actively engaging industry across multiple sectors. Information and recommendations generated from discussions will inform the development of a new generation of LMI products to meet the challenging needs of this province.

Mr. Speaker, supporting the Cabinet Committee on Jobs industry action plan, as well as the work of the comprehensive human resource plan, AESL is committed to supporting labour market, industry-led initiatives, including labour market partnerships, funding to support sector-specific research into labour market needs for these sectors.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately my time is up, but I just want to make mention that we are working closely with these associations: the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry; we're working with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture; we're working with the NEIA, the NATI, the CMI and any other group that will give us insight into labour in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to get up and speak on this private Member's motion today, as it is every opportunity we get to stand in the House and speak on any motion that affects the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, yes, we acknowledge the rate of unemployment in Newfoundland and Labrador is exceptionally high. And who could deny that? It's getting worse – even worse than the numbers indicate because discouraged people who have given up hunting for jobs are not even counted as unemployed. Too many people can't support themselves and their families; too many people can't build careers here with the excellent skills they have; too many people can't afford to stay here. But the more important question is: What's our solution? That's where the parties fundamentally differ.

Some on the left said we need to require companies and people with healthy incomes to pay more in taxes and royalties, and then those revenues would provide a wider array of public services, creating good jobs for more public employees while maintaining a comprehensive, publicly funded, cradle-to-grave support network for people in need.

That's one approach. There's another approach. Some believe that the private sector is principally responsible for driving job growth. Some say we need to create a climate for business to thrive, which means lowering the burden of taxes on consumers and employers and finding new ways to provide essential services while making better choices in managing the people's money.

That's a real choice: bigger government with bigger tax bill, or smaller government with smaller tax bill. Those are vastly different approaches, Mr. Speaker. So how do you choose? Which approach works? Well, our province has endured three years of a high-tax approach. We see where that has got us. Liberals are so shammed of their approach they're pretending they didn't choose it.

Yesterday, the Liberals stood to challenge the idea that they imposed more than 300 tax and fee increases. That's old news, they said. Well, no, it's not old news, Mr. Speaker. We had no

choice, they said. Well, yes, you did have a choice. Instead of taking a measured, balanced, evidence-based approach, the Liberals imposed more than 300 tax and fee increases virtually across the board in their first budget in 2016. They left almost all those increases in place in their second budget in 2017. And they left almost all of those increases in place in their third budget in 2018.

Members opposite sometimes like to always say I'm in the past; I'm talking about the 2016 budget all the time. That's why, because we're talking about the same budget year over year over year, and we're still into it.

So the high Liberal taxation is not an old headline; it's a current news headline in Newfoundland and Labrador, right up to date. The crushing of taxpayers is happening right here, right now in our province. Families everywhere are feeling it; employers everywhere are feeling it. The government opposite is a tax-and-spend administration. They said they wouldn't be. They said they'd be zero-based budgeters. They said everything was on the table, but it wasn't.

Agencies, boards and commissions were not on the table; attrition was not on the table; patronage was not on the table; eliminating waste was not on the table. They had a chance to strike a good balance. They failed. Their approach has made things worse. The jobless numbers have grown worse. They have not made Newfoundland and Labrador stronger; they've actually made Newfoundland and Labrador weaker.

The NDP agrees with us that our province is weaker; they see the crisis. What they fail to see is the same solution. The NDP tell us they hate high taxes, they tell us they'd reduce high taxes, but they also call for universal programs that require hiring more public employees because they oppose public-private partnerships. That would require more public spending, which of course would mean more high taxes, at least for some.

The NDP difference is that they would shift the burden of tax to those with greater means: the larger companies, the wealthier people, but this province does not have enough wealthy to

support what they are calling for. So the burden will quickly fall on families living cheque to cheque. Tax on goods would continue to get out of hand.

The solution won't solve the fundamental problems. What we need is a different approach, one that appreciates the transformative value of free enterprise. It doesn't mean there is no role for government. It means that government must be a facilitator of growth, not the engine. Admittedly, some people hate this kind of talk. They believe government is the answer and business is the source of money to pay for it, but the evidence shows that approach does not work. Why doesn't it work? Because the economy that fails to grow simply feeds upon itself.

In order to grow, an economy has to bring new money, new wealth. The engine of that kind of growth is free enterprise. When governments take their hands out of people's pockets, then people have additional money to spend as they see fit. Extra consumer spending drives hiring and production and expansion by employers. When the tax burden is low, employers can compete beyond our borders. That's the approach the previous government tried for years and it was working.

When businesses can compete abroad selling local products, then new wealth flows in our economy from the outside, and that creates new jobs. When governments raise taxes they draw money out of consumers' pockets, out of employers' pockets and out of investors' pockets. They hamper our trading prospects.

Such a government isn't creating jobs, it's removing the money that consumers, employers and investors need to create jobs and drive growth. It is making our local businesses less competitive. It's making our local investment climate less attractive, and because our investors and employers have choices, they will choose to do business elsewhere where their money will go further. Not surprisingly, elsewhere is where the opportunities have been going, along with our people.

Liberal taxes have starved consumers of spending power which has starved employers of hiring power and investing power. Our local businesses have struggled; many have slipped

into bankruptcy. That's not an accident, Mr. Speaker, it's a cause and effect scenario.

Jobs don't disappear when business is good. Job opportunities grow when business is good, but business stops being good when people stop spending, and that's what's happened in this province. People stop spending when governments have their hands deep into their wallets, which has also happened in this province.

When people have less to spend, businesses earn less and fail more. We've seen that also in this province. When businesses fail people lose jobs; something else we've seen in our province. Job losses mean even fewer people with money to spend, and that is something that we hear. I know Members of this House, I being one of them, I hear a lot of people tell me that from day to day things are tighter; the money is not as plentiful as it was.

It's a downward spiral. It's a war of attrition. A government that overtaxes is always disappointed with its haul. There's less and less income to tax, less in retail sales to tax, less in corporate profits to tax and less revenue to pay government's big bills. That's exactly what this province is experiencing today and, still, the Liberals talk about new taxes.

Speaking of which, they're ready to impose the carbon tax. I speak about that weekly in this House; it's been an issue that I continually bring up. I believe that eventually people will catch on and people will realize actually what's happening. I think right now it's just one of those things that sometimes we talk about issues and it doesn't resonate with the public. Until it does, and when it does, it usually gets legs. As the saying goes, it sticks and it becomes a huge issue.

I believe the carbon tax is exactly what will happen with the carbon tax in this province. I said this before and I'll say it in here now, a lot of people do not realize or have not really looked into it. This is not a complicated issue to understand, it's just people are not taking an interest. When you really sink your teeth into it and you look into what the carbon tax is, the carbon tax is what it is, it's a tax. It's another tax that's going to affect each and every individual

in this province. It's not just the big emitters, it's not the big industry we're talking about, we're talking about me and you, Mr. Speaker, every individual, every family in this province.

I've asked two ministers now responsible for the Environment what it's going to cost a family in this province. What's the extra cost burden on a family of four, for instance, in this province, your traditional family? Myself, I have a family of four. How much is that going to cost those families? We've not been given a number. We have anecdotal information from the Conference Board of Canada that it's \$2,500 a family, but these are approximate. It may be more, it may be less. People want to know.

It's an issue that I feel is important. It's in my critic role but I took an interest in it. I've done a lot of reading up on it and I think it is a very important issue. It's an issue that's important elsewhere in the country and it has not caught on here yet. It will. Eventually it will. When the government rolls out whatever plan they're going to roll out in September and people start to realize the effects of this, it will get legs. It should get legs because it's another tax. It's another burden on families. It's another burden on every individual in this province.

When I say the 300 new taxes and fees and whatever – and Members opposite sometimes take offence to it and they'll get points of order. I get all that. That's fine; it's trying to change the channel. But no one can dispute the carbon tax is a tax that's going to affect each and every one of us. Regardless of the amount, which we can't put our finger on, it's going to be another cost to families.

That just adds into the bigger picture of these new taxes and fees, and I think it's one that's very important. I do look forward to more conversation and more dialogue from the general public, because I do believe when people start paying more attention it will become a bigger issue. I look forward to their commentary and government's action. Right now we haven't seen much action on the file. I'm sure there's stuff happening behind the scenes.

Again, we're waiting, and the public and the province are waiting to see how this plan

unfolds and what it's going to cost each and every one of us. Like I said, we don't feel we should have to pay a penny of that, Mr. Speaker. We feel the Liberals should be fighting it; instead they're trying to find a way to hide it. Tax and spend does not work.

On that note, the Province of Saskatchewan has gone to court on the issue. You have the Jason Kenney Conservatives, the United Conservative Party, I guess UCP, whatever, in Alberta. The Conservative Party are fighting the carbon tax. We have Ontario –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member to stay to the text that's involved in the PMR.

MR. PETTEN: And which I'm doing, Mr. Speaker. We're talking carbon tax, and I'm just trying to bring examples of the tax.

We feel this tax needs a lot of work. Again, it's a tax. I know the government opposite doesn't like to hear the word and don't like me talking about it, but I guess that will continue to be until it gets to the issue it needs to be, then we'll all be talking about it.

In our party, we continually say government needs to stop strangling our economy. Stop strangling consumers and families, employers and businesses. Free enterprise activities are what this economy needs to grow. We're like the voice crying in the wilderness, Mr. Speaker, and I just said carbon tax seems to be that way, too.

The Liberals refuse to acknowledge that they have made matters worse with their misguided fiscal and economic policies. Even today, they are rhyming off one figure after another to try to convince people that everything is okay, or it's the Tories who are to blame. But you can't blame the Tories for a Liberal decision to overtax our people and employers in a fragile economy.

Instead of trying to whitewash their dismal record, maybe they should choose some honest soul-searching. Maybe they should start looking at the economies that are succeeding, unlike our own. Look at the most prosperous jurisdictions in the world today. Look at the most successful

employers. It is commerce that is fueling their growth, even in countries famous for socialism. The revolution in growth is driven by commerce. Commerce that is increasingly free of barriers.

We can't join that growth revolution abroad if we are crushed by over taxation at home. We have to get with the program. We have to stop feeding on ourselves. We have to plan budgets that recognize the realities in jurisdictions outside our own. We are not an economic island. We have to be part of the global community and achieve growth in production and sales. We have to innovate the ways others are innovating. We have to give our companies the space they need to be competitive in the global marketplace and that means cutting away the chains of taxation and red tape that are holding them back.

When business leaders tell us over and over again that businesses need reduced burdens of taxation and red tape in order to grow, why do politicians keep challenging them? Why are they ridiculed as if they are greedy or self-centered? They are giving us insights that we need to take to heart.

We are denying them the sunshine they need to grow and telling them it's their advantage when it's not. Solutions that will grow their enterprise, will grow our economy and the best solution a government can give to businesses in this province is usually to get out of the way.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That was quite a manifesto from my hon. colleague from across the way and felt almost like I was back in my political theory class at the university that I took as part of my political science degree, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for the reminders of the ideological spectrum. I wish they had considered that when they were devising –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BROWNE: – their jobs plan for Romania, Mr. Speaker, when they shipped off all the jobs that could have been done in Marystown to Romania because I'm sure the Government of Romania certainly appreciated the assistance of Members opposite on their jobs plan.

Mr. Speaker, it's certainly an honour to stand here and speak to this private Member's resolution today. I thank the Member opposite for bringing it forward, but something I think very important to consider, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that over a year ago, the Premier devised and created the Cabinet Committee on Jobs. That Committee has been diligently undertaking its work in partnership with community, Mr. Speaker.

What we heard the Leader of the Third Party talk about was working with community, talking with community and working with industry. That's why, Mr. Speaker, we've hosted already three industry summits which have produced Sector Work Plans on agriculture, on technology and on aquaculture.

Look at aquaculture alone, *The Way Forward* commits to bringing salmon production to 50,000 metric tons, Mr. Speaker. Taking mussel production to 10,750 metric tons. That's what's committed to in partnership with the industry.

At any of the industry summits that I've attended, whether it's aquaculture, agriculture or technology, the industry associations have been there. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Members opposite, I suggest, would be flabbergasted to hear the positive reviews from the industry associations saying they've never had this level of engagement from government before, Mr. Speaker.

So I say to the Leader of the Third Party, this is certainly not a top-down approach. This is very much engagement at the community level.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please!

MR. BROWNE: Just as it is, Mr. Speaker, 1,700 names on a petition for the Grieg project in Marystown. We've heard the negative commentary from the Leader of the Third Party and others, Mr. Speaker, degrading the project, but yet refusing to engage with the people of the Burin Peninsula; refusing to put their views on the table.

All we are asking for is a fair shake, for an ability for people to get back to work on the Burin Peninsula, in Placentia Bay and elsewhere. We have been working diligently to create jobs, not add more layers of bureaucracy in governance, Mr. Speaker.

Take the Canada Fluorspar project, and I commend the Member for Burin - Grand Bank who worked so hard on this file. A \$17 million repayable loan has put hundreds of people back to work in St. Lawrence, something that a former administration, as I've said before, cut the ribbon so often they couldn't even find the ribbon to cut it there last summer, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please!

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, I'm hitting a nerve.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please!

I'm having difficulty hearing the hon. Member speak. I ask for the co-operation of the House.

Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, I'm hitting nerve, and I won't stop standing up for the people of the Burin Peninsula and Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, I know what people at home are thinking. I know what they're asking themselves. I know what they're

thinking. They're saying: The Members opposite are saying they supported the project in St. Lawrence. Well, why did they vote against it in the budget?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: They voted against it, Mr. Speaker. They refused to support economic development in ways that this government had to pick up the slack from their 12 years.

Mr. Speaker, I hear the questions coming from surf clam every day. Where were the questions on the Marystown fish plant? The Marystown fish plant is a heap of rubble because they let it fall.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please!

MR. BROWNE: They let it go down; go up the road to the Burin High Liner fish plant, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please!

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, it's gone. It's closed, on their watch, despite the promises to the people of the Burin Peninsula, you did not deliver on, I say to Members of the Official Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: When we look at the Third Party, Mr. Speaker, they've been promoting messaging that clearly is against the Grieg project. We have 1,700 people on the Burin Peninsula.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many?

MR. BROWNE: Seventeen hundred.

Mr. Speaker, I have been involved in this file. The Member for Burin - Grand Bank has.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please!

MR. BROWNE: I invite Members of the Opposition, as I have, Mr. Speaker, come to the Burin Peninsula and put your views on the table.

It was just yesterday, we heard a Member of the Opposition –

MR. SPEAKER: I ask once more for the co-operation of all Members in the House. I'm having very much difficulty hearing the hon. Member speak. I ask for full co-operation of the House.

I want to hear the hon. Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, it was just yesterday, we heard from the Opposition benches, calls that industry be moved out of St. John's into rural Newfoundland. That's what we heard yesterday, but I want to say very clearly, I don't believe it's an either/or proposition. I believe that we can support both urban and rural areas to spur economic growth and spawn economic development.

It's very important that we work together and address, through partnerships, the ability to support urban and rural areas.

AN HON. MEMBER: Don't forget the shipyard.

MR. BROWNE: The shipyard in Marystown, Mr. Speaker, is a file near and dear to my heart. It's something that, again, was left dormant under the former administration, and I have not heard from the Third Party on their views on the shipyard.

My view of today's private Member's motion is that we have a Committee on Jobs established. It's been working for a year. There are already three Sector Work Plans with agriculture, aquaculture and technology. There will be more to come.

So I believe all Members of this House have an ability to input into that process and work with the government, work with the industry associations, work in our partnerships to ensure that we continue supporting economic development, because as the only Member of this Legislature – probably, I would think –

under 30, I believe young people want to stay home. I believe people do want to start families here. I believe people do want a future here.

The more negativity that we hear coming out of the Opposition benches, Mr. Speaker, at some point – I've said it before – they're going to have to take responsibility that their rhetoric is driving people away. You have to take responsibly.

We have made strategic investments into jobs. I heard the Member opposite for Conception Bay South earlier talking that this government hasn't addressed attrition. Well, we have, you should check your facts or ask your researchers to do so, I say. Perhaps he could update himself on the fact that we have made administrative efficiencies.

Take no closer look than the Research & Development Corporation; moving that into government took a \$3 million savings, Mr. Speaker, that we can now put back into innovation here in the province. Apparently, the Members of the Opposition don't think that's a good idea.

Just last week, we announced a \$750,000 investment into Quorum Information Systems, Mr. Speaker. They already have 96 full-time employees here in the city. They do all the software development for car dealerships. It's amazing to know what's right underneath our noses here in Newfoundland and Labrador, the amazing technology and development that's occurring right here in St. John's and across Newfoundland and Labrador.

The \$750,000 investment that was made through our department, Mr. Speaker, will spur an additional 24 permanent new hires, 24 new jobs.

I say to the Members opposite, if you had not left a \$2.7 billion deficit in our lap we would've had a lot more to work with. Talk about the carbon tax, talk about fee increases? The biggest tax this province will ever face is Muskrat Falls, and my generation will be left to pay for your failings, I say to Members opposite.

So I'm fully aware, Mr. Speaker, fully aware of the impact decisions that this Legislature takes can have on the ordinary people of

Newfoundland and Labrador. That is why we're taking the methodical approach, Mr. Speaker, an approach that respects industry associations, respects communities, municipalities, respects everyone involved and includes their input, which includes Members of the House of Assembly. I certainly hope that people will take a constructive approach.

I know the Minister of Finance had pre-budget consultations, invited Members opposite. They did not attend, Mr. Speaker. They refused to have that session. I also know that Grieg, who I have 1,700 names on a petition in support. I know that a particular Member of the Opposition who has spoken against this project was asked, was invited to a meeting by the company and refused. So refusing to learn and be educated about the impacts to the area I represent, Mr. Speaker.

We have many examples, Mr. Speaker. In spring of 2017 we made a \$3 million investment with PAL for the Force Multiplier project. This will result in 150 person years of employment over five years – 150 person years of employment over five years. That's what's occurring under the leadership of this Premier and this government, Mr. Speaker. We are making strategic investments that make sense. We're certainly not shipping off anything to Romania let me guarantee you of that.

I can tell you, it disappoints me when I look at strong projects like the Canada Fluorspar project in St. Lawrence being voted against by Members of the Opposition. Voted against, Mr. Speaker. Could you even believe it? Could you even fathom that hundreds of jobs in St. Lawrence today could be voted against by Members opposite?

I know people at home must be saying to themselves, is that what they done? Well, that is what they done, Mr. Speaker. I'm here to confirm that to the people of the province, that that is what happened.

I can also confirm, Mr. Speaker, I can also assure people who are watching at home and the people of the province, that we will always have a steady hand at the wheel; that we will always put jobs as our first priority. That is why I was

so proud of our government when we unveiled the Cabinet Committee on Jobs.

I can tell you, as an MHA, I will never advocate that jobs and industry leave my region and go to another. I can guarantee you of that, Mr. Speaker. I will be fair to all regions of the province, but never would I stand in this Legislature, as I heard yesterday, and advocate that an industry leave my area and go to another. I would never do that.

I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to support industry. This province is open for business. We will continue making strategic investments that leverage additional dollars, whether it's at the federal level or through the private sector, no differently than when we supported the Superclusters Initiative, Mr. Speaker, which has leveraged millions and millions of dollars of federal money.

What I say to Members of the Opposition: if you're so proud of your record on the Burin Peninsula, come down and talk to the people about your record in Marystown with the fish plant; or Burin with the fish plant, or your views on greed. I invite you. I will host you, in fact, Mr. Speaker. I have no issue doing that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Order, please!

MR. BROWNE: I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I invite Members of the Opposition to come and visit and put your views on the table. We can have all the committees we want in this Legislature, protected under the dome of parliamentary democracy –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BROWNE: – but show up in the communities. If we are serious, Mr. Speaker, show up in the communities and tell people what your views are. Defend what you did when the Marystown fish plant went from a thriving workforce of 500 people to nothing today. There are no workers at the Marystown fish plant. It's

a heap of rubble. A slab of concrete, and I am very –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BROWNE: – very passionate, Mr. Speaker, about these issues. Very passionate about these issues, because the people that I represent are asking me –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BROWNE: – and I said to the Member, the surf clam issue is of exclusive federal jurisdiction, the Marystown fish plant was provincial jurisdiction and went on your watch.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Order, please!

This is my last warning. I'm having very much difficulty hearing the hon. Member for Placentia West - Bellevue. He's the only person I care to hear.

Proceed.

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, I know we all have passionate debate in this Legislature and I encourage that. We all feel very strongly for the people we represent and the people of the province. I certainly thank Members opposite for bringing these issues forward and I certainly want to thank you for your contributions to the debate here in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that by the end of today's debate I hear a firm position on the Grieg project from all Members and all sides of the Legislature, because we now have 1,700 names and counting on the Burin Peninsula, in Placentia Bay. The people want to know, where do we all stand? They want more than committees and structures in place, Mr. Speaker. They want results. That's why we have sector action plans. That's why we're supporting

strategic investment, supporting innovation and we will continue to do so.

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'm very happy to stand this afternoon and speak to the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

I'm very happy to stand this afternoon and speak to the private Member's motion which was moved by the Member for St. John's Centre, which I'm delighted to have seconded, because this motion deals with something that's very important to us in this province today.

I find it very disturbing that we have theatrics going on here in this House instead of looking at the situation that we're dealing with. The resolution is that the "House of Assembly urge Government to create an all-party Select Committee on Jobs to address the growing unemployment crisis in Newfoundland and Labrador."

For the government Members to stand and to act as if there isn't a growing unemployment crisis is just irresponsible. Their documents, in their own budget documents – the facts are there. The facts show in the booklet that's called *The Economy* that our unemployment rate is going up and our numbers of people employed is going down. That is a reality and it's a pattern, Mr. Speaker. It's a trend that has been going on now for two years, and the trend will be continuing with next year's budget and the budget after, and the government knows that.

What we're calling for here this afternoon is for us to recognize the problem in the province and to work together in a select committee to seriously deal with this problem. It just seems so

logical to me that we would do that. And maybe the Members of the House – some don't have a very long history in the Legislature and certainly members of the public don't understand what an all-party select committee is. It's a very, very, important body.

The committee that's set up as a select committee gets its authority from the House that appoints it and the committee has the power that all statutory committees have. It would have all parties represented on the committee, number one. Number two, it has the power to look for evidence, to have evidence brought to them by witnesses. They have the power to hold public meetings. They get the resources to do the work that they need to do.

It's a very, very common practice in legislatures. Up to the year 2001, it was something that was very common here in our own history going back to the mid-1800s and almost every year – there were some years, I think, 1998 for example, there were three select committees; 1996 there were two. You had years with more than one select committee. It is part of the legislative system, Mr. Speaker, and this is what is so frustrating. We're not talking about bringing in something strange, something that's extraneous, something that's outside of our system. We're talking about using something that's in our system.

What we have, we have a book that's called our Standing Orders; it's the book that sort of regulates what happens in the Legislature. In the Standing Orders there is a full recognition of what select committees are. It gives the number of people who should be on it. It talks about the power that the select committee has. The select committee has the same powers as the standing committees that we have. As I said, they can call witnesses, they can publicly hold meetings and they can gather evidence that is important to deal with the issue.

It is just so logical. For the government to deny that we have a problem right now, is just not right; it is wrong. Even in the Estimates, when I was in the AESL Estimates, I guess, to be in Estimates and to be told that the numbers of the students in our college system are going down, that the numbers of students from Newfoundland and Labrador in our university

are going down, that the numbers of children being born are going down. Why do we have a smaller budget, for example, in the budget for mothers and breastfeeding? Because there are fewer children; there are fewer applications for that money.

So we were presented all this information in Estimates by your departments. We have your documentation giving us the statistics. We are not making them up. They aren't statistics that have just come from the top of our heads. Yet you are acting as if we don't have a problem. What is wrong with all of us working together to try to get some answers to this problem?

I'm sure government has – they're saying they have a plan. But there are more heads in here than just the people who are calling themselves government. We were all elected to represent the people and that's what a select committee is about, all of us working together.

The Member for – I always forget the new names – Placentia West - Bellevue just referred to working together. Well, that's what we're talking about, is working together. Working together is not government saying this is what we're going to do and all of us saying yay, yay, yay we're going to do what government wants to do.

Government is us sitting down together in a select committee, for example, and reaching out to the community, looking for the expertise out there, working with a select committee to come up with the ideas so that we can deal with our employment-unemployment issue because that's what it is. And it is a crisis.

Let's look at some of the select committees that have existed in the province. I won't go through all of them but a couple, like the last one in 2001 actually, was a Select Committee on Recovery of Tobacco Related Health Care Costs. That was a really important issue. The report of that committee led to a bill, Bill 9, which became An Act to Provide for the Recovery of Tobacco Related Health Care Costs, and it is still a statute today. So that Select Committee resulted in getting a bill in place.

That committee in particular, we have a full report from them; they tabled the report on May

14 in 2001. They actually were formed in early April, so they really saw their work as urgent, and they really got working really, really quickly as a select committee. They conducted public hearings over a period of 10 days, during which it heard from individuals and groups who witnessed first-hand the devastating effects of tobacco use, members of the health community, as well as representatives of tobacco industry.

So here were some of the groups that backed the last one that we had in this House – here's some of the groups who met with them, who appeared publicly and presented: the Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco; the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador; the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers' Union; the NLMA; the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador; Health and Community Service, Western Region; the Lung Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I can go on. You know, even the Department of Justice made representation to the Select Committee. And that committee, as I said, resulted in creating the bill which is still in place, and it's interesting to note that that bill was modeled after legislation in British Columbia. So that resulted because of a select committee. What was another select committee?

A very interesting one, in 1998 – one of the three in 1998 – a Select Committee on Arming Policy of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, and this committee was tasked by the House of Assembly with investigating the arming policy of the RNC at the time. RNC officers did not carry side arms then; however, government policy said the RNC had reasonable access to guns if they needed them. The committee was asked to investigate this question: Did the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary have reasonable access to firearms while responding to an emergency situation?

And the committee again – carrying out the duties of a select committee – consulted, held meetings, and they came to the unanimous conclusion of the committee – which is a committee representing all parties in the house – the unanimous conclusion was no, the RNC did not have reasonable access to firearms while

responding to an emergency situation. Therefore, they made this recommendation; it was the number one recommendation of the committee: "Whereas the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary is an armed force and has been an armed force since 1991 and whereas the existing policy limits access to firearms, which are now kept in a locked box in the locked trunk of a police patrol vehicle, the Committee hereby recommends that the arming policy of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary be amended to permit its members on operational duty to wear sidearms as part of their regular uniform."

And there were other recommendations, but this committee decision led to the RNC being able to carry side arms in the course of their duties. In his comments introducing the report of the Select Committee, the MHA for Topsail at that time said: First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee for their non-partisan approach and in-depth deliberations on such an important issue, and that's what I want to speak to, the non-partisan approach. The fact that everybody could sit on that committee together, get the same evidence, listen to the same evidence, all be there for the same discussions and could come to a unanimous position.

It's interesting because one of the things that's demanded of our select committees is that anybody who's sitting on the committee cannot have an attitude against what the role of the committee is. I think that's very interesting. You have to go in open to really pursue, to really search for answers.

What was another one? This will be my last example. Again, this was 1998. As I said, there were three Select Committees in 1998. So we're not talking about something strange here. It makes all the sense in the world.

So that Select Committee was to travel to Ottawa to present the concerns of all of the Members of the House of Assembly and the people of the province to all federal political party caucuses with respect to post-TAGS crisis because there was a crisis coming up because the TAGS program was going to be ending and there was nothing in place. The House of Assembly, everybody was quite concerned about what was going to happen to the 20,000

residents who would soon see an end to the TAGS program.

The Committee made several visits to Ottawa. They took part in talks. They helped Ottawa come to putting things in place that would help. They worked together.

It was interesting to hear the comment for the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair. The Member was on the committee. No, she wasn't on the committee. She spoke to the committee, and she underscored one of the key advantages of select committees in general, saying she noted she was pleased to be part – she was on another select committee. This is what she said: Dealing with this decision in Ottawa, and to say that it is of crucial importance to all fisher people in all communities within this province, there is certainly no room, no room whatsoever in this issue to play politics on either side of this House. I think the message that we have to send to Ottawa is one of solidarity.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's what we're asking here with this private Member's motion. Is to show the people of the province that, together, we all understand what is going on. Together, we are all hearing the parents of young people who, after they graduate either from high school or university or college, are leaving in order to find jobs. We need to show the people, together, that we're hearing the same message, because some of the messages that I've heard from the government side today is not the message that I'm hearing.

If we were to put a select committee together then we would, together, hear the same voice. We would, together, hear the witnesses. We would, together, hear what our people are saying. Hearing that voice together might help us and understand how to work together because we wouldn't be playing a game of playing one off against the other.

I'm tired of one party blaming another party for what they did in the past. Don't blame us for what we're doing now because look at what you did in the past. That's not helpful. That's not helpful at all. Whereas, if we have a select committee, we sit together, we set together what the guidelines are, we decide together who is it that we need to listen to. How do we need to

listen to them? Do it together. Have that one unanimous action together, and maybe we'll get somewhere.

Like I said, it's not a matter of government saying: We have the answer, now you have to say yes to what we're saying. No, because when I hear them talking, I'm not hearing from them the same message that I'm hearing from people in my district, and people out on the street, no matter where I go.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be delighted to support the bill that I seconded, obviously, but I really would wish government could put all the partisanship aside and let us work together on this one.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of personal privilege.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I introduced a bill earlier today and I had called it the liquor control act. It's actually the Liquor Corporation Act.

In order for them to print it properly on tomorrow's Order Paper, I need to correct that, with leave of the House.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Please proceed. Do you want to read the motion, Sir?

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, to read the motion.

MR. OSBORNE: Yeah, that's okay?

MR. SPEAKER: Just the correction is fine?

CLERK: That's okay.

MR. SPEAKER: I understand it's fine.

Okay, thank you.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak to this motion today. I listened quite intently to the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi talking about models of Sweden and Denmark, in particular. Quite often, countries are referred to as models for economic development, but I want to highlight that in those Scandinavian countries, the effective personal tax rates at the maximum levels are over 60 per cent; 60 per cent personal income tax has to pay for the social programs and quality of life programs in countries, such as Sweden and Denmark. This is a type of process that the Member opposite is talking about, as to how Newfoundlanders and Labradorians would pay for particular programs and services.

The Third Party is very much against trade. They've been very much against positions with CETA, the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement. They've highlighted time and time again, the Members opposite, about wanting all child care centres and education around that to be universally and publicly funded, wanting to basically shutdown private operations.

There are a number of things that would highlight, where the Third Party talks about wanting the minimum wage to be at \$15 an hour. Whereas, the St. John's Board of Trade applauded government's decision of tying minimum wage to an economic indicator, such as the consumer price index, because when you look at our Atlantic Canadian minimum wage and where we are, we are very competitive when it comes to Atlantic Canada for a minimum wage.

When you see the net impacts – as the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour highlighted – that Ontario put the minimum wage up, quite significantly, and shed over 50,000 jobs.

She's asking for an all-party committee to come together to look at job creation. Well, I will say to the Member opposite that the Premier, over a

year ago – when the Premier formed office he realized the mess that was left by the former administration, a \$2.7 billion deficit. That's why we have to stabilize the position of the province, get a solid foundation and then what is needed is to look at working with industry, working with businesses, in all sectors of the economy, to fully diversify.

That is why the Premier took a whole-of-government approach and created the Cabinet Committee on Jobs. It is netting results. It has a number of Cabinet ministers that are working synergistically with the industry, with the associations, with community, with municipalities and with economic developers. It is an approach that will create the environment and the atmosphere that will see private sector jobs created in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Certainly, I believe that community building starts from the ground up and that community problems require community input and community solutions. That is why, as the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, I've been travelling around the province, getting into every nook and cranny of Newfoundland and Labrador and looking at what the opportunities are. Talking to people, talking to community, talking to municipal leaders, talking to business and finding out where are those strengths, where are those opportunities and we're all doing that. All Members on this side of the House, in our districts and in communities, are listening to people of the province to look at ways of which new opportunities can be created. That is why we've maintained the lowest small business tax at 3 per cent. We're the third lowest in the country.

The Finance Minister in the budget announced that the payroll and post-secondary benefits for taxation, the threshold will be increased. That's going to help a number of companies here. Insurance reductions that's taking place in *Budget 2018*. Workers' compensation benefits, the rates are being reduced. These are very positive things when it comes to employers here in the province to help spur and create economic development. These are positive things that are happening here in the economy when we look at where we have significant opportunity.

I would say to the Member opposite, this is why we've created the sector work plans on agriculture where 64,000 hectares of Crown land will become used for farm use. It will help with our food security and it helps create new entrants, new young farmers. We've seen those announcements take place where jobs are being created because there's tremendous potential in agriculture. It's very unfortunate that the former administration neglected agriculture and saw decline under their watch.

The aquaculture industry; seeing the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources focus on aquaculture and making sure that salmon production is increasing and finfish and mussel production. We have great supply chain opportunities there. As well as the tech sector, what a gem in our province, working with four industry associations: the aerospace and defence, meeting with Canadian manufactures and exporters, Newfoundland Association of Technology Industries, and also the Newfoundland Environmental Industry Association, NEIA.

We look at clean tech; we look at all the opportunities we have in our technology sector work plan. These initiatives will see an already \$1.6 billion industry, 4,000 jobs see increased growth. We've already been through Innovate NL.

As the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue talked about, we rolled up a corporation, we're finding efficiencies of which through the complete lifecycle you can now go from something that's idea phase, pre-commercial to commercial, to market to internationalization. These are going to be great opportunities for companies for growth where they can deal with one specific location. One window for service and get the answers they require, whether it be venture capital, working capital, whether it be travel support or marketing, to get into different areas of the province for internationalization and export, or whether it will be looking at the mix of capacity building that is required, or research and development or commercialization supports. They will get all of that.

We saw that recently, as the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue talked about, an announcement the Premier made at Quorum,

where four Newfoundlanders and Labradorians wanted to come home. Technology being borderless, they decided we're going to open up a company in Newfoundland and Labrador. It has now grown to their largest operation with 90 employees, and they are growing. They're going to grow further. They received R & D, and also a non-repayable loan meeting job targets. These are initiatives that we've undertaken.

We've seen under our watch, where we're working very closely with the tourism industry; the Provincial Tourism Product Development Plan was launched. When the last exit survey was done in 2011, there were less than 18,000 people employed in tourism. Fast forward to 2016, 20,000 people employed in the tourism industry; 2,600 businesses. It is quite significant; \$1.13 billion in 2016, \$575 million – the most non-resident spending ever in the history of this province – 553,000 non-resident visitors. This stuff just doesn't happen by accident. It happens through collaboration. It happens through partnership. It happens through industry and community and government and others working together.

We have seen our film and television industry grow significantly. It was amazing to see Mary Sexton here in the House earlier. When we talk about *Maudie* and the economic impact that has had – a Nova Scotia story that was filmed right here, that received significant accolades.

When we look at the economic spin-off from film and television, it has already exceeded \$50 million in production, up from \$40 million the year before, resulting in 640 full-time equivalents. That came through strategic investments of supporting film by doubling the film equity program last year, and keeping it at \$4 million this year.

When we look at the significant leverage that we work with our federal partners through infrastructure, approximately \$620 million is expected to be spent in 2018-2019, and over \$3 billion over a five-year period. This will create 4,900 person years of employment annually.

If we look at manufacturing; the manufacturing sector contributed \$1.1 billion to nominal GDP in 2016, representing 4 per cent of total provincial GDP. It's quite significant.

We have great manufacturing companies all over this province, whether it's the Dynamic Air Shelters on the Burin Peninsula; or whether it's the Superior Glove Works in Point Leamington; or whether it's the Resource Innovations and what they're doing in Corner Brook; whether it's Corner Brook Pulp and Paper and the export they're doing to India with their paper, pursuing new markets and diversification; whether it's looking at the mining that's happening in Labrador and on the Baie Verte Peninsula and Central Newfoundland and Labrador and the prospectivity for more mining.

It's so significant that we have – the Minister of Natural Resources will tell you – there are 6,000 people employed in mining here in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's quite significant, with plans to grow. They just launched some funding for prospectivity.

Then our oil and gas sector, *Advance 2030*, where there are 5,000 people employed in the oil and gas sector. There's tremendous opportunity to double the exploration and production and increase jobs to 7,500. That happens through partnerships with the Minister of Natural Resources working with the industry, working with NOIA through an oil and gas council. Then looking at all the opportunities of which we can collaborate through the whole of government to look at supply and development and how we can take that expertise, that servicing, so that we can export our knowledge to other jurisdictions, whether it be in Europe, whether it be in Africa, whether it be in South America, Guyana. We're doing significant partnerships where we have the capabilities and the opportunities right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our companies have confidence. We're working very closely. Never before I think in the history of the province has industry, industry associations and community had such connectivity with government, because we're listening. We're looking to create the atmosphere and the environment, reduce regulations and barriers that inhibits private sector growth. This is what we are doing. We already have invested in a number of entities where we're creating industry right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Member opposite, I'm very appalled by the Leader of the Third Party in yesterday's Question Period, when she talked about a 40 – there's over a \$55 million investment of all private sector money, through a publicly traded company, that is going to invest and set up a cannabis production facility in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, creating 145 jobs for 20 years. There's also going to be R & D investment that's going to happen with that.

We are open for business. Any other production company can look at St. John's or they can look at Labrador. They can look at the Northern Peninsula. They can look at Central, the Burin Peninsula and the Bonavista Peninsula. They can look at the Port au Port Peninsula, Stephenville Crossing, the West Coast. There is ample opportunity. But the Member opposite said we should, as government, have dictated to that business that they should set up elsewhere in a rural area of the province when it is business that determines where their best opportunity is. They determine their business plan. They determine their level of success.

The type of approach that the Member opposite is talking about is basically a state-directed social or communist type of approach to doing business in any jurisdiction. How can you look at growth and economic development when you're trying to dictate to business, when they're investing all of their dollars – it's their own money. They're setting up shop. This is not government money that is going in. This is not anything that is being –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MITCHELMORE: – put forward in that way. It is very interesting. The ideology of the Member opposite and the approach of wanting – when a company wants to set up and is willing to set up in the City of St. John's and not want that company to set up in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

As the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue said: It is not one or the other, because economic development needs to happen both in urban areas and in rural areas. I will say that I am very much a proponent of seeing economic

development in every region of Newfoundland and Labrador.

When it comes to my very own district, when we look at the opportunity of mining prospectivity, when we look at our forestry resource that's there and the fibre basket, there's opportunity there. There's opportunity for value added for our economic institutions and we're working very closely.

That's why we created the Regional Innovation Systems pilot projects for industry, for tourism, for fisheries, for forestry and for aquaculture. We've done a number of things that's really looking at how we advance the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Member opposite, the Leader of the Third Party, did not want to contribute to the budget when the Finance Minister put forward that offering. When it came to Estimates, she asked a number of questions about wanting to have briefings with my department and we said absolutely. I said I would even make myself available for that. The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune was there and part of that process and had asked as well, but neither of them have yet to take up that offer to have a request on any of the industries within the Department of TCII to have those meetings since the Estimates have taken place.

I encourage them to reach out, if they want to have that dialogue, they want to have those meetings and they want to look at the economic opportunities to the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's indeed an honour to speak this afternoon to the private Member's resolution that's been proposed here. I won't go through all of the components of it but the gist of it, so people who may be watching at home would understand exactly what it is that we're having a discussion

and a debate around, and what we're asking this House to vote on:

“BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge Government to create an all-party Select Committee on Jobs to address the growing unemployment crisis in Newfoundland and Labrador.”

Mr. Speaker, as we do realize there are situations out there that are hindering our ability to create more employment and it is having a major impact here. We know part of the impact around people wanting to stay in our province is having accessible, reliable and what they would consider decent employment. That may mean its geographic location, it may mean the amount of money they make or it may mean what they do as part of that employment.

So we all have a vested interest here. The Minister for Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation had noted one important thing: We have great employers who create great jobs, with great employees doing wonderful work. We have that here. The challenge here, and the question we're having here is: How do we ensure everybody, those great people who are doing great jobs in great industries, everybody else who doesn't have that ability has an ability to have some choices in what they want to do and not be left out?

That's where we're getting to, and it's not a slight against any administration. It's not a slight against an industry. It's a realization that the economy has changed. We need to be a bit more creative on how we do it. We need to be more supportive in what we do. Every administration has talked about diversifying the economy.

To have a committee on jobs, to me, is an important step forward. I take it at a bigger level. If I was to make an amendment to this resolution, it would be that there would be a committee on the economy. Obviously, if you stimulate the economy, if you find ways to engage business, the private and public sector, if you find ways to engage the not-for-profit sector, but if you find ways to engage citizens from all sectors, then obviously you're going to stimulate the economy. When you stimulate the economy, part of the stimulation is job creation.

That automatically comes as part and parcel of it.

While I'm talking here, I will personally be supporting this, but I'm going to talk in a broader sense around the economy itself. The economy is the bigger picture here. The economy getting on the right track will, no doubt, start to address the job issues we have here.

I go back to – this is not new what we've talked about, the issues we're facing. Are we at a crisis situation yet? In comparables to previous years, we're not. But if you're unemployed, this is a crisis for you. If you're forced to leave Newfoundland and Labrador because you can't find suitable employment or employment at all, it's a crisis for you. So it's all in the interpretation of it. But for the person affected by it or the community that loses a family or individual, it's a crisis for them.

So we have to take that in context here to realize the impact that it has on people. An impact on one individual has an impact on a multitude of others – in communities or in families, or in the agencies or organizations that they're volunteers, or an impact it has on services that other people are relying on them to spend money, so that they can provide employment.

We've got to look at it from a bigger picture. And the bigger picture here is the economy. How do we find ways to stimulate the economy? Well, the best way, and we've talked about it – and the government takes credit, patting themselves on the back and rightfully so, that's fine – in consultation, and you have *The Way Forward* where you open it up to groups to come in and tell you what the processes should be. Nobody's saying that that wasn't a good process. We're not saying there are no merits to it. We're not even saying that what's outlined in it isn't one of the starting points of being able to stimulate the economy or move in the right direction.

What's been suggested here is that the more people who sit down from a holistic point of view, and look at the logistics of what an all-party committee from the House of Assembly can bring – and what it can bring is different perspectives and an understanding from all

agencies. If it's the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, if it's the Employers' Council, if it's unions, if it's not-for-profits, whoever they may be, you'd bring them a better awareness that they would like to be engaged and sit at the table.

It's new to us in this province. The last couple of committees that we've done have been very effective. But it's not new in other jurisdictions and what they do. A lot of other jurisdictions use the committee process, particularly around immediate issues that need to be addressed, or long-term sustainable issues that need processes and policies and an outline, an engagement, for particular sectors or particular issues that we're going to face. So, you know, proposing this is not out of line with what we should and could be doing, and have done, but particularly in what other jurisdictions have done.

Again, and I want to reiterate, I would take it to the higher level. I would be thinking the economy. Let's just not centre it on jobs, because that might keep some groups out from that process, but as part of the process we need to have another discussion around where we are with it. As part of this bigger picture, there's a difference between what we do from promoting employment, to what we do to enhancing and making it possible. It's one thing to get out and put posters up, you know, there should be more employers and there should be more things going on, but then there becomes a difference between your actions and what you do to support businesses being creative.

Sometimes it's about the tax regime, how you change that. Sometimes it's about some of the incentives within the community itself. Sometimes it's about the training, particularly for individuals. Some other times it's about how we engage people here to ensure that the structures are conducive to them to be able to move the economy forward, and as a result create employment, but it's also giving people the ability or the supports to say let's try things we haven't. Let's look at what other jurisdictions are doing or other areas or let's take our natural resources and let's take them to just beyond the raw resource and the raw mining or the raw development. Let's get secondary jobs where we know that is a key component from a number of points of view, from a tax revenue

point of view, from an employment point of view and for what gets contributed back into the respective communities when you do these type of things.

There are a number of things here that need to be looked at and there has to be a holistic approach to what we're doing. So when you look at the economy, you must look in a bigger picture. There has to be more dialogue. There has to be more ways of doing it.

It's not the first kick at the cat when we talk about engaging more people. We've talked about it in the past, back in the '80s, the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, when we were, in my opinion, at a crisis level, when youth unemployment was at 35 per cent, when the unemployment rate for adults was at 22 and 23 per cent.

When people were leaving the province. When you were reliant – and it wasn't only about jobs, it was about the quality of jobs and your reliability to be able to sustain a quality of life. We know in the fishing industry people would fight to get enough for unemployment. It became the process of am I EI eligible and getting to that point. You would scramble to be able to do that.

That's not a quality of life. I know that there are jobs that are seasonal and they're acceptable and they're very necessary. They're the careers that people are engaged in, but there are times where there was a challenge.

I remember presenting to the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment and, particularly, around youth unemployment. I remember Dr. House throwing back at me and said: Well, how do we engage? How do we get young people to tell us how we create employment? I said: You don't. You give them the support so they create employment. This is how this works. This can't be a government solving the problems for everybody. It has to be a government putting the mechanism and the supports in play so that citizens can do it. They're much more equipped to understand what are the services that are needed or the skill sets we have to create employment or the products that we can develop.

He stopped for a second and the other commissioners looked. They had a little dialogue among themselves and then they came back and said: Well, let's make some suggestions. What are you proposing would happen here?

We talked about going back to the school system, about teaching more about entrepreneurship, teaching more about hands-on skills. This was just as the electronic age was about to happen in the '80s, about being prepared. Those days, Newfoundland was always five or 10 years behind when it came to technology or training and this type of thing. Maybe it was because the geography and social media wasn't there and the communications process, but what was discussed then was about: How do we find mechanisms to ensure our young people, who we know are as intelligent, are as capable and are as talented as any out there, how do we ensure that they have access to all the same supports that would engage them to become entrepreneurs, create employment or do their part to ensure that employment or industries are successful?

I remember the report and the recommendations coming out. There was a whole section on youth and what that meant for employment and how you would change the focus in Newfoundland and Labrador, and not just sticking to traditional industries, which were very important. The fishing industry and the mining industry. Tourism was only just a little blip on the radar at the time, but it was being discussed at the time.

It also talked about how young people, how creative they can become with their own training. Maybe they have to go into areas of training where there are opportunities to create things. That was the first time we talked about aerospace and electronics.

The groups that had presented at the time were young people who, in some cases, had gone to universities in other parts of the country and had gotten some exposure to industries that could easily work here, they felt were very transferable here because the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have the skill set and the young people. We have the resources to do it, we just needed the mechanism; we needed the supports as part of that process.

As we started the discussion, you could see a bright light. You could see people get hope again. Some programs in the late '80s and early '90s were implemented as part of that initiative thing. Unfortunately, it didn't take off to the same level because people can only wait so long when you're unemployed and, particularly, if you're a young person who's come out of a post-secondary education institution and you have a student loan in those days. We've come a long way in our debt deduction and our student loan process and our tuition cost and all that, to the benefit of the students and young people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So they were hard times and people ended up having to leave. We still have that gap.

Then a few years later, it hadn't gone away. It was still an issue. I remember the Wells government of the day had a Royal Commission on Employment also. Similar discussions, I remember going in again as a bureaucrat and sitting down and reading a brief. I deliberately left in a date and I remember one of the commissioners saying: No, no, no, excuse me, Mr. Brazil, that says 1987. Oh, yes, it does because that's exactly what we presented seven years ago. Unfortunately, nothing has changed.

The process, the information is out there. We know that our Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who've left are unbelievably successful because these were people who owned tech plants in the States. These were people in Ontario who were leaders in different industries. These were engineers who had specialized companies and who were doing things all over the world. So we knew that the process we had put in place, our education system, was conducive to training our people to be as good as any in the world.

The problem we had is we didn't have the incentives or the infrastructure or the mechanism to ensure the skill set they had could be transferable and used here.

Some of the mechanisms that were needed there, in some cases, were about providing supports for start-up businesses in a multitude of other areas. Certain things that young people don't have. Some of the loans processed that were out there

were about you had to have X number of dollars equity.

Well, if you're 22 years old, you just paid off a \$20,000 student loan and you're coming out and it's your first job, but you have a skillset, you're very talented and you have some experience because you worked on your co-op programs, your work terms or you worked with dad or mom or somewhere in your community, you have a skillset, but now you can't get to the next level because you need to buy equipment. You don't have that access and, unfortunately, in Newfoundland and Labrador, we didn't have a lot of manufacturing companies that had faltered where you could buy equipment at 10 cents on the dollar, like you could in Ontario, Quebec and some of these areas.

We found a lot of people would leave here and be very successful up there because, not only were there some incentives in play, but the industry – and as I said, some of the companies would falter because they had a different mindset, these young people could pick it up. They had lots of energy. They weren't expecting big salaries while they started. This was about creating a business that had some longevity, that they had some security, but also creating jobs for their counterparts; the young people they had worked with.

I had a number of young people presenting briefs about how they had sent home for people that went to school with them in various courses and brought them up to work for them in their manufacturing plants and in their companies that they had going.

This tells you about the resiliency and it tells you about the desire to be able to make things happen here, but what we're looking at is putting a structure in play and having a mechanism where we engage more people to talk about where we are.

I don't think we need to reinvent the wheel. I think we need to go back, look at some of the things that were outlined and we tried to do. Some of it successful; don't forget there are a number of successful business people around here in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s who started as young people, who scrimped and saved and went through all the process but made it work.

In some cases, it's because programs and processes were put in play to make them have an opportunity. It wasn't a handout, it was a hand up.

We have a number of those successful people here. We need to build on their successes and how they did it, but more importantly, some of the struggles they had and some of the barriers that were there.

The key thing of solving issues, in a lot of cases, in my opinion, is let's get rid of the negativity, let's get rid of the barriers and then let's add the supports because if you're adding support on one side and there are two negativities on the other side, then you've got a challenge there. There's only so much energy to go around.

We have the ability to do that through dialogue and engagement. There's an opportunity here to have some discussions, to engage more people in the process and to see if we can indeed change the outcomes on our unemployment rates and give people choices around employment, and choices that if they want to leave to go for employment somewhere else it's because they want some more adventure versus having no opportunities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre to close debate on her resolution.

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

I would like to thank all those who participated in the debate today. It was very interesting to hear from my colleagues from across the province, from around the province. I must say, I commend those who've been involved in helping look at the issue of the need for job creation in the province.

I was somewhat surprised, Mr. Speaker, by the level of derision that some folks brought to the floor today. Really, what this is about, this is a private Member's motion not about taking

power away from government, not about giving power to anyone else, this is about involving the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in one of the most critical and crucial problems that is facing our province today.

That's what it's about. It's about saying we have to do something different, that there is opportunity here. So it's not about negativity. It's about we have an opportunity here and we need to do something bold. What we've been doing is not working, and we know that.

As the people here in the House may recall, I started off the debate by reading from the report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment called Building on our strengths, which was the report of a royal commission from 1986, and the report actually could have been written today.

We do have a problem with, how are we going to deal with sustainable jobs in our own communities all over the province? Really, having an all-party select committee again, nobody loses. We only gain. It's about engaging our whole province in the conversation. It's not just talking about the challenges. It's about looking at potential solutions, and what can different people bring to the table.

It really is as well, Mr. Speaker, we know that it would require hard work. It will require hard work from our Members here in the House. It will require hard work from people in communities all over the province, but it's hard work that I know people all over Newfoundland and Labrador are willing and able to do. They are willing and able to roll up their sleeves and come to the table and talk about how they see moving their communities into a more sustainable economic situation.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing people are asking of us as legislators is to work together, to drop our petty differences. Some of our differences aren't petty, but I've heard some pretty petty things here today; the false accusations, for instance, that I'm against aquaculture. I think aquaculture is one of the most interesting emerging industries in the province. Let's do it right. Let's do it right to make it's sustainable, and to make sure that it fits with our inshore fishery as well.

I'm excited about aquaculture, and I've always stood up in this House and said that.

So those kinds of diversions to try and ridicule this private Member's motion, or try to ridicule me or to ridicule our party doesn't sit well with the people of the province, nor does it bring us any further towards the solutions that we must work on, that we must search out together, because that's what we have to do. We have to find solutions.

We know, whether it's downtown St. John's, whether it's Bareneed, whether it's Conception Bay North, whether it's Lab City – where we've seen unemployment, horrible unemployment there as well for some of our people – wherever it is, whether it's in indigenous communities, whether it's women and young single moms, our youth are experiencing incredible high unemployment now.

This is not about fear mongering. It's not about being negative. It's about being incredibly optimistic. It's about saying we can all step up and work together and find the solutions that will be embedded in our communities. That will make our individual communities absolutely economically sustainable.

Again, I harken back to the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. I don't think we ever hear in this house, since the report of that Committee, any kind of petty infighting, any kind of small-minded questioning. As a matter of fact, I think we were all proud of the work that was done. Our mental health and addictions system was on the verge of collapse and we knew the suffering that was happening all across the province, and that's why we had to do it.

We know now we have the highest rates of bankruptcy than we've had in a very long time. We know, you go on Kijiji and how much furniture, how many campers and vans are for sale because people are moving, and it's not because they want to. Of course, we will have young people who will move away. A lot of us here in this House have done that.

I've moved away, Mr. Speaker. I lived in –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

I moved away and worked in Montreal for 10 years and I came back. That was a good experience for me, but it's about choice.

Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing, it's undeniable because we all hear the stories. We see news stories about it. We see reports about it. The high rate of unemployment, it's undeniable, and it doesn't have to be this way.

The same way that we all worked together with respect and totally engaged people with the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. We heard from police, we heard from corrections officers, we heard from teachers, we heard from people with lived experience, we heard from parents with adult children with persistent mental health issues, we heard from young people, we heard from seniors, and we came up with a plan that seems to be working. It's a plan that we all agreed on, and we can be so proud of that.

I remember in that debate, Mr. Speaker, I said I don't understand how anybody in this House, when we were proposing the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, and knowing the crisis that was representing – I remember standing in this House and saying I don't understand how any Member in this House could go back to their community, knowing what's happening in their communities, and justify why they wouldn't support government striking an all-party committee on mental health and addictions.

I would like to extend that to this, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how any Member in this House could go back to their communities, knowing the effects of unemployment and persistent unemployment in many areas which may threaten the actual existence of some communities, I don't know how any Member in this House could go back to their community and justify why they wouldn't support an all-party select committee on jobs. It's about our future. It's not taking anything away from government. It's not giving any extra power to Opposition Parties or the independent Member; it is about working together, which is exactly

what the people of the province want us to do, and it is about engaging people in their communities.

Again, engaging people –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: – where they live. It's about engaging people where they live and how they envision the sustainability of their communities. That's what this is about.

Mr. Speaker, I find it quite interesting for the Minister of Tourism and Culture to call me a communist. I find that pathetic – so low and pathetic. However, I would like to say, as someone who's been a small business owner and who is very respectful of free enterprise and how important that is, that every Member in this House today received an email from Mr. Vaughn Hammond who is the director of provincial affairs for the Canadian Federation –

MR. MITCHELMORE: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation on a point of order. Please proceed.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to correct the record here. I said the directing of business as to where a business would set up or whatnot is a way of which is a communistic policy. I did not say anything about the Member being a communist.

MR. SPEAKER: I don't see a point of order. I'd ask the Member to please proceed.

Thank you.

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

As we see, I just have a few minutes left here and I hope that no other Member would –

MR. SPEAKER: May I say I've known some good communists in my time, too.

Please proceed.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, thank you very much, and socialists and democrats and all of that. That's what we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, all of us working together. It is that diversity and the diversity of opinions and the diversity of ideological ideas which helps us gather stronger solutions –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: – much stronger solutions.

Mr. Speaker, the role of government is not to create jobs, nor to create –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Please proceed; we have three minutes to go – four minutes.

Thank you.

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

I hope that the government would just kind of hold off so I can use my three minutes on this very important private Member's motion.

The role of government is not to create jobs or make-work projects; the role of government is to create an environment where jobs can be created. It's about removing barriers. It's about facilitation. And that's what we're calling for here, Mr. Speaker. I find it very interesting again, that we all received emails from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, who are supporting this private Member's motion because they see the value in it. They see how important this is.

Again, we have not only the current unemployment rate that we have, and growing, but also the issue of automation, and how automation –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I would ask for some protection here; it's getting hard to speak in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Until we adjourn, we are doing important work here. I'd ask for the co-operation of all Members, please.

Please proceed with your final remarks – final warning.

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

So again, this is about gathering every single brain cell, every bit of expertise that we have in the province. Whether it's somebody who is running a little shop in Come By Chance, whether it's somebody at Memorial University, like Professor Barb Neis, who is doing such incredible work looking at mobile workers in the province, whether it's single moms or we have some incredible entrepreneurs here in the province as well, who have built large companies, who are doing great work in building our province and contributing to our economy, so it's about bringing all that together.

And that's really the role of government: to facilitate. To facilitate this kind of dialogue, and it's about finding solutions that work. We can't afford not to do it. At the present situation that we are facing now as a province, we have to do something bold, and we have to create a vision – not that's created up on the eighth floor in somebody's office, but that the people of the province want to be involved in this, and have to be involved in this.

We have seen the success of when we do work together in a respectful manner. We've seen the success of the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. We've seen the success on the All-Party Committee on Northern Shrimp. We can do this. As my colleague from St. John's East - Quidi Vidi – she showed the history of successful select committees.

So this is a legislative tool that is at our disposal, and I would encourage the government

Members – they have nothing to lose, only something to gain. We are at a critical point in our history. This is a serious problem that's facing the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a legislative tool at our disposal. Let's use that tool. Let's engage our people. Let's engage academia. Let's engage the whole province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

MR. SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Please, House Leaders, call in your Members.

Division

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Ms. Rogers, Ms. Michael, Mr. Lane.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. Ball, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Ms. Coady, Mr. Byrne, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Mitchelmore, Ms. Gambin-Walsh, Mr. Warr, Mr. Bernard Davis, Mr. Edmunds, Ms. Haley, Mr. Letto, Mr. Browne, Mr. Derek Bennett, Ms. Cathy Bennett, Mr. Finn, Mr. Reid, Ms. Parsley, Mr. King, Ms. Pam Parsons, Mr. Holloway, Mr. Hutchings, Ms. Perry, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Petten, Mr. Lester.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes: 3; the nays: 29.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is defeated.

In accordance with Standing Order 9 and this being Wednesday, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock.