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Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Before we start today's proceedings, I want to acknowledge some special guests in our gallery. Today we are joined by twelve business and human resource management students from Keyin College, St. John's campus. They are accompanied by their teacher, Paulette Sampson.

We are also welcoming today –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I want to acknowledge Ms Jessie Noseworthy, who will be mentioned now in a moment in a member's statement. She is joined by her family.

Also today, also going to be mentioned in a member's statement, Ms Jillian Joy, joined by her mother, Tanya Morrissey, her father, Paul Joy, and together with two members of the staff of the Buckmaster Community Centre, Kim Mallard and Lindsay Hynes.

Welcome, all of you, to our gallery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today, we will have members' statements from the District of Bellevue; the Member for the District of Burin – Placentia West with leave; the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Springdale; the Member for the District of St. John's Centre; the Member for the District of Lake Melville; and the Member for the District of Bonavista North.

The hon. the Member for the District of Bellevue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PEACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 39, of Dildo. On Saturday, November 2, 2013, I had the great privilege of attending the Legion's annual Remembrance Day dinner and dance.

The Legion has been very active in the schools at fundraising, attending events, and especially with the poppy campaign of 2013. This year of events for 2013, like others, has been a very successful year.

Branch 39, this year held a very special night in recognizing the sixtieth anniversary of the Korean War, and at the event there were three Korean War veterans in attendance: Thomas Lahey of Chapel Arm, Peter Petipas of Whitbourne, and Alfred Pretty of Dildo. All three are in good health and the memories that they shared and the stories they told while reminiscing with others made for an interesting night.

Major Michael Bennett was the guest speaker and his speech "Korean War, not Forgotten" was very informative and educational.

I ask all the members of this House to join me in congratulating the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 39, on the outstanding work they do throughout the Trinity Bay area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burin – Placentia West with leave.

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable lady, Mrs. Margaret Moores of Rushoon, who is today celebrating her 108th birthday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: This makes her, Mr. Speaker, the oldest resident in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the members opposite for granting me leave to personally acknowledge this milestone in the life of Aunt Maggie Moores.

As her daughter Marie will tell you, her mother, like all of us, has her good days and bad days. Mr. Speaker, I am willing to say that at the age of 108, Aunt Maggie has seen more good days than bad.

Her hearing is a little impaired, Mr. Speaker, but her mind is still sharp and alert, and she is keenly aware of what is happening around her – and that extends to the political scene as well.

Mr. Speaker, on a recent visit with Mrs. Moores, I could see the pride she felt in her daughter, Marie, with whom she resides. I could also see the pride Marie has in her mother. I could see a woman who has given much to her family, and a family who has given much to her in return.

I tip my hat to Marie and Patrick, and to all her extended family, and ask my colleagues in the House to join me in wishing Aunt Maggie Moores of Rushoon a happy 108 birthday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale.

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is with great pleasure that I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the special achievements of five graduating students in the District of Baie Verte – Springdale: Danika Bath, of Cape John Collegiate, La Scie; Andrew Burton, of Copper Ridge Academy, Baie Verte; and Andrew Hillier of Indian River High, Springdale captured the Electoral District Scholarships, valued at \$1,000 each.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, proud recipients of the Centenary of Responsible Government Scholarships were Zachary Roberts of Cape

John Collegiate, and Faith McCarthy of Indian River High, also valued at \$1,000 each.

The criteria to receive such prestigious awards are based solely upon their performance on the Department of Education public examinations. This is a testament to the entire school community's caring, supportive attitude towards educating our youth so that they are able to become productive members of society.

Honourable colleagues, please join me in applauding Danika's, Andrew Burton's, Andrew Hillier's, Zachary's, and Faith's accomplishments. They sure have made their parents, their school, and their communities proud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to congratulate several students from my District of St. John's Centre who were awarded scholarships this fall – and some of them have actually joined us here in the gallery today. Scholarships are recognition of their hard work.

The Department of Education awards Electoral District Scholarships to three graduates in each district with the highest marks. This year our students were Xiongyi Cui, Danielle McDonald, and Lauren Hayes. Jessie Noseworthy also won the Centenary of Responsible Government scholarship for her high marks.

Two students from Buckmaster's Circle Community Centre were also awarded the generous Fry Family Foundation awards. Jillian Joy won the Fry Family Foundation St. John's Community Centre's \$2,500 Post-Secondary Entrance award, and is now a successful Memorial student. Amy Haynes, a Grade 12 student, was recognized for winning the Fry Family's junior scholarship.

We are all proud of these students and look forward to their brilliant futures.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating these students and thanking the donors as well as the community centres who helped turn these students' dreams into a reality. Bravo!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand in this hon. House to congratulate the Mealy Mountain Collegiate Female Soccer Team on their success in capturing their second straight AAA provincial banner at the School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador provincial championship held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay from October 18-19.

The Mealy Mountain Collegiate girls did not disappoint their fans in Lake Melville, Mr. Speaker. They won their first game against and tied the second in order to secure a bye to the final round.

I watched the finals where the MMC girls played the Menihek Magic in the rain, Mr. Speaker, with over 150 fans, family and friends of the team cheering them on. Down 2-1 in the final minutes of the second half, the team rallied with two straight goals and won the championship.

Coaches Mr. Ed Turpin and Mr. Andrew Rowsell are to be commended for the coaching of these girls who represented their school and community with class and sportsmanship.

The team members were: Julia Kelland, Billie Dawn Sampson, Tana Pittman, Amy Rowsell, Megan Manners, Danielle Spearing, Andrea White, Brittany Patey, Caleigh Ivany, Kaely Marques, Laura Baikie, Ally Acreman, Hannah

Kennedy, Tiffany Parsons, Sidney Goudie, Brittany Baldwin, and Breanna Wall.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members of this House to join with me in extending congratulations to the Mealy Mountain Collegiate Female Soccer Team on capturing the School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador provincial championship.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, I stand to pay tribute to a resident of Wesleyville. He may have been a man small in stature, but he sang with a big voice.

Gordon Sturge displayed a musical talent for many years. He shared his voice with many, most especially if they were ill or for families suffering the loss of a beloved member. He performed at hundreds of family services in our local funeral homes.

Gordon's performances of *The God of the Mountain*, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, or any of his repertoires could rival that of any great vocalist of this or any era. His voice and his piano accordion brought comfort to those who were mourning and were suffering.

About eighteen months ago, at age sixty-nine, Gordon experienced several strokes that have left him without his voice. Today, he receives and enjoys friends as they visit to repay his kindnesses.

I ask all humble members to salute Gordon Sturge, who is indeed a symbol of many others around our Province who give so freely of their talents to comfort others.

Best wishes, my friend. Have a happy day, Gordon Sturge.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a significant milestone in the history of education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In the 2012-2013 school year, this Province recorded the best ever high school graduation rate with 94.2 per cent of eligible graduates earning a diploma.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: As I noted publicly a week ago, this is a tremendous achievement, and speaks to the commitment of our students, teachers, parents, as well as school board and department personnel. While we have consistently shown a graduation rate of over 90 per cent since 2008, this is the best result we have ever recorded, Mr. Speaker. I believe it shows that today's students understand that education is the key to a successful future, and that it all starts with a high school diploma.

It is also worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that over the past several years, more students are graduating with an honours or academic diploma as opposed to a general diploma. This is an important development, Mr. Speaker, as it means more of our students are graduating with diplomas that allow them to pursue a wide range of post-secondary opportunities. It is all about having choices, keeping all the options open, and having the best possible head start in the realization of lifelong goals.

This milestone has not been achieved without great effort, Mr. Speaker. For example, this is the third consecutive year that the department has offered two opportunities for students to write supplementary public exams – in August

and November – in order to allow students the chance to achieve graduation status or improve their standing. So, following the results of this month's supplementary exams, the graduation rate could improve even more.

I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating the graduating class of 2012-2013, and to wish them every success in their future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his advance copy and I thank him for his notice yesterday – it is foreshadowing, we used to say, when we did English literature a few years ago. Where do these numbers come from?

Mr. Speaker, in English 3201, in the school submitted exams of the males, 90 per cent passed and in the public exams 75 per cent passed, but the Department of Education went with the school submitted mark of 90 per cent passes. Math 3204, 81 per cent of the boys passed at school, only 66 per cent passed public exams, and the department went with 77 per cent. In science, 87 per cent passed the school exams, only 74 per cent passed the departmental exams, and the department went with 88 per cent pass rate.

If you look deeper into the numbers you will see that in 2007-2008, which is the five-year period he is talking about, only six students passed who were age twenty years of age and older, whereas last year 115 of the graduates were twenty years of age and older. Mr. Speaker, I guess it goes to show that if you lower the passing requirements enough and if you keep them in school long enough, you get a higher passing rate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The high percentage of eligible graduates earning a diploma is certainly good news. It speaks well for our future generation being well educated and able to contribute to the workforce and their communities.

Mr. Speaker, we still have students falling through the cracks. They have low achievement, problems with attendance, and other issues. The past program was piloted in eight schools to identify and assist these students at risk, but now that pilot is over, Mr. Speaker. I am encouraging the minister to work with the new school board to ensure that the past program is established as a permanent program in schools across the Province, to reach all students who need it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Member for St. John's North have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Does the Member for St. John's North have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. John's North.

MR. KIRBY: Thanks to the minister for an advance copy of your statement. By the way you were talking yesterday, I thought you were going to be announcing all-day kindergarten today, but it is good to see increased numbers of high school graduates and it is certainly a reflection of all of the hard work of our teachers,

school staff, students and, of course, moms and dads.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: It is important that we also make sure that there are spaces for these young people in our post-secondary institutions because there will be more of them coming out, and make sure there is more guidance for them in schools as well so they make the right choices right from the beginning.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this hon. House to provide an update on the Population Growth Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the provincial government's commitment to building a vibrant economy and sustaining Newfoundland and Labrador's communities for the long term, a set of community workshop consultations was conducted this past month to help inform the development of the Population Growth Strategy.

More than 170 people attended the public workshop consultation sessions throughout the Province, which was carried out by our Office of Public Engagement. We also held direct stakeholder meetings and we received private e-mail and mail submissions. In total, over 300 people have provided input so far. Subjects raised included the impacts of a transient workforce, improving supports for parents and families, and the need to continue building welcoming communities for newcomers.

Feedback from participants has been positive and supportive. For example, following the workshop in Corner Brook, a student at Grenfell Campus mentioned in a tweet that the discussion was very interesting and highly democratic. I

cannot say I witnessed that myself, Mr. Speaker, not being a tweeter.

Mr. Speaker, though the scheduled workshop consultations have concluded, we are still encouraging online and mail submissions and taking requests for meetings as we prepare a What We Heard document before the strategy is released next year. Individuals can e-mail populationgrowth@gov.nl.ca.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, this is an unprecedented time for our Province. More people are working than ever before, we have a growing demand for skilled labour, and our approach to delivering affordable, accessible, quality post-secondary education is being recognized across Canada and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, the Population Growth Strategy will provide a plan to build on the economic and social foundations created by this government's first ten years of work, and it will help make this Province the home of choice for women and men around the world.

In the coming weeks and months, I look forward to providing regular updates on its development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

We became aware of the Population Growth Strategy earlier this year when it legitimized, by rewarding a key player in the PC Election Campaign with a six-figure salary. The importance of the strategy in our Province's future was touted as the justification for the \$150,000-plus political appointment.

Once Mr. Reid was appointed as the Chief of Staff in August, however, Mr. Speaker, we have since seen responsibility for the strategy downloaded to the Parliamentary Secretary

level. This raised flags to us whether the strategy or its leader was the priority.

The Population Growth Strategy is meant to address, in part, the growing demand for skilled labour, which is what this government's skilled task force was meant to do. With the log-jam of apprentices unable to complete their plans of training, scores of skilled workers are leaving the Province with multinationals like Vale looking outside the Province for workers.

It is fairly safe to say that this government strategy to meet this skilled labour demand has failed miserably. Wrapping this challenge into yet another strategy is a convoluted stall tactic. The programs and services that would keep residents here are the same programs and services that would attract more residents.

My time is up?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: I look forward to the continuing work that is going to be done on the population growth. I point out to the minister, Mr. Speaker, that we will need both, more babies along with more working adults in the future. Quebec's affordable daycare at \$7 a day has generated –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: – a baby boom across all income brackets in Quebec, increasing the

population significantly, and has also added a lot of working women to the system. I say to the minister, a one-fee universal daycare program can be the big economic and social payoff for us here that it has been in Quebec.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North have leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Leave.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Demographics are probably one of the key issues going forward for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, especially our rural communities. So I am very encouraged to see the minister out there engaged throughout the Province.

I had the opportunity in St. Anthony to participate in the discussion and dialogue. I look forward to the updates moving forward, and see what comes out of the strategy.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, on the same day Nova Scotia demanded more Muskrat Falls power with a ruling by the UARB, Hydro-Quebec launched a court challenge water rights and water management on the Churchill River. If Quebec is successful, Muskrat Falls would only be able to deliver a fraction of the power this government has promised.

I ask the Premier: What is the status of the Hydro-Quebec court challenge and what liabilities are there for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we came to government in 2003, one of our stated intentions was to develop the Lower Churchill. Mr. Speaker, we were determined in doing that, we would not make the mistakes that had been made in the past. We began to study the river, the obligations on the river, the regulation on the river, Mr. Speaker, so that we understood right from the very beginning what needed to happen in order to have a successful development on that river.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, we had to look at was water management, because under the Tobin government there was an effort to develop the Lower Churchill. As part of the regulations and preparation for that document, they gave CF(L)Co a veto on development on the Churchill River; in fact, gave the river to Hydro-Quebec.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Once again, the Premier refuses to answer the question. What liabilities are there for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

The Hydro-Quebec case is serious enough that Emera of Nova Scotia has sought assurances that their investment in the Muskrat Falls link is protected. To satisfy these concerns, government has agreed to pay Emera compensation if the delivery of power is interrupted.

I ask the Premier: With such serious questions on water management to be decided in a Quebec

court, what is the total liability to our Province because this issue was not settled?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, following on my last answer; one of the things that we realized right from the very start was that we had to have control of water management of not just the Churchill River, Mr. Speaker, but of all rivers in our Province. A valuable resource that belongs to the people of the Province, and government should be the stewards of that resource.

As a result, we brought in a bill on water management in this House of Assembly in 2007, in which Newfoundland and Labrador took control of the Churchill River, and every other river in the Province. In order to do that, we understood water management from start to finish, especially how it related to the Upper Churchill, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are not concerned about the court case. It is following due process. We understand what our rights and obligations are under water management in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Once again, Mr. Speaker, we see the Premier hiding the liabilities from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who are going to pay for it down the road. Shameful, Premier! Shameful that you will not let the people of Newfoundland and Labrador know the liabilities that they are facing.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the member to direct all of his comments to the Chair, please.

MR. JOYCE: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier and the minister have talked about more rain and snow adding more capacity to Muskrat Falls, but the VP of Nalcor has said that the average production of Muskrat Falls will only be 510 megawatts, not the 824 that has been promised by the Premier.

I ask the Premier: Which one of you is correct, you or Nalcor?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish there were time in Question Period that I could educate the Acting Leader of the Opposition on running a utility and how that works, and the amount of electricity that is generated and the amount of loss on lines and so on.

Mr. Speaker, the Muskrat Falls Project is a great project for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: There is a \$2 billion difference between Muskrat Falls and the next least-cost alternative, Mr. Speaker. It is providing opportunity, jobs, and benefits to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It will continue to do that, particularly in Labrador, Mr. Speaker. It is a project that we are all very proud of on this side of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Once again, the Premier refuses to answer the question because she does not want to say that Nalcor officials are wrong. One of you has to be wrong, Madam Premier.

Mr. Speaker, the Workers' Compensation Review Division is supposed to be an independent body that undergoes a fair review process. I recently represented different injured workers, heard by Mr. Lloyd Piercey. Everyone was denied.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JOYCE: At the time, Mr. Piercey was on the executive of the Burin Peninsula PC Association and a member of the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I ask the Premier: Was a political appointee permitted on the board to make decisions that are supposed to be independent?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In a system where rights of injured workers are at stake, it is very important that we have the right people doing the jobs as commissioners, Mr. Speaker. These commissioners are highly qualified. They go through a very rigorous training process. Every one of our commissioners are qualified to do that work that is being done on behalf of the people in the Province, and on behalf of the injured workers of the Province as well, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the only qualification he had was to be President of the PC Burin Association.

Mr. Speaker, I expressed my concern to the former minister, in writing, and was told this past June Mr. Piercey was no longer a member of the Burin PC Association; however,

government records show that Mr. Piercey was appointed as commissioner on June 6, 2011, a full two years of hearings.

I ask the minister: Do you feel that it is appropriate for injured workers to have appeals heard by political appointees, who are still on political associations, with Liberal MHAs representing them?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

It is my understanding he is certainly not a political appointee. He is a qualified Newfoundlander and Labradorian who has been trained extensively to do this job and I understand he is doing a very good job. I am proud of the work that he is doing.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, if he does not think it is a political appointee, let me show you on the Web site where he was the president of the association when he was appointed. Go read the facts, boy.

Mr. Speaker, I have the letter here from the minister, as well as the government's own list of political appointees, that shows a Mr. Lloyd Piercey was clearly in a conflict of interest.

I ask the minister: For the injured workers who feel they were not given a proper hearing because of this blatant conflict and to ensure transparency, will the minister immediately remove Mr. Piercey from the review division and order new hearings on all of these cases?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, I can only say that these reviews are very complex; there are a lot of facts on the table. The people who are adjudicating these reviews are very highly qualified. I am proud of the work that is being done, Mr. Speaker. Every one of our commissioners is there for the right reasons.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Eight months ago the government voted down a Liberal motion to introduce fracking regulations in our Province. Yesterday's announcement on fracking comes without detail, without timeline, and without deliverable.

I ask the minister: People want to see details, how can you make such a significant announcement without details attached?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a problem making announcements when it is in the best interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem making announcements when it is in the best interest of the health of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and I do not have a problem making announcements when it is in the best interest of the environment of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: That is exactly what I did yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

As I indicated, it is a very emotional issue. It is a very important issue for the Province. There is an amount of work that needs to be done in a jurisdictional review. We need to look at how hydraulic fracturing will impact the West Coast, particularly in the geology and the rock formations of the West Coast, Mr. Speaker. When we have had an opportunity to take a look at all of that work, we will make it public so that we can inform a good debate and discussion in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Huber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the best interest was not that way just a few short months ago when the minister and all of the members opposite voted against the regulations that we were proposing. With over 20 million barrels of oil in play, announcing a moratorium on fracking is a significant move and a marked departure from government's previous policy.

So I ask the minister: While the moratorium is in place, will you appoint an independent committee of experts to hold public consultations, sessions, and make recommendations to this government?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, references months ago about hydraulic fracturing were around regulation and stiffening up regulations, of which we committed to do a piece of work with.

Mr. Speaker, my announcement yesterday was a responsible act by this government to undertake a full review of hydraulic fracturing, whether it is the health of the people, whether it is the environment, and, Mr. Speaker, as well the economic impact and the importance of hydraulic fracturing to the industry so that we present a balanced view.

By the line of questioning today, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member opposite would clearly say – do you agree with this initiative or don't you?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: I have no problem responding to that. That is the reason why we put the PMR in place that you voted against, I say to the minister. So, we were in favour of that; you are a little bit late on that one.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, a fishing boat out of Shoe Cove caught fire, forcing three fishermen on board to climb into a life raft and wait for rescue. Today we learned that the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre in Halifax dispatched the Fogo ferry to respond to Green Bay – seven hours away.

So I ask the minister: In light of yesterday's near tragedy, are you still satisfied with the dismal state of search and rescue in our Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as we have stated many, many times in this House, there is nothing more important to us than the health and safety of our people, particularly the people who earn their living on the water. It is so fundamental to who we are as a people. The people who earn their living need the reassurance that their safety is

extremely important and appropriate response is there for them by their governments and others, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have reiterated our view many times to the federal government, we even made it a part of the CETA negotiations, even though it was not in the framework, and we have presented our view to the Quadrennial Review stating clearly what our expectation is as a Province. People can go to that submission and read it on our Web site.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I do not think in the opinion of people in this Province that the appropriate response would be the Fogo Island ferry.

Mr. Speaker, this past spring our caucus called for an inquiry into search and rescue services in our Province. Yesterday's fishing boat fire off Green Bay would have been tragic if not for Terry Ryan, a local fisherman, who intercepted the call. Had the three men aboard the fishing boat waited seven hours for the rescue from Fogo, they may not have made it.

I ask the minister: Will you now agree, one more time, for a full provincial inquiry into search and rescue?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, this issue clearly falls within federal jurisdiction. That said, it is obviously important to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

My officials reached out this morning to the Joint Rescue Co-Ordination Centre in Halifax to get a full report on what indeed had happened. In this particular case, procedures were in fact

followed. It is not uncommon, Mr. Speaker, for a private vessel to perform a rescue before federal resources or provincial resources arrive on the scene. That said, this does raise the issue of search and rescue. It is an important one for this Province, and we are going to raise that issue with the federal government at every opportunity.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister Responsible for Violence Prevention is taking her cue from the RNC in her refusal to release a report on sexual exploitation. When government distributed an excerpt of this very report to 180 schools in this Province, the very same RNC spokesperson called it educational.

I ask the minister: Which is it? Is it educational or irresponsible to make the public aware of the dangers of sexual exploitation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the research that has been done in this field is very valuable. Because we did the report, it does not mean that we did not act on the recommendations. We have acted on many of the recommendations; we continue to act on the recommendations. Since the report, we see the joint task force on organized crime, we see the task force for child exploitation, we see a new manager of special victims' initiatives in the Department of Justice, and we see the two treatment centres for youth.

I ask the member opposite, if I do not take the advice of the RNC, who is the public body responsible for public safety in this Province,

who do I take it from? What is your position on that?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I would ask the minister again: Is it educational or irresponsible? We are getting conflicting messages from this government and the RNC. The people involved in this report, who went out on the line and made their positions known –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: – people who were involved said they wanted their voices heard. As the minister, you should know the role that silence plays in sexual violence.

I ask the minister: Will you honour the voices of the people who were brave enough to speak out, and release the report and the recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what the member is forgetting is the voices of the women who do not want to speak out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, it has been clearly articulated to me that these people are in a very vulnerable situation, and by releasing this report it would put them in further harm's way. That is something this government is not going to allow to happen, and I cannot believe you are on the floor of the House asking for this to be done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, one of the sex workers who contributed to this report actually read the report and said they could not even see where they were in it. They called it, and I quote, "...ridiculous" that this report is not released to the public. That is just one who was brave enough to come out.

I ask the minister: Isn't it shameful that you are not releasing a report that people were brave enough to contribute to?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to offer a briefing to the member and any members of the Opposition on the realities that are involved, and how women, predominantly women are involved in the sex trade and sexual exploitation, can be severely harmed. Not only the women, Mr. Speaker, but the children and their families have been threatened.

Mr. Speaker, for the member to say one person, there were numerous people, hundreds of people, involved in this report. The easiest thing for us to do would have been to speak to the recommendations because we have acted on many and we will be acting on more of them, and VPI Phase 2. We take it very seriously to ensure that vulnerable people are protected, and not to put them in further harm's way. I cannot believe what I am hearing from the member opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier told this House there would be no job losses from CETA doing away with our MPRs, but the federal minister, Stephen Harper's minister, says part of the payoff she wants to take is for job losses.

I ask the Premier: Who is right? Would she like to correct the record, or correct Stephen Harper? Because he is telling Canadians something different than she is telling us.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I was absolutely delighted when I saw the member opposite at our news conference, announcing the \$400 million. Had he been paying attention to what was going on he need not have referenced the federal government. If he had just listened to the questions and answers coming out of the scrum, he would have heard me acknowledge that on the outside, the absolutely outside chance there might be a repercussion from the loss of minimum processing regulations, that there was an ability within the fund to deal with that.

He could have saved himself a phone call to Ottawa. I gladly shared that information publicly on the day of the announcement, and I am happy to share it again here in the House today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, does that mean when the Premier said yesterday, how many people will lose their jobs? She said: I say, Mr. Speaker, none, none. Is she backtracking on yesterday's answer?

When I went to the announcement last week, if I had gone earlier like the invited guests in the cheering section, I would have had probably a half hour private briefing that they had before they threw the party. A private briefing the media did not even get to.

Does the Premier agree that for every processing job there are 2.2 jobs created in the economy, and how many more of those jobs will be gone?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia does not have minimum processing regulations. New Brunswick has no minimum processing regulations. PEI does not have any minimum processing regulations. Quebec has a number of minimum processing regulations on a wide variety of different species of fish, Mr. Speaker. They have let their minimum processing regulations go in this CETA process in order to have access to the European market.

While we were all able to do that, Mr. Speaker, we know that there is no threat to our fishery here from the European processors. It is not economical to come here, get fish, bring it back to Europe and process it and sell it at a competitive price, Mr. Speaker. We consulted widely within the industry. The consensus is they are on that point, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, we have perishable freight destined for Black Tickle that has been sitting in an unheated freight shed in Cartwright for days. By the time this freight reaches Black Tickle much of it will be unfit for human consumption.

I ask the Minister of Transportation and Works: Why are you allowing this freight to sit in Cartwright while residents of Black Tickle are being denied access to fresh fruits and supplies?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in constant contact with the community officials in Black Tickle, as well as the contractor that supplies the vessel to go to Black Tickle. The *Astron* is now commissioned to bring the freight in. When it comes to freight going into Black Tickle, if it comes down to bad weather, we do not take a chance on the safety of the crew. When the captain decides the ship cannot go into Black Tickle because of bad weather, well then I do not argue with the captain. I am, as I said, keeping close contact with the officials in Black Tickle. I got off the phone with them just this afternoon, and we have another ship commissioned now to bring that in there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, the people cannot wait for days while things get sorted out in the interim. Mr. Speaker, Food Banks Canada just released its HungerCount report for 2013. Yet again, Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest percentage of its population relying on food banks to survive. We have twice the national average of food bank usage.

I ask the minister: With the highest rate of food bank usage in Canada, how is your government going to reach your commitment of having the lowest rate of poverty in Canada by 2014? Which is only two months away, I might add.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I want to reference that right now in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador we have the lowest amount of people on Income Support ever in the history of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Do I recognize the issue that the hon. member referenced? I absolutely do. That is the reason why we have such diverse programs within Advanced Education and Skills to encourage people to go into the skilled labour force, to access the jobs that we are creating all across this Province in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have big things that are happening here; we have big opportunities. I encourage people to take advantage of all the array of programs within Advanced Education and Skills, to access the programs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Expert testimony at the 2010 Offshore Helicopter Safety Inquiry stated that the survival rate for a nighttime helicopter crash offshore is 30 per cent as opposed to 70 per cent in daylight. Commissioner Wells noted that asking workers to fly at night is asking them to take on more risk.

I ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker: Will she stand with us in opposing any return to regularly scheduled night flying in the offshore?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, time and time again in this House the Premier and our government has had an opportunity to express the concern about offshore safety. We have been very clear.

Mr. Speaker, an unfortunate incident, a tragedy, has brought to light some issues. During that period of time Commissioner Wells has recommended to the C-NLOPB to suspend night flights, of which the C-NLOPB complied.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I understand that there may be a recommendation coming from industry to the C-NLOPB to review the issue of their flying schedules. Mr. Speaker, the C-NLOPB is the regulator at this time, and we will certainly await that decision. Mr. Speaker, be sure, we do continue to press the federal government for an offshore independent safety regulator.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Commissioner Wells also suggested that adding a helicopter during the four winter months when the pressure to fly at night is more acute would be a good idea.

I ask the Premier: Will she join with us in demanding that offshore oil companies provide the extra helicopter for the winter months instead of trying to fly at night?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, just to reiterate our position, offshore safety is of utmost concern to the people on this side of the House, and I am sure to the opposite side, as well as all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

When it comes to the operations of the offshore and the regulator, Mr. Speaker, the C-NLOPB

are charged with that task and they do a good job. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we will be very vigilant and we will continue to ensure to protect the workers offshore and continue to pressure the federal government to consider and to implement an independent offshore regulator.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Third Party.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Nova Scotia's Energy Minister says there is no rush for a utility board decision on Nalcor and Emera's latest deal on the Maritime Link, though section 17 of that deal states time shall be of the essence.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: What are the implications to the federal loan guarantee of a prolonged Nova Scotia utility board review?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have had parties opposite raising the alarm about one thing after the other with regard to Muskrat Falls since we introduced the subject with the signing of the MOU between Nalcor and Emera. The accusations that they have hurled from the other side with regard to deficiencies in the planning of this project, many of them have to come to show exactly what they were: fear mongering.

We have done our due diligence. We have imagined every case scenario that can occur, and we have proposed a remedy. This project is progressing as it should, Mr. Speaker. The interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are protected in that process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, restaurant maintenance and inspection reports are posted online for public scrutiny.

I ask the Minister of Transportation: Can the minister please tell this House why he would refuse to post ferry maintenance and inspection reports online as well?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as this government has proven over and over again, we want to be a transparent government, but there are certain things that are just too technical. When you look at a scheduled maintenance report for ferries and inspection reports, they are probably 300-400 pages long, and it is something that just would not be posted for online viewing. It is too technical – 90 per cent of people would not understand it because we are not trained for it. They are very technical inspection reports, and very lengthy, about 400 pages long. You just would not be able to put it on to the Web site.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: So, Mr. Speaker, I take it if it is a 300- or 400-page document and he is not willing to put it online, it sounds like he is more than willing to let everybody in the public out there see them if he wants to make them readily available.

Is there something in these reports that he would rather not expose to public scrutiny?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, these reports are very technical. It is not something that would normally be released to the general public, but if the general public are interested in seeing, they can get in touch with my officials and we will do our best to make them public for them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: A hopeful sign, Mr. Speaker.

In the meantime, government is having problems, of course, with ferries and the lack of a swing vessel obviously is evident. The lack of a swing vessel in the Newfoundland and Labrador ferry fleet has made us susceptible to a lot more risk out there. It is so bad now that there are rumours that the old *Hamilton Sound* is being enlisted to be put back to work after being sold for scrap a few years back.

Will the minister tell this House if indeed the now-named *Norcon Galatea* is being considered to be pressed into service?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, since I have gone into the department, one of the things I have diligently been working on is getting out a contract for a new ferry, for an eighty-metre ferry. We are working on it and very close to it, so stay tuned on that one.

When it comes to the old *Hamilton Sound*, the *Hamilton Sound* was sold. It has been refurbished with over \$1 million worth of refurbishment done to that. We are talking to the company that owns that now, to the

contractor. We are in the process of doing a negotiation and we will see what comes out of that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Under section 37 of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards conducted an inquiry into the conduct of the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island for the alleged contraventions of the House of Assembly Act, the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, and the Members of the House of Assembly Code of Conduct.

Under section 38 of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards delivered his report resulting from the inquiry to me, in my capacity as Chairperson of the Management Commission of the House of Assembly. This report was distributed by me, as Chairperson of the Management Commission of the House of Assembly, to members of the Management Commission on August 15, 2013.

In accordance with section 38.(1) of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, I am hereby tabling the report of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards into the conduct of the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

Further reports?

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Pursuant to subsection (5)(a) of section 26 of the Financial Administration Act, I am tabling nine Orders in Council relating to funding of pre-commitments for the 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 fiscal years.

Mr. Speaker, these relate to pre-commitments. One is to facilitate the award of a contract to Pennecon Heavy Civil Limited for the construction of underpasses at two sites on the Team Gushue Highway, \$1.784 million.

The second is to facilitate the award of a contract to LSG Construction for the Exploits Valley High School redevelopment project, \$2.646 million; to facilitate the award of a contract to Mike Kelly and Sons for the widening and hard surfacing of the Trans-Labrador Highway, \$7,778,145; to facilitate the award of a contract to Mike Kelly and Sons Limited for the widening of the first eighty kilometres of Phase II of the Trans-Labrador Highway, \$5 million; to facilitate the award of a contract to Marco Services Limited for the construction of the new west end high school in St. John's, \$15,700,000.

Also, to facilitate the award of a contract to Anchorage Contracting Limited for mechanical and electrical upgrades to the Confederation Building East Block tower, \$1,888,699; to facilitate the award of a contract to Redwood Construction Limited for the renovation and redevelopment of the RNC Annex Building, \$6,132,117; to facilitate the award of a contract to Brook Construction (2007) Inc. for the William Gillett Academy rebuild, \$4,206,800; and finally, to facilitate the awarding of a contract for mental health and addiction initiatives to m5 Marketing Communications for \$300,000, for a total over the years 2014-2015 to 2018-2019 of \$46,035,845.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice, seconded by the Member for Gander, of the following resolution:

WHEREAS in accordance with section 45 of the House of Assembly Act and section 39 of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, the Commissioner for Legislative Standards has recommended to this hon. House two following recommendations: first that MHA Brazil be reprimanded by the House of Assembly for failing to file an accurate disclosure statement; and second, that MHA Brazil be reprimanded by the House of Assembly for violating the Members' Code of Conduct.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House of Assembly concurs with the findings and recommendations of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards and ask that the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island stand in his place in this House and apologize to this Assembly for his failure and violation as cited by the report of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the City of Corner Brook Act, the City of Mount Pearl Act, the City of St. John's Act, and the Municipalities Act, 1999. (Bill 20)

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

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Food Safety in Food Premises. (Bill 22)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Insurance Adjustors, Agents, and Brokers Act. (Bill 21)

MR. SPEAKER: Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, a petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS home care allows the elderly and people with disabilities to remain within the comfort and security of their own homes, home care also allows people to be discharged from hospital earlier; and

WHEREAS many families find it difficult to recruit and retain home care workers for their loved ones; and

WHEREAS the PC Blue Book 2011, as well as the 2012 Speech from the Throne committed that government would develop a new home care model and give the people the option of receiving that care from family members; and

WHEREAS government has given no time commitment for when government plans to implement paying family caregivers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to implement a new home care model to cover family caregivers.

And in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue which remains current because government is not making good on its promise that it made to get re-elected in 2011. It is not making good on its promise in the 2012-2013 Budget that the House just passed. Funds were set aside. People are calling on a regular basis.

Today, I had a telephone discussion early this morning with a resident from the District of Carbonear – Harbour Grace. This is a province-wide issue, Mr. Speaker. It is a province-wide issue. The resident from Carbonear – Harbour Grace said we are finally getting some pavement. I guess it is by-election pavement, but I want you to ask about home care. Are you asking about home care? I said absolutely, I am asking about home care.

People are sending in petitions day after day after day. It is a simple matter. Government has already allocated the fund. The funds are readily available. This person is an older person. He had the situation of having to care for a loved one. He had to give up work, give up employment to care for a loved one. This is really unfair. Most people can agree that it is unfair. I believe even this government agrees that it is unfair because they made a promise and allocated the funds.

The belief among many people in the Province is that Muskrat Falls is running such a massive deficit that government is taking every single dollar they can find, that should go for the benefit of people, and just throwing it into the hole. Just throwing it into the hole, \$6 million here, \$8 million there, \$10 million some place else to make up the shortfall. Mr. Speaker, this petition calls on government to make good on its promise.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KIRBY: 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 current government regulations deny busing services to students who live closer than 1.6 kilometres to school; and

WHEREAS parents have expressed concern that children living within 1.6 kilometres of school face dangers in walking to school, such as congested streets and busy intersections, especially during the winter; and

WHEREAS the \$75,000 review of the school transportation system completed by Deloitte recommended that the Department of Education consider reducing the 1.6 kilometre eligibility zone for kindergarten and elementary students; and

WHEREAS the \$75,000 Deloitte report also noted that only 10 per cent of those surveyed for the school transportation review agree that the current 1.6 kilometre policy is reasonable for students and families; and

WHEREAS parents are continuing to demand more flexible policies to meet the current needs of school children;

WHEREUPON we the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to change the outdated 1.6 kilometre school busing eligibility policy in order to ensure safe transportation to school for primary and elementary school children in the Province.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to mention that one time during September, I believe it was, I was listening to the radio and the Minister of Education was on there singing to high school

students over the Internet – distance education students. Now, I do not know what the song was, Mr. Speaker. I think it was that song by Bill Luffman, *Light and Power Boys*. I think that was the one he was singing, but I am not for certain about that. He can certainly carry a song. The minister can certainly sing; there is no question. He is no Gene Autry, but he might get there with trying.

In seriousness, the minister did get the report, the Deloitte report for a song. It was \$75,000 of taxpayers' hard-earned money that went into that report, and it was a good idea to do it. We petitioned the government to do that review, the minister listened, which is always good when ministers do that. Now I urge members to think about the implications of that report and to implement some of those recommendations so that our kids can have safer school busing across the Province.

Thank you.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the residents of the isolated communities in Northern Labrador have major issues with regard to the passenger ferry and freight service that is offered by the provincial government; and

WHEREAS for six months of the year ice prohibits any marine transportation, and the residents rely on the ferry service for supplies of food, other necessities and goods, as well as for travel in the ice-free months; and

WHEREAS the current ferry service has had ongoing mechanical and electrical problems resulting in stranded passengers, delayed freight

and vacations, which affect the availability of food, travel plans, and supplies for business and tourism;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to replace the *MV Northern Ranger*.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this Province is dealing with very heavy issues when it comes to the ferry replacement strategy, and I know that they are dealing with heavy issues now as regards to finding suitable boats that are out there that are going to be under the government preview in the next few years. Since 2003 and, indeed, I think even before that, we have had problems with our boats. Ever since the provincial government took them back from CN Marine and took over jurisdiction.

Before that, it did not seem like there was any kind of a problem with the old CN Marine boats that were out there. Sure, they would update them and we would have new boats out there, particularly along the Coast of Labrador; but for some reason, since the Newfoundland and Labrador government took over the service it seems like, particularly on the Coast where it is pretty important for the people of the Coast – and I have signatures here from the people of Postville, Cartwright, Nain, Hopedale, and all along the Coast, Mr. Speaker, that are very heavily dependent upon these boats.

The petition in essence is asking government for assistance here, to get this problem addressed sooner rather than later. I think it is pretty safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that as the years go by, government has failed in its strategy to replace these boats and at the same time are still not giving answers to the consumers who are out there and the people who are living on the Coast of Labrador who are so heavily dependent on these boats.

Mr. Speaker, I will leave this petition with you. Hopefully government will listen to this and

address these problems on the part of the people of Labrador, particularly when they are asking in this petition. We hope to hear from the Minister of Transportation when he is talking about this new eighty-meter vessel and hopefully it is going to address some of the problems with the fleet.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

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

WHEREAS hundreds of residents of the South Coast of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, including residents of the communities of Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River, and François use Route 480 on a regular basis for work, medical, educational, and social reasons; and

WHEREAS there is no cellphone coverage on Route 480; and

WHEREAS residents and users of Route 480 require cellphone coverage to ensure their safety and communication abilities; and

WHEREAS the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development recently announced significant funding to improve broadband services in rural Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS the residents and users of Route 480 feel that the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development should also invest in cellphone coverage for rural Newfoundland and Labrador;

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

House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to support the users of Route 480 in their request to obtain cellphone coverage along Route 480.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue I have obviously raised on numerous occasions and I thought it was timely that I do so again, given that we have a new minister in the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development. Again, this is something I have done on numerous occasions. I have written to the previous minister and I get the same unsatisfactory answer back to my questions, which basically is not even an answer.

I am just asking at this point if government has a strategy for what they would like to implement in the future. I understand the fiscal situation this government has placed themselves in – not found themselves in, but placed themselves in; again, it is a monster of their own creation – but I would at least like to know that we have a plan for down the road so that we can expand this coverage to all areas of this Province.

We have a section here, Route 480, which is not the only place in my district that does not have cellphone coverage. There are lots of areas across this Province that do not have it. I would like to know if the government has an inventory on where they do not have it. Is this an issue? Is this a priority for this government, to make sure we have this coverage somewhere down the road?

The coverage will mean wonders when we talk about safety, people in these desolate areas being able to have contact if something goes wrong, which we saw just last winter on the Burgeo road. When it comes to economic reasons, people being able to connect back and forth, when we talk about tourism, tourists like to know that they have connections. Again, we have a lot of great apps when it comes to social media for the Department of Tourism, but in a lot of these places you cannot actually use them.

I hope this is a priority. I am hoping that the new minister will have a serious look at this, and I will continue to present these petitions until such time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS Route 432, Grenfell Drive, is the primary highway for the residents of the Great Northern Peninsula East; and

WHEREAS prior to 2012's repaving in patches, Route 432 had a twenty kilometre rough road sign; and

WHEREAS without repaving on the remaining section of Route 432, this past investment will rapidly erode; and

WHEREAS Route 433 connects Roddickton-Bide Arm, Englee and Conche and it too is in deplorable condition; and

WHEREAS it is government's obligation to provide basic infrastructure to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; and

WHEREAS an improved road network is needed to enhance road safety, and help with local commerce, enhance tourism and create new business opportunities surrounding this section of highway;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to allocate funds under the provincial roads program to pave this section of Route 432-433

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am well aware that there are many sections of the highway in Newfoundland and Labrador that are in very poor condition. A number of members opposite had the opportunity to visit my district this summer and drove that section of highway and would know the condition of it.

I commend the Member for Harbour Main, the past Minister of Transportation and Works, because there was an allocation for tender and that was stretched out to pave sections of the highway, and it covered most of the potholes; but, without further investment, that investment of doing it in sections is going to rapidly erode and we are not going to get best value for our tax dollars.

Right now, there are a number of tenders for municipal works that have been carried forward for Conche, for the Town of Roddickton-Bide Arm, and in the area so there will be roadwork done in the spring of the year. What an opportunity it would be to look at making an investment in Route 432-433 to make that road network stronger; because if our rural communities are going to be stronger, we need to have advance transportation networks. That is certainly key, Mr. Speaker. That is what my constituents are petitioning for.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, a petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS mental health is important to overall health and vital to health education, which is a responsibility of the provincial government; and

WHEREAS one in five Canadians suffers from mental illness, crimes and tragic stories

pertaining to mental health disorders and illnesses are becoming more prevalent in Canada today; and

WHEREAS the first signs of genetically inherited and developing mental health issues are often shown right after puberty and during teenage years; and

WHEREAS mental illness has a significant impact on productivity in school, work and overall happiness, major depression is the leading cause of physical disability; and

WHEREAS mental health issues are followed by a stigma which prevents diagnosis, though 80 per cent of symptoms pertaining to mental health disorders and illnesses are resolved through treatment;

WHEREUPON your petitioners call upon all Members of the House of Assembly to urge government to implement mental health education into the school board curriculum;

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, in November every year there is a group of young people and they have an Unconference at Memorial University. A number of the students at Memorial and some of their mentors invite young people from various high schools in the Province.

The young people in a high school prepared this petition. As part of their learning about democracy, they learned how petitions work, how to draft petitions. At the closing ceremonies on Sunday evening they presented federal petitions and provincial petitions.

They provided this one to the Member for Mount Pearl South and asked him to present it in the House of Assembly. He was not very comfortable presenting the petition in the House of Assembly. He thought that I ought to do so.

Mr. Speaker, this is a well written, well thought out and purposeful petition. The request is simple, to ask the members of the House to urge

government to implement mental health education in the school board curriculum, a better cause I cannot imagine.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully, the Minister of Education will also take this under advisement.

Thank you, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, to ask leave –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will start over; I am not sure how far I got.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 4, Bill 12, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 4, Bill 12, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 12, and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay’.

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. Minister of Finance to introduce a bill, “An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act, No. 4”, carried. (Bill 12)

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act, No. 4. (Bill 12)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill is now read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 12 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Proceedings Against the Crown Act, Bill 19, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it moved and seconded that the hon. Minister of Justice shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act to Amend the Proceedings Against the Crown Act, Bill 19, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 19, and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay'.

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. Minister of Justice to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act", carried. (Bill 19)

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Proceedings Against the Crown Act. (Bill 19)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 19 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, second reading of a bill, An Act to Amend the Services Charges Act. (Bill 5)

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

MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am sorry that I was not alert at the time, but the Member for Bay of Islands was telling me about the good work that is happening in the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency out in Corner Brook. I was delighted to hear commendation.

MR. JOYCE: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, on a point of order.

MR. JOYCE: Actually, I was telling him about the lack of construction for the hospital in Corner Brook and how much he should be ashamed of it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to get up today to speak to and to recommend a motion, seconded by the Minister of Education, the passage of Bill 5, which is merely An Act to Amend –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

It is moved and seconded that Bill 5, entitled An Act to Amend the Services Charges Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act". (Bill 5)

MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is what you would call just some basic housekeeping legislation. For the benefit of new members to the House, I would like to say there are times in this House of Assembly when momentous things happen. Tremendous things that affect the history of the Province happen in this House, but unfortunately this bill is not necessarily one of them.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is, as I said, housekeeping amendments to the Services Charges Act. This proposal is being brought forward by myself, as Minister of Finance, and by my colleague, the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, who is responsible for the Registration of Deeds Act. This act is the result of a review that took place back in 1998. It was reviewed to ensure the validity of some of the fees that the Province was charging. This was in response to a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada. It was called Euriv versus Ontario, was the name of the case.

Basically, that case essentially held that probate fees that were charged in that province, the Province of Ontario, were in reality or in substance taxes. Thus, if it was a tax as opposed to a fee, then it had to be imposed by legislation. It had to be imposed by the act of the elected representatives of the people gathered in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, in response to that court decision the Department of Finance here, in conjunction with the Office of Legislative Counsel in the Department of Justice, initiated a survey. They took a look at all provincial fees that government was levying here and fees charged by agencies to determine whether they were really taxes as opposed to fees, and if they were taxes to bring forward legislation to give authority to those taxes.

As a result of the review, four varieties of fees were identified. Amongst the classification of fees, were those that were similar to the fees that had been challenged in the Euriv case that were clearly not a fee but a form of taxation, since there was no reasonable linkage between the amount of the fees and the cost of providing the service or the benefit.

These fees would include probate fees in this Province levied by the Department of Justice, and property registration fees levied by Service Newfoundland and Labrador under the Registration of Deeds Act, which is a piece of legislation or law in this Province where all documents relating to land, to protect the person named in the documents, are registered in a public Registry of Deeds where members of the general public can come in and search title to their documents and to their land. Mortgages, deeds of conveyance, releases of mortgages, all documentation affecting title to land, it is important that they be registered so that the public, the people who are taking an interest in the land, people who are buying the land, can ensure that they are going to get ownership of land free and clear of all other registrations or claims.

There is a fee paid in the Department of Service Newfoundland and Labrador under the

Registration of Deeds Act, and these fees amount to quite a lot of money taken in by the Province. I know in places like Ontario they have a land transfer tax, which we do not have in this Province, and they also have registration fees. I think here in this Province it was always the intention to go with the one charge, which would be the registration charge, instead of having a separate land transfer tax.

The Services Charges Act received Royal Assent and was proclaimed into force on December 15, 1998 and it effectively established the fees covered by the act to make sure that there were valid taxes imposed by the statute; however, the act has had an unintended inconsistency with the schedule of fees that are prescribed by the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador under the authority of section 39.(1) of the Registration of Deeds Act, 2009, as well as the former Registration of Deeds Act.

Recommended amendments to the Services Charges Act will have no net impact on registration fees that are currently being charged so, as such, the total amount of revenue coming in to the coffers of the Province will not be affected.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments are quite straight forward. The first one is subsection (3)(a) of section 5 and section 5.(3)(b) of the act, the Services Charges Act. The act presently makes an incorrect reference to the fee payable for the registration of mortgage of land based on the value of the land. Of course, the registration fees for a mortgage of land are not based on the value of land, so the reference is incorrect. The registration fees are based on the indebtedness that is secured by the particular mortgage.

In fact, the registration fee of a mortgage, as I said, is not based on the value of the land it is based on the amount of indebtedness secured by the mortgage, so it is proposed in this legislation to replace the words "the value of land" with the words "the amount of indebtedness".

The second amendment has to do with section 5.(2) and 5.(3) of the Services Charges Act

because they do not fully address the manner in which the registration fee is calculated. Where the value of land exceeds \$500 the registration fees provided in subsections (2) and (3) of section 5 are \$100 for the first \$500 of value, plus forty cents for each additional \$100 of value. So to be clear, the language for these formulas should indicate that the registration fee is \$100 plus forty cents for each \$100 or part of each \$100. So this will address the scenario where the value of the land is not in \$100 increments.

The third amendment, Mr. Speaker, is subsection (1) of section 5 of the Services Charges Act. It makes a reference to an obsolete part of the previous Registration of Deeds Act. The new Registration of Deeds Act, 2009 received Royal Assent on May 28, 2009, and that was proclaimed in force on December 13, 2010. So the act needs to be amended to make reference to the new act, not the former act.

The next amendment, Mr. Speaker, has to do with subsections (1) and (3) of section 5 of the Services Charges Act, which makes an outdated reference to the term: the registration of mortgage of land. Well, for some time now, the mortgage of land itself, the mortgage is not registered, because under subsection 7.(1)(e) of the Registration of Deeds Act, 2009, the full mortgage document is no longer registered, rather registration of the existence of a mortgage is done by filing in the registry what is called a notice of mortgage.

The last amendment, Mr. Speaker, is to section 5.(3), will render section 5.(4), so it is proposed that section 5.(4) be repealed.

As I said, these charges will not have any impact on the total amount of revenue that comes into the Province by the fees charged, and my colleague, the Minister of Service NL, will have more to say about that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for District of Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I concur with the minister when he mentioned the House of Assembly and when you look at all the pieces of legislation that we actually discuss and debate in this House and the significant changes that it can have on people within the Province, Bill 5 is certainly not one of those. It is indeed something we would consider to be very technical, and indeed the word that we often to use to refer to something like this is housekeeping.

We did have a little briefing session just to make sure a little bit about the history on all of this. Really what it goes back to is that the Services Charges Act was put in place originally to ensure that fees being charged were constitutional as a result, as the minister said, of the Supreme Court of Canada decision, which goes back 1998 and the impact that it had regarding those fees.

Essentially the original purpose of the legislation sets fees as a legislated tax. That was not the purpose here because the current amendments being made in Bill 5 bring the legislation in line with how fees are actually being levied by Service NL.

As the minister said, there is no change in these fees. As a matter of fact I looked at the history to see when the last changes were made. Over the last ten years this fee has jumped from \$50 to \$75, and now as the baseline the floor of this fee is at \$100. As you go over that up to \$500 there is a surcharge then or an addition to that fee of some forty cents.

Then it becomes to the value of the mortgage versus the value of the land or the amount of indebtedness I would say, Mr. Speaker. Not only just the land here because the legislation makes reference to land, but it also deals with the structure that could be put on that land. It is kind of the value of the whole mortgage indeed. It is a floor of \$100. As we get over \$500, there is forty cents that gets added to that for every \$100.

Mr. Speaker, as an Opposition and as the critic for Finance, there is really not a whole lot to say about this. Some people might look at this and get a little confused about how Crown land fits into this discussion. This is not about Crown land; this is about setting fees against the value of a mortgage or the amount of the mortgage that would be set and that would be paid to the general account through Service NL.

Mr. Speaker, there is not a lot to say about it. This is a piece of legislation that we will be supporting because we do believe it tidies up the legislation and gets it in line with its intended purpose.

Thank you.

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

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the Minister of Finance, as the Member for Humber Valley did eloquently say, did a great job of capturing the essence of this amendment. The Services Charges Act governs specific fees and charges levied by a number of departments and agencies. The Commercial Registration Division of Service NL is responsible for one of the legislative initiatives under the Services Charges Act. That is the reason I am on my feet speaking to this here now, Mr. Speaker.

We are proposing four amendments to be made to the act. These changes relate to mortgage registration fees, registration fees for conveyance of assignment of land leases and incorrect reference to the previous Registration of Deeds Act, and an outdated reference which mentions registering a mortgage of land at the Registry of Deeds rather than the current requirement of registering a notice of the mortgage of land.

The difference there, Mr. Speaker, is one time when an individual registered a mortgage of land, you had to register the full mortgage document but now you do not have to do that. You do not have to register the document itself,

you just have to register the notice. So it takes a bit of paperwork out of the equation. It simplifies the process, and we are all about reducing red tape, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments are necessary to ensure fees outlined in the Services Charges Act reflect the fees charged by the Commercial Registration Division. This will in no way impact fees currently charged by the division. This amendment, while likely housekeeping in nature, will update the act and ensure consistency between the legislation and the actual fees charged.

Just to comment a little bit about what the actual fees are. It is indeed forty cents per \$100 to register a mortgage. Mr. Speaker, that rate has not changed since 2005. At this point in time we have no plans to change that rate, but we will see in the upcoming Budget. There are no increases in rates with this legislation. There is no extra cost to the public, and no increase in revenues for the government.

Mr. Speaker, it really is a little piece of housekeeping that we need to get through, and I rest my case here.

Thank you very much.

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure to get up for a few minutes and talk about –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. MURPHY: Yes, I guess this is a momentous occasion. The hon. Member for St. John's East is getting up and talking about small print.

I had a couple of observances when I was –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: When I was going through the legislation, Mr. Speaker, last spring with one of my researchers, of course we had a couple of questions that were pretty prevalent in the legislation that I felt had to be addressed because, again, for anybody who has bought a home and knowing there is a fee that has to be levied for the registry of a mortgage, it would be readily apparent to them.

One of the things that immediately jumped out at me was the simple fact that the first issue we had with it, the proposed amendment to section 5.(3)(b) of the Services Charges Act places a cap on the service charge at \$5,000, which is in fact a break for rich people who buy expensive homes; homes that are valued at more than \$1.25 million.

My first question to the government here as regards to looking at this piece of legislation, it is pretty evident here, I think: Why do we have a cap here? Why the cap? That is one question I think we will ask when it comes towards committee. I can appreciate that it is a piece of government housekeeping here.

The second issue that was pretty prevalent amongst the people we consulted with, lawyers included; lawyers have concerns regarding the notice of mortgage reference leading to big legal problems in the future and a problem that must be addressed. What they were telling us is fraud is possibly going to be a concern here in the future.

One thing that was really evident as regards to the first issue again, not probably to a lot of people but I will repeat it, the \$5,000 cap on that particular item. We know there are not too many of these homes that are for sale are worth more than \$1.25 million. I think in the last year there were probably twenty-five or thirty homes that were valued over that amount where government has lost revenue. We can appreciate there is a limit there, but at the same time when you are talking about a very expensive piece of property, it in essence sounds like a tax break for anybody who can afford it.

The other thing that concerns me as regards to this, just looking down through the notes here, talking about the whole aspect of home ownership, and it sort of rang with me, is government really needs to get back here and address the whole fact of home ownership, too. I say to the ministers involved here in this piece of legislation, that while we are talking about a tax here, some form of tax on a mortgage, the simple fact is some people cannot afford a mortgage right now based on the whole text when you are talking about the price of home ownership.

I would like to bring that particular point to the attention of the government as well, that some people cannot even afford to have a mortgage because homes are so expensive. Hopefully, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, in addressing this piece of legislation they will keep it in mind too for those people who cannot afford a mortgage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will just have a few brief words to say about Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Services Charges Act. Of course, we are all aware, and people who pay fees are all aware, that fees are one of the limited numbers of ways that government collects funds, raises funds from the public. Oftentimes that is just really to cover the cost of doing business, of providing services.

We pay a variety of different fees from drivers' licensing, to birth certificates and other services that government provides. By and large, in many cases, these fees are collected in order to cover the cost of service provision, whatever the service may happen to be. Regardless of income, in a lot of instances people pay the same fee or similar fees for whatever service it is they are procuring from government.

This fee is for the registration of a mortgage of land. Now it will be based on the value or the amount of indebtedness with this legislation rather than the value of the land. I was very pleased to hear the minister say that this is going to reduce the amount of paperwork. I think we are all for reducing red tape and ensuring that we have an economic environment that invites growth, incents growth, and helps to create additional growth. Paperwork and red tape certainly impedes that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KIRBY: Also, Mr. Speaker, it is great to see that the rate is basically staying the same, especially in light of the current housing cost, especially here in the Northeast Avalon and my District of St. John's North. People in Kenmount Terrace will certainly tell you that the cost of housing is pretty dear, to use local terminology.

So I am certainly happy to see that, and for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to vote for this legislation.

Thank you.

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

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

It is a privilege to get up here today and speak on this bill. I would like to thank the people in the Department of Finance this morning for the informative briefing they gave us. Like the minister said, this is a housekeeping bill. The biggest thing when you look at any of these bills and people look at when you talk of fees, taxes, and everything else, the first thing anybody thinks of is, oh, gee, they are changing something and the taxes are going to go up. This is just, like I said, housekeeping.

The main thing to assure the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is that there is no

increase in fees whatsoever. It is just mainly an increase in most of the terminology that is in the bill to be consistent with other pieces of legislation, and it brings two departments in line with the proper terminology that is here. The Services Charges Act is something that governs fees and charges that are levied by different departments and agencies within government.

If you look at some of the parts of this legislation that we are changing here today, it is pretty simple. One part there is just a change of whether you register a mortgage or you register a notice of a mortgage. That is all they are doing, basically, is changing the part of the act that says that you have to register mortgage of land to the register of a notice of motion for a mortgage.

The other part that is getting changed is really the title of the act. It is Registration of Deeds Act; we are changing it to the Registration of Deeds Act, 2009. Other than that, Mr. Speaker, there is not much to this. It is like it is. It is a lot of housekeeping and stuff like this.

Another part that is being changed is just basically to make sure that the fees are getting charged properly. Forty cents goes on to each \$100 after \$500 and it is done in \$100 increments. What this will do is if it goes into something that is \$1,050, the \$50 is recognized that they have to pay the forty cents on that \$50 rather than everything at \$1,100, \$1,200, and \$1,300.

That is basically most of the changes, but the biggest thing that I want to emphasize to the people is that these changes are made just for housekeeping and they are basically made to make sure that two departments are in-line with each other; and also to ensure the people that there is absolutely no increases in any fees or levies that will be charged for when you do register a mortgage. It is just changes to the terminology.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to the bill, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act. It is very positive to see that errors are being amended with this legislation to make sure that everything is accurate.

One of the things that is very important that I heard the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador state was that no longer are the full mortgage documents to be required and that a notice is acceptable. The notice itself sets out all the terms of a mortgage document, of the transaction, the amount of debt, the debt due, the interest rate, and all of these types of things. It is built in to the insurance. That simple document will certainly streamline the process. There will be less information that government needs to hold when it comes to a full piece of a mortgage document.

So it is a means to help us in our database management when we are looking at how we handle resources, and today we are looking at more information than ever before. So it is great to see. I just hope the information is there, the database management to basically upload that document and make sure that it is in electronic form, and then we can go from there.

What I am seeing is where the fees are the same, which is great, but land values certainly in many of our areas are going up. So we are probably seeing more of these transactions hit closer to the \$500 mark, which is bringing in more revenue for the provincial economy. I am wondering, and maybe I will ask the question in Committee, if you know the resources are being provided back for staffing to ensure that applications are being processed in a timely and efficient manner, especially in rural regions, because that is always a concern of mine when we look at this.

What I see in the act and the bill itself is positive. It is housekeeping in nature, and it is certainly something that I can support, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: If the Minister of Finance speaks now he will adjourn debate at second reading.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the hon. members opposite who have taken part in this debate on what is basically a pretty routine piece of legislation, housekeeping legislation.

One of the things that did come up, and it is always interesting to hear other points of view, because they will bring up things that sometimes you have not even considered. The point I want to emphasize is the fact that this is not a fee increase. This is merely correcting some anomalies and some redundancies in the legislation. This is not an increase.

The hon. Member for St. John's East mentioned a cap, and my understanding - it has been ten years since I practiced, but the Minister of Service NL reminded me that there is no cap to Registry of Deeds. Regardless of the consideration in the deed there is no cap, but there is a cap when you register a mortgage. It is a cap of \$5,000. Given the increase in real estate, the increase in prices, and the prosperity we are seeing here, it could be a time to maybe review that number.

So, with that we look forward to Committee, and if there are any further questions we can answer them at that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the said bill be now read a second time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay'.

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act. (Bill 5)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill is now read a second time.

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

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act”, read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 5)

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

MR. KING: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act, be now referred to the Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair, and that the said bill be referred to the Committee of the Whole.

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay’.

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act.” (Bill 5)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: I just have a question relating to clause 1, 5(2)(b) into the value of land and how it does not exceed \$500, \$100.

Just for the Minister of Finance, if we could have some clarification as to how the forty cents was calculated, is there some sort of formula or reasoning behind these actual figures and numbers for the determination? I would like to know why these figures were chosen.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chair, I registered documents in the Registry of Deeds for over thirty-two years. Based on my memory it was always forty cents. What did change was the charge, and again, I am going on memory. I have been in this House for ten years now, so it has been a while since I practiced. What did change was the first \$500. I think the fee charged for the first \$500 way back was \$50. I know in 1998 it was \$50 and it was forty cents for each \$100 after that, or each part of \$100.

Then in 2004 it went up to \$75 on the first \$500. You paid \$75 for the first \$500 of value, and then it was forty cents for every \$100 or part \$100 afterwards. Then it went to \$100. I cannot remember when it was not forty cents, but I do know the charge on the first \$500 did change.

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Just a question for the Minister of Finance on this issue when it comes to the particular question around the whole fact of the allowance of other staff, for example, to be handling the paperwork now, where it seems like the

paperwork has lightened off. It does not necessarily involve lawyers anymore.

When we went to consult with some lawyers on the issue they are saying that it really downloaded the administrative duties previously done by registry staff. I have a little bit of a concern about that. When it comes to the whole issue – and I guess, Mr. Minister, you might be able to answer the question about the whole issue of the preservation of legalities and the more mistakes I think that are probably going to happen within the system.

Are you aware of any mistakes that have become evident as regards to this that would have necessitated the change in this legislation?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Yes, Mr. Chair, not to our knowledge. We do not have any information around that.

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

MR. MURPHY: Okay. I guess, Mr. Chair, that might do it.

I just want to get a little bit more clarification though around the \$5,000 limit, because that was my point about the growing wealth within the Province. I know real estate values and everything are exceeding faster than, I guess beyond everybody's dreams in some cases if you are a property owner.

In some cases, like I say when you are not a mortgage owner but you are pursuing the value of a home then it becomes quite evident, of course, when the whole question is about affordability. That is another issue, but I just wanted to get some clarification, and possibly government might be able to address it again as regards to the whole issue of why that cap was put there in the first place, this \$5,000 cap.

Are we going to end up seeing another piece of legislation, or a revision to the legislation to get that cap lifted?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, we certainly will take that under advisement and talk to our officials about the history of that cap. We will look into that for you and get back to you at the appropriate time.

CHAIR: All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

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: A bill, An Act to Amend the Services Charges Act.

CHAIR: Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, preamble carried.

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.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Services Charges Act, carried without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 5 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: On tomorrow.

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

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 4: a motion to move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to Consider a Resolution Relating to the Granting of Supplementary Supply to Her Majesty. (Bill 8)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to inform the House, and through the House the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, that in accordance with the Constitution of this country, I have received a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

As the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I transmit Estimates of sums required for the public service of the Province for the year ending March 31, 2014 by way of Supplementary Supply and in accordance with the provisions of section 54 and 90 of the Constitution Act, 1867, I recommend these Estimates to the House of Assembly.

Sgd.: _____
Frank F. Fagan, CM, ONL, MBA
Lieutenant Governor

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Government House Leader and

Minister of Justice, that the message together with the bill be referred to the Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole on Supply

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now reviewing Bill 8, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

CLERK: That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain additional expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2014, the sum of \$62,517,800.

CHAIR: Considering a Resolution Relating to the Granting of Supplementary Supply to Her Majesty, Bill 9.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Supplementary Supply. Supply bills are obviously very important to this House, to the members of this House, and to the people of the Province. We do three types of Supply bills. The big one, of course, is the Supply bill that comes with the Budget that we do during the Budget session of the House in the spring, and

that is when we debate the main Supply and we have a debate over the Estimates, the money that is going to be spent by the government over the year.

Prior to doing the main Supply bill, when we first come into the House for the Budget session, we do something called Interim Supply. While we are debating the main bill and while we are debating the Budget, government needs some money to pay its employees and conduct its day-to-day operations, so we go through something called Interim Supply which provides the government money for three months.

When the amount in the Estimates is spent and more money is needed, it is necessary for government to come back into the House and seek additional monies, and they do this by a process that we are going to do today called Supplementary Supply. It happens in two different situations.

One is like today when the government has a need for some new funds and the House is sitting, we come in looking for Supplementary Supply. The other one, which we will do on another day, is where government needs monies, there is no money in the particular appropriation, and the House is not sitting. The example is when the House was not sitting and there was a by-election called in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair and more money was needed for the conduct of that by-election, government sought what is called a special warrant; the Lieutenant Governor issued the special warrant which provided the funds.

Good practice is that in such a situation, when the House reconvenes, that we come together and the government comes in and says: Look, this special warrant was issued and now we want the House, the representatives of the people, to ratify what the government has done. This is based on a principle that has been around for a long time, and it is the principle that the government, the Crown, cannot spend money that is not approved by the representatives of the people gathered in this House of Assembly.

Now, Mr. Chair, with respect to this bill, hon. members will recall that in September the government reached a tentative agreement with the Newfoundland Association of Public and Private Employees, known as NAPE. I am pleased to say that agreement was ratified by eleven of the twelve bargaining units of NAPE last month. Discussions continue with Marine Services.

Shortly thereafter, hon. members are aware that the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPE, and the Association of Allied Health Professionals, AAHP, they also reached tentative reached agreements with the government, and the ratification votes are now taking place with those two unions.

I am pleased with the hard work and dedication of all those involved on both sides of the negotiation process. These agreements are good deals for the public employees of our Province. Through the negotiation process all parties were focused on reaching a fiscally responsible deal, one that recognizes the fiscal situation of the government, but that is also fair and reasonable to our employees and recognizes their hard work and dedication. This was most certainly achieved.

The framework of the agreement includes a general economic increase of 5 per cent over four years. Zero per cent in the first two years, then 2 per cent in the third year, and 3 per cent in the final year. In addition, the employees will receive a one-time signing bonus payment of \$1,400 on a pro-rated basis in year two of the agreement, which is this year, fiscal year 2013-2014. This year, of course, will end on March 31, 2014.

Mr. Chair, this payment is a fiscally responsible way to provide appropriate compensation for public employees in this year of the agreement. The bonus will reflect a one-time expenditure for government in 2013-2014. It will not become part of the salary base; therefore, it will not impact the fiscal forecast for the following year, 2014-2015, and beyond.

Our government has committed to employees that they will indeed receive the \$1,400 payment in year two of the agreement – that is this year – as negotiated. We want to ensure that the employees receive the payment by Christmas. In order to ensure that cheques can be sent out in time and can reach our employees by then, I am advised that between November 15-18 is as late as we have to pass this Supplementary Supply so that the cheques can go out in time for the Christmas period.

The cost to the taxpayer for the bonus part – if you look at the Schedule in the bill, you will see under Supplementary Supply \$59,566,400 and \$53,633,977 of that is the bonus; that is the amount of the bonus. Also included in the agreement were other benefits to employees, increased benefits, such as increases in the shift differential, increases in the weekend differential, there were substantial increases, and there were substantial increases in the standby. Those items, the shift differentials, the weekend differentials, and the standby will amount to another \$5.9 million. Those two, the amount for the bonus, the \$53,600,000 and the \$5.9 million will give you the \$59,566,400 set out in the Schedule under Salaries.

The next thing, Mr. Chair, is the Employee Benefits and you will see that in the Schedule there are Employee Benefits of \$2,248,000 and that is Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan and payroll tax on the \$59,500,000 figure.

The last item, Mr. Chair, in Transportation and Communications at \$703,400 that is an increase in meal allowance that showed up under Transportation and Communications; I think it is the ferry services. I think that has covered it all, the bonus, the shift differential, the weekend differential, the standby, the payroll taxes on those, EI and CPP, and the meal allowance.

Mr. Chair, these are good benefits for our public service employees. We must now take steps to ensure that they receive the benefits in a timely matter upon ratification. As such, it was recommended the Lieutenant Governor direct the Office of the Legislative Counsel to prepare this bill, this Supplementary Supply bill, for

2013-2014 not to exceed in total, of all those numbers that I previously mentioned, \$62,517,800. That is the total of the numbers that I previously mentioned.

This is required in order to enable the funding of the costs associated with the signing bonus and the other costs as I discussed as part of the new collective agreements with costs calculated to apply to all public employees. The number of \$62.5 million is based on the cost if everybody ratifies the agreement.

Mr. Chair, it is precedent that negotiated benefits in the collective agreements of the public service be applied to non-bargaining units, employees, and management as well. Therefore, the same general economic increases and the one-time payment in year two, the \$1,400 bonus, will be applied to these groups. It is in the spirit of equality that this precedent has been set and I think all members of the House will be pleased to continue to honour all public employees with these fair and fiscally responsible payments.

These payments were welcomed by employees as illustrated by the ratification by eleven of twelve NAPE groups and the tentative agreements in place with CUPE and AAHP. As an employer, government is certainly pleased to recognize their employees in this way and to be able to proceed in a fiscally prudent manner for the term of the agreement.

Mr. Chair, before I conclude – I see I have about five minutes left – there may be some questions on who will get the bonus and who does not. I can tell you that MHAs are not going to get the bonus. I can tell you that doctors and provincial court judges are not going to get the bonus. Resigned employees who have voluntarily ended the employment relationship with the employer will also not get it. Employees who were dismissed with cause because the employment relationship ended for cause will also not receive it.

It is important to remember that Supplementary Supply is being secured to ensure there is funding to allow the payment to be made to those who have negotiated a contract, those

currently in negotiations, and management and non-bargaining management groups. If individuals have any questions, they can certainly contact their managers, their executive, or their union representative.

Now, Mr. Chair, as I said earlier, every effort will be made to get the payment to bargaining unit employees who have ratified the agreement before Christmas. Every effort will also be made to apply this benefit to those groups of management and non-union employees before the end of the fiscal year. We must first focus our resources on those groups who have ratified collective agreement.

The one-time \$1,400 payment will be pro-rated. This means that employees will receive all or a portion of the \$1,400 payment depending on their hours worked in the previous twelve months leading up to the signing date. The payment is non-pensionable and will be considered taxable income. The cost to government to provide this bonus with its \$1,400 payment as I indicated will be \$62.5 million to cover the costs associated with implementing the benefit and others effected as of the day of signing.

Employees who have negotiated collective agreement with the government, NAPE and CUPE, pending ratification and AHP ratification, will get the payment. It is government's intent through Supplementary Supply to have funds available to apply the payment to employees who are classified as managers and non-bargaining management of the public service who may receive it in a different time frame.

Employees on maternity, adoption, or parental leave and employees on injury while on duty leave or Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission leave will receive the pro-rated payment based on the twelve months prior to the signing date. It will be paid to the employee when the employee returns from leave.

Employees on other forms of leave without pay will receive the pro-rated payment based on

hours actually worked in the twelve months prior to the signing date. Employees on layoff status with recall rights will receive the pro-rated payment based on hours worked during the twelve months prior to signing date. Retired employees will receive the pro-rated payment based on hours worked during the twelve months prior to the signing date.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will conclude my opening comments. I understand that for members opposite the first speaker will have fifteen minutes, after that other members will have ten minutes, and we can continue the debate. I would urge passage of Supplementary Supply.

Again, I remind all members of the date of November 15 to November 18 and that we have to get the cheques out in time to get the cheques to the employees by Christmas.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I can assure you now, to the Minister of Finance, there will be no Scrooges on this side of the House. We are going to do our part to make sure this money gets in the hands of the public sector workers and all those who actually qualify for this bonus in particular.

I am glad to see that this is brought to the floor of the House of Assembly. It is good news for our public sector workers. When I look back to the Budget in March of this year, I can remember I wrote a letter to the then Finance Minister to ask for the number of people who were eligible for retirement within government. This was just coming after the core mandate review. There were about 9,000 public sector workers who were included in that.

The letter came back and said there were about 13 per cent of the people who were eligible for

retirement within two years. To some degree, not quite magic, but when you look at the number of workers who were displaced –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. BALL: – the 1,100 workers, this was an opportunity, I believe, to work with some of our workers within government who do a great job day in, day out providing benefits for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Indeed what we saw in that Budget were some 1,100 people who were displaced. Subsequent to that we have entered into a negotiation with NAPE, CUPE, and of course with Allied Health. We still have a few outstanding ones I understand, that being with NLTA and the Nurses' Union.

This \$1,400 bonus is indeed, I believe, recognition for the hard work they have done. As I said earlier, we will certainly be doing our part to make sure this does get in the hands of our workers and their families in time for Christmas.

Mr. Chair, it was said that this would include people who are currently off work, not employed with government right now, but off temporarily on adoption, parental, or injury leave. It makes sense that they would be included, as it makes sense for the managers who we have in the system as well, that they, too, be included in that.

I am thrilled to say that MHAs will not be part of that. As a matter of fact, at the House Management Commission meeting our salaries are frozen and should remain frozen. I can tell you for the Official Opposition, that is a position that we hold and we support without any doubts at all.

This \$62 million rightfully belongs to the people who will need it the most and deserve the recognition. We are already into the second year so I have heard from employees already: Why did this process take so long already? We have a four-year contract, already into the second year with zero per cent increases early on.

Here we are. We have to be proud that it was a negotiated settlement, which is always important when you want to create the morale and keep morale within your workforce. We are pleased that they were able to get a deal four years in length. This bonus is part of that and the \$1,400 for most and some pro-rated based on the number of hours they would have worked, they will be able to take advantage of this.

Mr. Chair, Bill 8, as I said, being from a Supplementary Supply, is certainly something we do see from time to time in the House of Assembly. This one in particular, \$62,517,800 is the amount that we will be voting on today.

I will say that as the critic for the Department of Finance, we will be supporting this bill and we will do our part, as I said earlier in my concluding remarks, right now, to make sure that this is dealt with and this money can get in the hands of our public sector employees, including the managers who do a great job day in, day out providing services for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Humber West.

MR. GRANTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Indeed, it is a great pleasure to stand in my place today to speak to this. First and foremost, I want to say welcome back to everyone after the break over the last number of months. It is great to be back in the House of Assembly.

As the Minister of Finance spoke to earlier, just a few moments ago, our government reached tentative collective agreements with the Newfoundland Association of Public and Private Employees earlier in the fall and subsequently ratified those agreements, Mr. Chair, by eleven of twelve bargaining units, followed shortly by a tentative agreement with the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Association of Allied Health Professionals. The minister went on to

explain that ratification votes are now taking place with those two groups as well.

Mr. Chair, for nearly twenty-four years I had the opportunity to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador as an educator in both Stephenville and Corner Brook. For many of those years my experience was similar to others in the public service. Times were tight, times were economically, sometimes, challenged, and common place in those days was tight collective bargaining times. In fact, rollbacks and freezes from time to time were the order of the day, but as a young educator with student loans it was difficult to accept, but accept we did and hope that there would come a better day in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, considerable time passed and many spent a good portion of the public service career working under that noose of economic gloom; however, over time things changed and Newfoundland and Labrador began to loosen the tightrope of economic despair and a brighter day was approaching.

That is not to say that it all came easy, because the truth be known, it was a tough road, but change did appear and the efforts of the public service were recognized, as they should have been, with better salary benefit agreements negotiated and accepted by many of the bargaining units throughout the Province, Mr. Chair.

I was still an educator during the last round of collective bargaining and the offer by the provincial government, our provincial government, was one which recognized the many years of contributions made by public servants in this Province, with recognition of the tough times experienced down through the years. It also recognized the valuable contributions made on a daily basis by those in the public service.

The public servants in this Province do not enter into the public service to become rich. In fact, Mr. Chair, it is quite the contrary. They enter

out of the genuine need to help and assist the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have always had a great deal of respect for the public sector employees of this Province. Just last week I spent three evenings visiting the hospital here in St. John's and I observed nothing but a truly professional group of people, representing every collective bargaining unit in health care in this Province.

Every day, public sector employees go to work to make this place, Newfoundland and Labrador, better for the citizens of this Province. Whether it be a security official in our buildings, a Transportation and Works employee preparing for the winter months on our highways, or a licensed practical nurse sitting by a bedside, each and every one of them provide a service, individually and collectively, for the sole purpose of bettering this place and the lives of those they touch on a daily basis.

Mr. Chair, public employees are our neighbours, they are our friends, our volleyball and soccer coaches, churchgoers who sit in the next pew to us, they are brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, and yes, they have good days and bad days. So the next time you have an encounter or an engagement with a public employee, just be thankful of the good work that he or she does on behalf of all citizens of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our public employees in this Province are smart, loyal, compassionate, and they are ethical and committed individuals. That is why I can stand, as others in this House, and support the Supplementary bill acknowledging their work and their effort. Too often your good work goes unnoticed and the intent of this bill is to acknowledge the same way for all people and your efforts.

I have to say as well, Mr. Chair, that as we turn again to a greater economic return in the days and years ahead, it is my hope that the public employees of this Province will again reap the benefits of that economic gain. This government recognized that principle in the past,

and will continue to recognize that principle in the future.

There is a 5 per cent increase over the life of the contract, in addition to the \$1,400 bonus, as eloquently illustrated by the minister earlier. Mr. Chair, as the Minister of Finance and the Premier have said in the past few weeks, this payment is a way to provide appropriate compensation for public employees without impacting the fiscal framework of the Province and the fiscal forecast for 2014-2015 and beyond. In addition, there are increases in shift differentials, weekend differentials, and standby, as well as increases in meal allowances. It is for those reasons that I support the actions to enable the funding of costs associated with this signing bonus, and other costs agreed upon as part of new collective agreements, with costs calculated to apply to all public sector employees in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I want to congratulate the negotiating teams on both sides, and the leadership and members of all of the collective bargaining units, and I support this action today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I am very happy to rise in my place today and speak to Bill 8, which is a Supplementary Supply. Again, we all know the reason why we are speaking to this, obviously – it is actually the reason that we are back here in the House so early. Not that we need an excuse to get back here, but it is certainly a good one. By passage of this bill, we know that the members of these unions will get these bonuses that were just negotiated and agreed upon in September. I certainly do not intend to belabour any points, but I think it necessary that I get my points on the record as it relates to this.

The first thing I would want to say is that I am very happy that this all worked out in such a fashion, knowing that, again, eleven out of

twelve bargaining units agreed to it, that it seemed to be done rather quickly. Given what we may have anticipated or expected, it looked like it could have went the other way – and nobody wants to see that. So I applaud the members of the negotiating team for doing this, and I applaud the members of NAPE for agreeing to this, or the members who did agree – the eleven of the twelve.

It is great to see this. Again, these are our hard-working public servants, and they deserve to be compensated for their service. Again, this all works out great. Given that we had to have this bill passed by a certain time so cheques can go out in time for Christmas, we are just happy to be here and to get that done. It is a great reason to be back in this House of Assembly early.

Again, it does not hurt that this will be done in the middle of the polling period – that is a great addition to get this done. It also worked out as very coincidental timing that this happened, Mr. Chair, but again that is just an added bonus to the government to not only get this done but right in the middle of polling period. It just runs so smack dab well together. I congratulate government on achieving that.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: I say to the member, it is polling period from what we have been told, according to all the good news stories that we are hearing.

I reiterate: This is a government that does not rule by polls, so I will continue on. What I do want to say is the reason I am very happy to see this – it was somewhat unexpected given the tumultuous times that we just went through in this Province back in the spring. It was the membership of this union that there was a lot of stressful times for these people. I am sure it was stressful times for everybody, whether you were a member of government and having to make these tough decisions, or you are a member of the Opposition getting phone calls every day and every night from people who were losing their jobs and people who had lost their jobs and figuring out what they were going to do with

their families. It was tough times. Again, you talk to some of these people in departments who are dealing with the stress of this situation; it certainly could have gone a lot worse.

I think the minister has done a good job of explaining how this is all made up again, when we talk about what was allocated in Estimates and then the new amounts that are added on to that, whether it be the \$59,566,400 for salaries, the extra amount for employee benefits, and the extra amount for transportation.

I would say that I hope this is a precursor – there are some unions out there that still have not finalized their negotiations, and I hope this is a precursor to a successful negotiation for that as well. We all want to see everybody come together. It can be difficult times. Anybody involved with negotiations – again, I never had to deal with it in my prior life and did not have to go through that time. I know a lot of people here probably did have to go through it and it could not have been nice, throughout the years, having to deal with the uncertainty and being on strike. It is a horrible time.

Again I just want to, as the Opposition House Leader, make sure that my points were on the record here today and that I am glad to see this done. I look forward to seeing how this continues on in the future. I look forward to these NAPE members continuing their productive work and doing their great work as public servants and, again, I appreciate the opportunity to make my comments on this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I looked to the government side to see if anybody was going to stand. There was nobody standing, so I will take this turn.

It is good to be here to speak to this bill because certainly back last April, I was not sure that this government was going to be ready to reach

agreements with the public service sector. I was very delighted when word came out that in actual fact good negotiations had happened and agreements had been reached. I am pleased about that.

I am very happy obviously to be able today to speak to the bill that is going to deliver a signing bonus to the workers who are covered by the contracts that are covered under this bill. I will not go through everything that the minister has gone through already, in terms of explaining who is covered and who is not. For the public service sector they know who is covered, so we do not need to tell them that.

It is also good that this agreement was reached and we now have to approve the signing bonuses. I am not sure we would be standing here in the House this week if that had not happened. I know the Premier said last week in the media that the reason we were here this week was to approve this bill. She was really happy not to be in the House next week if we did not want to be here. That is on record, she said that publicly.

My message to the people of the Province is I am always ready to be in this House. With this bill or not, we should be here because the government should be doing work that requires discussion, that requires us to have an opinion on, that requires all of us together to speak to the issues that are coming from the people of the Province.

It seems that by coming in to speak to this bill, we are actually getting government to do a bit of work. We are getting some bills coming to us. They are coming slowly. We will get them in dribs and drabs I am sure, but at least they are coming. Some of it is housekeeping. We do not see a lot of substantive stuff yet. I would like to see much more substantive stuff coming into this House, coming to the table for us to talk about with this government. At least we are here today, and I want to raise some of the substantive issues that are there.

I heard one of the members from the government side of the House talk about the

respect that he had for the public service sector, and the respect that this government has for the public service sector. I certainly have respect for the public service sector. I certainly know the hard work that is done by people who work for the government, and therefore for the people.

I know the hard work that is done, whether it is people who are working in offices in the Confederation Building, whether it is people who are working in our long-term care facilities like Escasoni and Hoyles, whether it is people who are working in our hospitals, whether it is people who are cleaning floors in our hospitals, or whether it is people who are taking care of the sick in their beds. We can go on and on naming the workers who are covered by these collective agreements that have been ratified and that they will be getting the signing bonuses for.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This government certainly has not shown respect for these workers, and I say that in spite of what has been said on the other side. They certainly did not show respect last spring with the Budget. They did not show respect when 1,200 people were laid off. They did not show respect when they rushed a whole process, which resulted in, when the freeze was lifted in April, people coming back in.

It did not result in respect being shown for people, for example, in the justice system where government tried to layoff 147 people and eliminate fifty-two vacancies, but they had to reverse their decision because they found out, they had a reaction, that they were gutting the system and they had to rethink.

We had such haste shown by this government in trying to use the workers to take care of problems that they have created over the years. That is the respect that has been shown for the workers, Mr. Chair, I would like to point out to my friends on the government side of this House.

We have teachers who have been cut in the school system. We know that school principals are saying they have fewer speciality teachers for subjects such as gym, music, and art. Teachers are really concerned about what has happened to the programs in our school system. We have fewer learning resource teachers than we have had. We have a loss of library and computer support. We have a reduction in healthy living programs. We have fewer staff to implement safe school policies.

That is what this government has done, Mr. Chair. It has taken out the programs and the jobs that were going on inside of the public service sector. That is what they have done, and they have caused untold harm through what they have done.

In the educational system alone, the very fact that we now have one English-speaking school board for the whole Province. We had a hard enough time when we had four. We had people in decision-making positions who were removed from the reality of communities that were not close to the centre of the authority. Now, with only one, we are going to have major problems, Mr. Chair, and this government are just going on as if nothing happened. It is going on as if everything is hunky-dory and it is not.

It is hard on the public service sector, Mr. Chair. I am glad that many of the 1,200 – and I do not have the final number yet. I am looking for that number. Maybe the minister can give it to us, but I know that many have come back in. They have been recalled, but they should not have been let go in the first place.

For a short-term savings, a short-term way of trying to deal with their fiscal mess people had to go through untold torture last spring. I had workers from public sector offices come into my office crying. That is the respect this government has for workers, Mr. Chair.

I am very happy that we are here today and we are approving an expenditure that at least is going to bring some happiness into their lives to make up for the disaster of last spring; to bring some happiness into their lives so they will have

a bit of extra money when they sign their contracts, a bit of extra money, Mr. Chair, so their families can enjoy Christmas, have extra treats at Christmas, be able to make sure that their families are comfortable at Christmas. That is good. That is a very, very good thing.

The long-term effects are what this government does not seem to look at. The cut to public sector jobs, and there were jobs that were cut. It was not just positions, people going and being brought back. There were positions that were cut. There were large numbers of positions that were cut, or there were positions that were empty and they are not going to be filled.

The implications for our graduates, the implications for our students coming out of college and coming out of the university are vast. Graduates are looking for work. They find they have to go outside of the Province, go to other parts of Canada and other parts of the world.

I keep hearing about young people in their twenties who are over in Asia teaching English because they cannot get jobs here. They are making good money over there and it is a stop-gap, it is helping them pay off their debts, but they do not want to be over in Asia teaching English. They would like to be here in full-time, permanent jobs that are part of their future in this Province. So when this government starts talking about respecting workers, they had better do some examining of what they mean by respecting workers.

Respecting workers means respecting the work. It means respecting the services that have to be given to people. Because this is what has happened, we have lost major services in this Province, Mr. Chair, and we cannot even look to new programs. We cannot look to have a child care program in this Province because of this government's policies.

I am glad to have the opportunity, Mr. Chair, to point some of these weaknesses out, and to hope that this government, as we come to a point of voting on this bill, will do some thinking about

what they mean when they say they respect the workers in this Province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS JOHNSON: Try to overturn some of that gloom and doom.

MS SULLIVAN: Mr. Chair, I am so happy to stand up here today – and yes, as my colleague just said, to try to overturn some of the gloom and doom that comes from the other side when we are on bill that –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MS SULLIVAN: Well, yes, that is right; I need to be more specific – that comes from the Third Party.

When we are talking about the wonderful work that has been done in terms of settling contracts in this Province, contracts for NAPE, contracts for CUPE, contracts for the Allied Health Professionals, and when we are making efforts to recognize the wonderful work that these public servants do in our Province, it is amazing to me that somebody can get up and absolutely run down the work that is being done by this government –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS SULLIVAN: – run down and, in some senses, disenfranchise the work that is being done by some of these public servants, Mr. Chair. It is absolutely shameful.

Mr. Chair, when I look at the public service from the perspective of my Department of Health and Community Services there are days when I am absolutely spellbound by the stories

that I hear, the letters that I receive, the phone calls that I get, people stopping me in supermarkets, drugstores, wherever I am, talking about the absolutely amazing, compassionate, wonderful work of our public servants.

Now, Mr. Chair, that is what we want to acknowledge. That is what we want to talk about. That is why we are in this House of Assembly right now, Mr. Chair, so that we can say to those people that we value the work that they do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: That we are here for them, that we understand the depths they will go to deliver great service to the people of this Province.

Now, Mr. Chair, in this House of Assembly people have heard me say before that in many respects I felt like I grew up in a long-term care home, because there were so many of my relatives who spent time in a long-term care home. From the time I was a little girl, I recall being there.

When my aunts were there, when my grandparents were there, three of them were in long-term care homes, my mother, and later my father. Mr. Chair, I saw and I witnessed the work of these public servants. It was beyond incredible; it was beyond a day's work for them, Mr. Chair.

When people spent their time passing on the comfort that people need, the touch of a nurse, Mr. Chair, is something that people really do not often pay enough attention to. It is not sometimes about just the medical services that are being offered. It is about the care and it is about the compassion, Mr. Chair.

I think that we all in this House of Assembly need to acknowledge that on a regular basis and be able to say to the public servants we so much care about the work you do, we so much value it, we do take notice of it, and that is exactly why we are in this House of Assembly at this point in time so that through the contract that has

been negotiated, we can ensure that we are going to be able to get the monies to these people in time for Christmas. That was something that we committed to, Mr. Chair, and it is something that we are going to make every effort to do.

Mr. Chair, in my former career, I was a teacher in this Province. For thirty years, I had the privilege of working with the young people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Every day I was inspired by them. Every day I told them that I took my energy from them. They gave me so much every single day that I was in the classroom.

Mr. Chair, I still see that in the teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are there because the young people inspire them to be there. They give so much to the young people of this Province and in so many different ways, not just in terms of the academic educations that are provided to them but particularly around the extracurricular activities that our public servants, through the education system, provide.

Mr. Chair, I heard the Leader of the NDP make reference to the fact that we are not doing enough as government. She would like to see more of this, this, this, and this, and there are usually a number of things that follow that. Well, Mr. Chair, I have had occasion in this House of Assembly to also hear her say that we need to be spending our money more wisely within our public service. Mr. Chair, that is precisely what we have been trying to educate the members of the Third Party about in terms of what we have been doing around health care and the sustainability of the health care system.

I have documented – and I will probably use it someday, but I will not bring it out today – times when they have said to us that you need to get spending under control within the health care system of Newfoundland and Labrador. We go out and we do operational improvement plans that do not layoff people, that do not cut programs, that do not cut services, that do not cut any of our health care services at all, nor close any facilities. They are still complaining about it, Mr. Chair, but not giving one bit of

respect to the public servants who are working there.

Mr. Chair, we did not lay them off. We looked for ways to find a more efficient delivery of the services that we offer. We looked at attrition; we looked at better scheduling. There were a number of areas that we looked at, Mr. Chair, when we talked about what we were going to do there. All we hear over there is you did not do it right; you did not do enough. At the same time they are saying to us: Do it. You cannot have it both ways, Mr. Chair. I do not understand what part of that they do not get over there. I really do not understand it.

Mr. Chair, I want to just end off by saying once again the reason that we are in here, the purpose for being here at this particular point in time is to honour the public servants of Newfoundland and Labrador, to ensure that we are able to deliver to them what they rightfully deserve in the contracts that were negotiated for them, and to see that is done in a timely fashion. We value their work, Mr. Chair, and we really need to tell them as many times as we possibly can.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

After hearing that, I do not know what to think. Mr. Chair, first of all to the employees of NAPE and to the employees of CUPE, they do an awful lot of hard work. Sometimes they are called at operational times, times at night when some of us are still in bed, whether that is to plow roads or to operate the ferries, and doing work in conditions that are almost unbelievable. We saw that with the release of the report that Transport Canada did on the whole incident involving the *Beaumont Hamel*. I will touch on that a little bit later.

One of the things that really struck my mind when the Member for Humber East got up and

spoke about NAPE and CUPE, brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers. I had to sit back and I had to think for a second that when government did its layoffs back in April and cut so rashly, the first thing I was thinking of was brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers. About 1,200, 1,400 people who were laid off, and 1,200 or 1,400 families who were affected, 1,200 or 1,400 families who had to rethink their plan, because their plan was to be working lifelong for the government, but this government cut them off, isolated them, and threw them out of work. The same people we were espousing to recruit ten years probably beforehand saying there was a job here and you have a future working for government, all of a sudden found themselves cut loose.

Mr. Chair, I know that it is Christmastime coming up and some of these people who were cut loose by government are probably still out looking for work. I do not know, but I wish them all the best, too. At the same time, while we approve of government reaching out and giving the present employees a signing bonus, I think I am probably going to be thinking about some of those people who are still out there looking for work who were cut loose from government, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers, all.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Chair, we can go back and we can talk about the cuts. We can go back and touch on the cuts again, and just remind government where these people have gone and what happened to them.

How many cuts did we have in Wildlife? How many people did we lose, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers? How many Wildlife officers did we lose? How many guardians did we lose from Burnt Cape?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: How many did we lose from Cape St. Mary's, people who were working in Environment and Conservation, brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers? How many government employees? Twelve hundred to fourteen hundred, I will say it again, brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers.

The cuts to Justice; the Family Violence Intervention Court was cut. Remember that? Of course all of the people on government side will remember that. How many Sheriff's Officers did we lose, brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers who express their loyalty in working for this government at the same time and pledged any number of years ago that they would spend their lives working for government because we told them? We told them. We saw it in government advertising how secure it was going to be at the same time.

How many people in Legislative Counsel lost their jobs? How many people in OCIO? How many people with the regional health boards across the Province are going to be losing their jobs all at a time, too – and this government knows it. The Canadian Labour Congress has already come out. They have already talked about the number of seniors this Province is going to have by the year 2030. There are going to be an extra 100,000 or so seniors, people over the age of sixty-five or so, people who are brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers.

So I say to the government, at the same time when you are talking about issuing that Christmas bonus, remember those people who are going to be left behind. Remember what your job is at the same time. Remember what our job is at the same time: to be looking after each other, not to be critical in your constructive arguments here, but at the same time just remember brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers.

Yes, we will go ahead and back government this time when it comes to issuing that signing bonus, and with pleasure we will do that, but at the same time we will be remembering those people who have been left behind, who were cut loose by government.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If I did not say it earlier, it certainly is an honour, a pleasure and a privilege for me to stand here in my place, wherever it might be in the House of Assembly, to have an opportunity to represent the great people in the historic District of St. John's North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: When I was on my feet before, I neglected to say congratulations to all of those who offered themselves for election in our municipal elections. Whether you won or lost, you did something really important. I think it is always important to remember that public office is very important and people have to take on that responsibility. When people come forward to do that, we certainly honour what they do.

I want to give special congratulations to Mr. Bernard Davis and Mr. Bruce Tilley, both St. John's ward councillors whose wards overlap St. John's North. I have worked with both of them in the past and I look forward to continuing to work with them.

Over the course of the summer, I certainly had an opportunity to speak with many of my constituents about the concerns they have, and to have conversations with people across the Province. My roots are down on the Burin Peninsula. I, fortunately, every now and then, get an opportunity to go down and see my folks down there and chat with the good people down at the toe of the boot. I will try to cover a few of those issues as we go on in the Legislature. I am not going to belabour a lot of those today.

I did speak to a number of public servants, people described to me what it is like to be on tender hooks and wondering whether or not you are going to be the person who is going to get the layoff notice. I was a public servant myself. I worked for the Government of Ontario in a

number of positions of increasing responsibility when I was doing my PhD at the University of Toronto. Well, I liked that job so much that I left it and came to Memorial University and took a position on faculty, and I liked that job so much that I took a leave from that to come up here.

I do know the position that public servants are in. In fact, there was one point where my wife and I were both public servants. We were in different unions. I had to cross the picket line every morning that my wife was in, in order to go to work. I had no other option.

I want to say that no one in their right mind would oppose this signing bonus. I know that the public sector unions are responsible for negotiating these agreements. They are elected and majority rules. I do understand that, but I would be remiss if I did not point out that it has been suggested to me by people who have called me or e-mailed me, that they are concerned about the zero per cent annual increases here. Again, I know this is what they ratified and that is what it is going to be, but I believe it is important to point that out.

I also wanted to relay concerns that have been addressed to me about the job evaluation system; in particular, the Association of Allied Health Professionals. I have a lot of folks who live around the Health Sciences Centre, because they are in St. John's North, who are health professionals. Many of those people have to go outside of Newfoundland and Labrador to do their particular training because we do not have graduate degrees in certain areas; speech pathology, occupational therapy and so on.

There are a whole variety of professionals in the health care system who have to go outside of the Province in order to study. Of course, it is harder to get them back because they are like I was, away and working. You sort of get into a bit of a trap sometimes, it is better to stay where you are than to go back home. They also incur more debt, because they have higher living costs in a lot of cases, transportation costs. A lot of those programs have sort of a cost-recovery model, a full cost-recovery model. So the

tuition is a whole lot higher than what students enjoy here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I wanted to point out that a number of those folks had been in touch with me over the summer. Again, I understand and respect the collective bargaining process but I think I have some responsibility to ensure that the voices of the people who are contacting me are actually spoken in the House of Assembly.

I think another thing that government has pointed out, and I certainly agree with where government is coming from because I do not think there is a member here in the House of Assembly who would disagree that we have a serious problem when it comes to the unfunded pension liability. It is a fairly significant sum of money.

We want to get that resolved for our kids and their kids, the next generation, and to make sure that those people who are working here today and the ones who are home retired, that there is funding there for them to enjoy the retirement they rightly deserve. Because let's face it, folks, I worked in the public service, I was not going to get rich at it. I was not going to get rich at it, but I had some decent benefits that our union was able to negotiate. I had some holidays. I knew, we all knew, public servants all know, that at the end of your career you have paid into a pension and you have some security.

You can go off and do something else if you want. There are teachers in the Province who go up in the Arctic and they teach up there after they retire. Lots of people retire from the public service and go into consulting, they go elsewhere.

AN HON. MEMBER: They stay here.

MR. KIRBY: They come to the House of Assembly, absolutely. We have to make sure that problem is resolved. I think there are a variety of ways to do it. No one is interested in paying more deductions out of their paycheque but it might just come to that. The employer's share and the individual employee's share may just have to increase in some way, or the

benefits will have to change. It will have to be some combination of change.

It has to change because we have to maintain that retirement fund, those pension funds and the benefit of being a public servant, going to work every day and enjoying the job you do and knowing at the end of your career there is some security. That is a problem that I think we also need to look at. I know the government is talking about doing it sooner than later, and I think that is really important.

I just want to throw out one other thing, as this is sort of peripherally related because education, especially at the post-secondary level is something that is really important to me. I think we have to start looking at co-operative education programs as a means of doing succession planning in the public service. There are a whole bunch of people who are going to retire; there is no question about that. When a lot of those people retire, they go out the door and they take years of experience, all sorts of institutional knowledge. They take it out the door with them.

If we can get those young people at College of the North Atlantic, the private training institutions, Memorial University, we could get those young people up working alongside of those senior public servants who are getting ready to go off and do whatever it is they do after they retire from here. They would be able to pass on all of that knowledge, some of that knowledge, a little of that knowledge and the public service would be better for it.

I think that is something we really want to think about. I know there are programs already to help some co-op students find places in the public service, but I think it is something we really ought to look at more and more just for those very reasons. Of course young people will get jobs, hopefully paid employment. They will get used to working in the public service and then they will want to come here after they graduate.

That is all I have to say for now. I certainly have no problem supporting this piece.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

MS SHEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is a pleasure to be able to speak in the House this afternoon regarding this particular motion to make sure we provide the funds, as we negotiated and has been accepted by our unions, for the \$1,400 bonus that they will receive – their signing bonus – before Christmas.

Mr. Chair, this has been, I guess the start of my eleventh year in the House of Assembly. Every time we have discussed the compensation for the public service it has not always been as positive as the message that we have today, or the message that we delivered through the last round of negotiations when the offer that was accepted by the unions was 8-4-4-4.

I remember back to 2003 when we had a difficult financial situation in the Province. We had a month long public service strike, and how difficult that was, especially for many of us who were new politicians in the House at that time, the first time sitting in the House of Assembly. We had to deal with a situation where the finances were very negative in the Province. As a result, the public service was not pleased.

As the fortunes of the Province changed and there was more money coming in, more money into the coffers, I think this government has a very strong record of demonstrating to the public service how much we value the work they do and how we are more than pleased to be able to share that revenue with them when we are in a position to do so.

The position of the 8-4-4-4 was extremely generous and we are very pleased to be able to do that. When you have successive years where there have not been increases, at some point your public service has to catch up in order to be competitive. With a tight labour market that we have in the Province today, and that we

anticipate, we do not want to lose the expertise that we have within our public service.

Again, last year we had a difficult financial situation we had to deal with. When you look at the contract back two years, the last two years of being 2 per cent and 3 per cent, that is 5 per cent, with the \$1,400 signing bonus, I think it certainly demonstrates the respect that this government has for the public service of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Chair, there is a lot to try to talk about in the few minutes that you are allotted to have this debate, but there are a lot of initiatives this government sees as a priority that helps people in the labour market.

One of the things mentioned in this House many times, is the tuition freeze at the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University. So not only do we ensure that the people in the public service have competitive wages and benefits, we also make sure that our young people are prepared for work when they come out and they are not burdened with debt. Mr. Chair, to have the lowest tuition in the country and no interest on student loans is certainly something that is extremely important.

We have a public service that does a wide variety of work. Most of my background, Mr. Chair, as you would know, is in the social sector. I have been the minister of many different departments, including what was at one time HRE, and then HRLE, Education, Child, Youth and Family Services, Advanced Education and Skills, and Education at another time. When you go into that sector you see there are social workers, career counsellors, policy analysts, and teachers. There are a lot of people in the social sector.

My new portfolio now puts me into a whole different field, and that is Environment and Conservation. I had the opportunity shortly after I moved into this new portfolio to meet the staff here in the building. There are other staff in other sites I will also visit when I get an

opportunity, but to go around through the Department of Environment and Conservation you get to meet many staff who are young professionals, who are out of university probably within the last five years. I noticed there was a split between men and women, a lot of women in the positions.

The people who I met with were chemists, people with chemistry degrees, with biology degrees, engineering degrees, and environmental engineers. It was amazing to see that other side of the public service that you do not necessarily always see when you are in the social sector. To see the enthusiasm, the skills, the young people, and the women in these positions in science and engineering really brought home the idea that a lot of the things we talk about, what is important to us, is making opportunity for young people and having a gender balance in our workforce is very evident in the Department of Environment and Conservation. That was very reassuring as a new minister when I went into that particular department.

The other point I wanted to make about our public service is we want to ensure that they are competitive and that they have the wages and the benefits that encourage them to stay in the public service or see a career that they can start off in an opening position and then be able to move up through the different positions that they have. It is not always just the benefits and the salary; it is what is deducted. The Member for St. John's North alluded to that when he just spoke.

It is well-known that the Leader of the Third Party feels that personal income tax should be increased, so there should be more money coming out of peoples' paycheques. That is what she talks about and that is what she feels is a way to deal with the issues in the Province. I know and it is well-known, because we have all seen the media that the Member for The Straits – White Bay North and the Member for St. John's North do not agree with that policy –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: – and so strongly disagree with it that they left the caucus. Obviously, not everyone feels so strongly; others feel that maybe the personal income tax should be increased and, therefore, they want to follow a leader who would suggest that. I think that is shameful quite frankly.

I think that we need to respect the civil service, the public service, and the work that they do. I also understand when there are difficult financial times that we cannot give increases that they deserve and that we would like to be able to give.

Mr. Chair, when there is a time when the revenues allow it to happen and we can justify it and we can work with our unions, we need to be fair to those people and we need to make sure that they understand that as the legislators and the people who sit in this House of Assembly that we respect the work they do and that they are well compensated for that.

Mr. Chair, this is the main piece of work that we need to accomplish as we open the House of Assembly. I think it is admirable that we have the Premier and the Minister of Finance who were able to work through these negotiations and make this offer that was overwhelming accepted by the union and something we need to be proud of. To think that this is one of the first pieces of business that we are going to do in the House of Assembly, certainly makes it a pleasure to be back into the House of Assembly and do this particular work.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 8.

This legislation will allow for providing a signing bonus of \$1,400 to our public sector workers and managers – the total amount: \$62,517,800. I am very happy to support this

bill, Mr. Chair. I want to talk about some of the important work that the unionized sector does in my district.

I come from an area that is very, very different than here in the city. I want to talk about people like transportation workers and nurses and teachers and the value of the work that they do. We are remote at the best of times but plant yourself in the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair in the middle of winter in little places like Shadow Pond, which is in the centre of a very desolate stretch of road, eighty-five kilometres, we get thirty-foot walls of snow on either side. We have people, transportation workers, who risk their lives every day when they are up there snow clearing. Mr. Chair, if a storm happens while these workers are there, they have no way out. So, we value the work that they do in keeping our roads cleared.

Nurses: We have no hospitals in the district where I live; we have community clinics. It is often hard to entice nurses to these remote areas that are definitely lacking in amenities. So, they are absolutely deserving of this signing bonus. Nurses oftentimes called out in the middle of the night, into the clinic when there are emergencies, often travelling by ski-doo in communities that do not have a road connection.

Teachers: My mother left Newfoundland and came to my district back in the 1960s when the only teachers that we could entice to our region were those with a Grade 11 education because of the remoteness of where we live. Thanks to provisions like this signing bonus now, we are now recruiting qualified teachers to the region, so that is definitely a positive thing.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 8 which the resolution applied \$62 million-plus for the public sector to have the \$1,400 bonus as

negotiated between the public sector unions and government.

Certainly, this is something that I myself will be supporting; but, in terms of when I go around my district of The Straits – White Bay North, one of the things that I see, and it is commentary that is made on the Province as a whole, when we look at the federal government and how they do business sometimes, is that when there are cutbacks we see that there are a disproportionate amount of cutbacks made to Newfoundland and Labrador when it comes to those federal jobs.

When I go around my district and I see things happening in rural communities, you see consolidation of services, and I have been seeing it for quite some time. Whether it is schools being consolidated – a number of them have closed in recent years. It is great that there are new facilities being built and servicing the current population, but with that and with those consolidation of services there are also jobs losses that happen, there are impacts on communities, and there are people who are commuting greater distances. We have to have good facilities, but we have to also plan for community development and community prosperity.

We have seen in areas like the St. Lunaire-Griquet area where they could have maintained a K-9 school, rather than busing people a great distance. We see where some consolidation sometimes has had a greater impact on regions.

We have to look at places like the area of Roddickton. Roddickton, for example, and Port au Choix, the Port Saunders area, they are going to see a consolidation of services for fish and wildlife enforcement officers, where those two offices that are currently owned by a government building, which there is no rent, there is no cost to operating them, where these people were previously laid off and ended up getting their positions back from the Budget cut. Now there is going to be a new building put up to consolidate services which will add additional cost, yet the majority of work is going to be done while they are mobile, working from their vehicle.

Some of these decisions sometimes do not make great sense when we are looking at planning for the future and making sure that workers are well looked after. I wonder how much public consultation happened with these actual workers in their communities in looking at how they are able to provide the best public service.

That is important when we look at advancing our workers, advancing training and meeting needs. I have a number of health care needs in my district, and I have certainly seen investment in health care. I thank the Minister of Health and Community Services for those investments. We have a hospital in Flower's Cove that is currently not operational, that has been put there and there are still deficiencies that need to be addressed. As we are moving forward we have to look at the public sector transition to these workers and being able to fill that role and fill vacant positions that are happening in my district in particular.

We have an aging population in The Straits – White Bay North, one of the oldest populations on average per capita in the Province. We have a wait-list significantly for long-term care beds. There is a demand in certain areas to look at adding long-term care such as the Roddickton area. These are things that we need to look at and plan as we move forward, listening to public sector workers, listening to the needs. Being able to make sure that when we do make agreements like this one as to wage increases, and also a one-time signing bonus, that we are doing things in a sustainable way, but we are also planning for sustainable communities.

There has to be a means to provide the services for people without just centralizing and consolidating and consolidating so that eventually there are only seven, eight, ten, or eleven areas in this Province that there are actually public sector jobs that are available that we need. We need to provide them to the rural communities as well.

These are types of things that are very, very important to me. It is seeing that there are adequate services, that rural areas are completely serviced. My district is very rural. It is seeing

that aging population. We need to see a step where we are not always losing services because of that.

One of the things we do need to deal with, and my colleague from St. John's North had mentioned it, is the unfunded pension liability. We have to make sure that when we are dealing with the Province and the Province's finances as legislators here, we all have a responsibility to do so in a very responsible manner to make sure that when we are moving forward, we take forward the best practices and best ideas that each of us can bring forward.

Some of the ideas that we do bring forward as individual MHAs, whether we are in government or whether we sit on the opposite side, there are legitimate ways of which we can save money and provide services to people in a better way. Those are types of things that we need to engage in. We need to listen a whole lot more to each and every member, and make sure that when we do move forward it is in a positive way that can benefit all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have heard concerns from my constituents. Some of them are very happy with the current collective agreement, and others are not. Because they are being red circled they are not seeing a salary increase. They are going to be kind of capped in a certain area for a while, and that is a concern for them. Others are very pleased because they are going to see that they are reclassified. They are going to see increases beyond the 2 per cent and 3 per cent in the coming years. There are concerns, and we hear them all time. I am sure every member in this House hears similar concerns.

Overall, I think it is very positive to see that an agreement was reached. I certainly applaud government on being able to do so in that way, and I will be supporting this motion for the approval of Supplementary Supply of the \$62,517,800.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am certainly pleased, as well, to have an opportunity to stand today and speak a little bit to this bill of supply that recognizes a recent signing of a collective agreement with our public servants in the Province.

As a number of speakers have referenced on a number of occasions, we are talking in particular about a \$1,400 signing bonus. I think it is fair to say, at least looking at the Liberal Party across the way, they are generally supportive of wanting to move this bill forward. I am not sure about the other party. We will see in due course where we are headed to with that, but hopefully no one wants to be Scrooges here and we will get through this bill in fine form and debate and we will have a nice bonus, a nice cheque in the hands of the public servants in the Province before Christmas.

Mr. Chair, I want to take a moment to talk about our public servants, because we are very fortunate in this Province. In spite of some of the commentary made by the Leader of the Third Party a few moments ago, we are very fortunate to have very loyal, dedicated, hardworking people in Newfoundland and Labrador who give their time in each and every single day, every opportunity they get, to do the best work they possibly can on behalf of the people of the Province.

I can give you any number of examples, Mr. Chair, but the one I would like to speak to for just a brief moment is the recent announcement of the CETA deal; the deal that, along with the \$400 million announcement, has the potential with the support of industry, in all facets of the industry to transform the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. I do not want to talk about the merits of that deal or spend a lot of time talking about that today.

What I want to do is highlight for people, though, that while governments and politicians have the opportunity to solidify some of these

deals and bring issues forward, there is a strong team of officials in the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development, in Executive Council here in government, which is the executive branch that works with Cabinet and with the Premier's Office, and in the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. These individuals, as an example, Mr. Chair, have spent countless hours developing strategy on behalf of the Province to try to advance that particular issue forward, the issue of free trade, and advance the issue of negotiation within Canada to secure the \$400 million fisheries commitment.

I want to say, first of all, hats off on behalf of my colleagues to those people because that is the kind of public servants we have in this Province. Mr. Chair, as people at home who may be paying attention to this would not realize, that does not just happen by coming to work at 9:00 o'clock in the morning in Confederation Building. Those people give freely of their time. They are travelling day and night, sometimes for days and weeks on end, across the country and to other parts of the world. It is a strong, huge sacrifice for people to make on behalf of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have a lot of other public servants, Mr. Chair, I could talk about. For example, in my own district I think about those who work with the Department of Transportation and Works, those who drive the trucks on the highways. It is easy to forget what they commit and what they do on our behalf. We see them in the summertime doing some maintenance, but sometimes we forget that it is in the middle of the night, 2:00, 3:00, or 4:00 o'clock in the morning and in blinding snowstorms.

I pick up on my colleague from Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair who mentioned a few moments ago the same kind of comment, that these people do a tremendous service for the people of the Province. That is the kind of people we are talking about here today when we talk about public servants.

In my district in particular, when I talk about health care I think about the Grand Bank Health

Care Centre, the Burin Peninsula Health Care Centre, which is a regional hospital, and the U.S. Memorial in St. Lawrence. We have tremendous facilities, but more important than that, Mr. Chair, as I am sure other people could reference in their own particular areas, it is not about the facilities. It is about the quality of the health care service that is being provided. That is determined by the quality of the individuals who are working there, by the commitment they have made to their particular profession, and the dedication that they give to the patients they serve.

I can honestly say that in my particular area, what we are receiving is nothing less than 150 per cent. There are always glitches in the health care system from time to time, like any system. We all acknowledge that. When we forget that, the Leader of the NDP spends her time telling us about all the bad things in health care.

I think it is important that we take our time to talk about the tremendous work that the people in the health care system are doing for our Province, Mr. Chair, and tremendous work. I think if you talk to people who have used the health care system on a regular basis, or somewhat regular basis, while there is often going to be stories where there is a little bit of discontent or they did not get in quite as quickly as they would like to through the emergency system or the emergency room, I think on balance, if you talk to people who have used the system or have had parents and siblings in a system where there is long-term care or just in the general facilities, my experience is that people tell me they are very pleased with the level of service they are receiving.

I am saying that, not to indicate a comment towards support for government, as a support for the workers who provide the service because you can have all the equipment, all the tools, and all the facilities you want, if you do not have individuals who are committed and hardworking you are not going to get the outputs you require. In health care, in my opinion, Mr. Chair, we are getting that.

Over and above all the things that I just mentioned, and I could go on forever to talk about the different sectors of employees in Newfoundland and Labrador. One of things that – I am not sure if anybody has mentioned this yet, but I am sure all members, I hope all members, I am certain the Leader of the Opposition would agree with me on this statement. That not only are public servants making a contribution to the Province, but they are making a voluntary contribution to our communities.

I say the Leader of the Opposition because I have heard him talk about this. If you go out and look at the members who are serving on our municipal councils – and I offer my congratulations, as the Member for St. John's North did a few moments ago, to all of those who just got elected. If you look at our municipal councils, you look at our recreation committees, you look at our fire departments, Mr. Chair, as an example, or you look at the schools – I think my colleague, the Minister of Health, mentioned that a few minutes ago – and look at the volunteers, I am willing to bet a lot of money that a good many of those are public servants who come home at the end of the day and volunteer their time to go into communities, purely because they believe in the cause.

Mr. Chair, I do not mind talking about the fire departments because I attended a fireman's ball last week in Grand Bank. An example is there are volunteers there who are public servants. They go into the fire department in the evenings and weekends and they use their skills as mechanics, refrigeration technicians to fix fire trucks, and to fix equipment to keep that fire department running. That is the kind of commitment, Mr. Chair, that we are talking about from the public servants of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Any time our government gets a chance to provide support back to the people of the Province we have to do that, we have to support our public servants.

My colleague, the Minister of Environment, referenced a few moments ago things are not always rosy. We have been in government for ten years and we have had some down times.

Members of the Liberal Party who served in government before us had their share of times when you could not give the public servants what they wanted.

Mr. Chair, the focus has to be on providing them with the support you can when you can. Our position is that when we are able to do it – whether it is the \$1,400 signing bonus or some other mechanism, our position is that we support them. Our position is contrary to the Leader of the NDP who is talking about raising taxes, for example. That is taking money out of the pockets of public servants, Mr. Chair.

I want to get that on the record because as we are having this debate today and we are getting views from different perspectives and different parties, it is quite evident as we hear some of the criticism across the way that they do not want to talk about the fact that the party has put out a policy to increase taxes.

I remind our public servants who are listening to this debate today that while we are debating, and as I see so far getting good support from members of the Liberal Party supporting this initiative, other members from the Third Party have been out talking about raising taxes. Giving you \$1,400 in one hand and taking it back in the other, Mr. Chair. That is what we are talking about. It is important for people to understand that as they are following this particular debate.

Having said that, I am going to bring my remarks to a conclusion by simply saying thank you. Thank you to all the people in my district and the people throughout the Province. As Minister of Justice and Minister Responsible for Labour Relations, thank you to all the people of my departments who work so hard to help keep government running, to keep the Province running, and to help us keep moving forward.

Even when there are challenging times and sometimes we are not sure where we are going to turn from one day to the next, these people are out there constantly doing the best that they possibly can do because they believe in Newfoundland and Labrador and they believe in

the future of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Chair, as we do as a government. We believe in the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. We believe the opportunities that are before us as a Province have never been better. Part of what we want to do is to ensure we have a good public service. We are doing that by ensuring when we can, like today, we are providing them with a collective agreement that they are happy with. Included in that is the \$1,400 signing bonus.

I thank you very much for the opportunity. I will take my seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have to speak. I have to support this bill for the same reason that the –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BENNETT: I have to support this bill for the same reason that the public employees had to support it, because they felt that the alternative was worse. Not that the goal was so good but the alternative was worse. The alternative of not getting the \$1,400 and maybe being out on strike or having more uncertainty was worse.

Mr. Chair, let's look at where we are in this Province. This bill is set up to provide \$1,400 – I think we are calling it a signing bonus – to 38,000 public employees. The workforce in the Province is around 225,000 or 230,000 people. If you look at the number of people who are not public employees and divide that by the number of people who are working in the private sector, it takes approximately five private sector taxpayers to support one public employee.

Mr. Chair, that is a fairly staggering statistic when you look at it. When you consider that that private sector employee could be somebody working for \$10 an hour in a fast food business to somebody who is maybe a surgeon making hundreds of thousands of dollars – five private

sector employees support one public employee. Mr. Chair, that figure is out of whack.

This is not to criticize or say anything negative about our public employees. We have great public employees and they work not always with the co-operation and proper consideration of government, but we simply have too many of them. A half a million people cannot afford to be governed by 38,000 public employees based on provincial tax rolls. It simply cannot continue; it is unmanageable. To add to that then we have the public service pension liability, the more people we have in the public payrolls the bigger the pension liability is. This government gets no credit for having expanded the size of government over the last ten years.

The solution at this point seems to be – it is almost like a Scrooge-like solution. I am grateful to the Minister of Justice; he said we should not be Scrooge-like. It is sort of noteworthy the reason we are here today, to rush back into the House two weeks earlier than this House has ever returned, under this government, a minimum of two weeks earlier, is so that we can pass this bill to do the patchwork, the patch up job of \$1,400 to get an agreement signed. Mr. Chair, that is not good government.

Good government would be more consistent. Good government would have had an agreement over time, would have had an agreement worked out so we would not have to rush to the end, get a \$1,400 patch per employee and come into the House in a big hurry so the public employees can have two pays between now and Christmas of that \$1,400 amount.

I am not so sure that the amount is even calculated correctly. The calculator that I am using that I think is a government-issued calculator, the numbers do not fit on the amounts – the \$1,400 does not work out. It works out to a higher number than \$1,400, and we are calling this full-time equivalents.

Mr. Chair, this Province has an aging population that is going to cost more and more and more for health care. So after we pay for 38,000 public employees with five provincial working people

– approximately 12 per cent or so unemployed right now – to support one public employee, we still have to pay for all the other items. All the heat and light for this building, all of the government buildings, all of the motor vehicles, all the cars and trucks, everything that goes – so, the cost of government in this Province, in my view, is excessive and it is out of control.

Over the past few months, in speaking with people, people are really concerned, because this government was elected with a large vote of confidence, high percentage, high number of seats, and people wonder what has gone wrong. The only explanation that I can provide them is if you can imagine three dozen people aboard a bus going down a hill, and the bus driver had her foot on the gas right flat to the floor, literally barrelling down over that hill to who knows where, then that is like the Premier. The members of her caucus are trying to get her foot off the gas so she stops running downhill, because we are totally out of control with our spending. That is why the polls are as bad as they, because government is totally out of control. The problem is from not having a plan.

This government was a conservative government – that is not necessarily a bad thing – in 2003, with a conservative agenda. Then we came into the money and there was no plan, no plan to invest, no plan to upgrade, no plan for any department, and it was spend, spend, and spend. We spent the money that we thought we were going get from the oil revenues before we got them, and we over-projected. Even apart from the Muskrat potential debacle, we have a government that is simply out of control on spending.

It costs more to govern per capita this Province than any other province in Canada, and that is simply outrageous. The size of the public service has increased 30 per cent when our population has not increased at all. It is little wonder that we need a population strategy. We also need a government that is committed to much more efficient government, leaner government – not necessarily more taxes, but when I hear of bills, for example, that we had amendments made or proposed today to charge

for the cost of mortgages to be the registration fees. When people buy a home, they buy a home and pay for the cost of the transfer, the cost of the mortgage and all of the filing fees. The cost of doing business for government is simply too high in this Province. It needs to be streamlined.

The solution right now, because government did not have an effective strategy with public employees, we are going to say: here is \$1,400, this is good enough and it is going to work. Why do we have to have the \$1,400 in the first place? Why isn't it a different number? Is \$1,400 enough? Should it be \$1,000? Should it be \$1,500?

This is a figure pulled out of the hat by the government in order to effect a deal with the public employees, otherwise there might not be an effective deal. Simply, it is an indication of a failed public employment strategy and a failed collective bargaining strategy. The \$1,400 patch is almost like the patch put on the hull of the freighter that is on the bottom out by Change Islands. It is a patch that will fix it for now, but you know it is going to break loose sooner or later. I would implore this government over the next two years to embark on sounder fiscal management and fiscal planning and get the finances of this Province under control.

As for this bill, I feel no option but to support it. As many of the public employees said: We may as well vote for it because if we do not vote for it, what do we have then? We have to vote for it. I have to grudgingly support this bill, but it is patch for a government that is not doing well with its fiscal responsibilities to the people of the Province.

People say: What about the government's money? The government does not have money. The government only governs for people and it is the people's money. There is one taxpayer. Every time when I look at the HST and the GST component, we collect money but when a kid buys a can of pop or a bar or a bag of chips or whatever, we collect money by the pennies and we spend it by the millions and the tens of millions. There needs to be more financial

accountability in this government for the people of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR (Cross): The Chair recognizes the Member for St. John's Centre.

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

I am very happy to stand and speak to this bill, Bill 8, An Act for Granting to Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Additional Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service.

Mr. Chair, I keep standing and talking about our incredible time of prosperity, and I am able to celebrate that incredible time of prosperity. We are in an historic time of prosperity. The task then is what to do with that prosperity, how to make sure that prosperity is invested, not simply spent, but absolutely invested. I think that is what we are talking about here today.

Much has been said this afternoon. It is almost like a contest. Who can thank our public servants more? Who can thank our workers in the public service and recognize more than the other in terms of the wonderful service they provide for the people of the Province? I am sure that everybody sitting in this House, Mr. Chair, appreciates the work, the dedication, the expertise, the brilliance, the creativity that the workers in the public service bring to the people of the Province.

What would happen if we did not have people in the public service? Everything would grind to a halt. We all know that. We all know they are so instrumental on so many levels of our society in keeping us going, not only keeping the roads cleared, healing our sick, teaching our children; not only do they deal with our immediate needs, but they also have the future in their hands in terms of how they care for our sick, how they teach our children, and on and on.

This time of prosperity, Mr. Chair, I would like to say, we are also in a time of uncertainty. That uncertainty came about in the delivery of the last Budget where we saw 1,200 job losses that created such incredible uncertainty in our public service, and then had ramifications outside of the public service as well for families and for small businesses. In the retail market, we know that the sale of housing slowed down. People were afraid. Can I buy a house? Can I not? Am I going to be able to carry a mortgage if I buy a house now? There was so much uncertainty as well.

I would posit as well, Mr. Chair, that uncertainty has not stopped. We know in the last Budget there was a warning. This government warned that the next areas they are looking at for cutting are the regional health authorities and post-secondary education, MUN and the College of the North Atlantic. We know the cuts have not finished. We know that it was a beginning.

This time of prosperity also brings with it a time of uncertainty, which I find very odd, Mr. Chair, because a time of prosperity should in fact bring a time of absolute security. Why is it we do not have that feeling of security? Why is it throughout the public service we do not have that feeling of security?

We are still feeling the fallout of the job losses of the Budget that came down. We still know there are people who are grieving positions, where they have been moved and jobs they have lost. We know there are people who have been moved into jobs they were not qualified for or did not have an aptitude for.

We know people who had absolute expertise in their particular jobs within the public service were moved on, so their full talents and all of their education, their expertise is not being used to the fullest. That is not good investment. That is not good planning. We know that. So people are living in this time of uncertainty. It is an odd thing to not have an absolute time of security and hope and optimism in times of prosperity.

I feel optimistic. I feel hopeful because of our prosperity, but I do not in terms of – I see the

uncertainty because we do not know what is coming, but we do know there are more cuts coming because this government clearly said there will be cuts in the regional health authorities and there will be cuts in post-secondary education. That does not look good.

If everybody, Mr. Chair, is talking about how much –

MS SULLIVAN: A point of order.

CHAIR: Order, please!

On a point of order, the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, again, it is misinformation and I cannot stand for that. When we are talking about government saying –

CHAIR: There is no point of order.

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair, but at least it is on the record. It is misinformation.

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

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

In this sort of contest that we are having here this afternoon where we are trying to see who likes our public service workers, who respects our public service workers, who has more gratitude for our public service workers than anyone else, then I would say again that if we are in this time of prosperity, it is time to create more of a time of certainty. It is time to not just say we like our public service workers or we appreciate our public service workers –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS ROGERS: - or they are going to get a \$1,400 signing bonus, which I fully, fully

support, Mr. Chair, but it is time then to also give them something more concrete. It is time to give them something more concrete so they can continue to work here, so they can continue to do the work that they do with expertise and generosity for the people.

We know we need a publicly funded and publicly administered child care system, one that is part of our educational system. We know that is a good investment. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. We know that our public sector workers struggle to get affordable, safe, and quality child care. We know that most of our public service workers, if they have children, have to spend between \$800 and \$1,000 a month for child care.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS ROGERS: We know that with good investment that, in fact, is a sign of respect. That is a sign of appreciation for our public sector workers, if we invest our prosperity in order to make it more possible for them to live fully and provide the service that they want to provide to the people of this Province. How else can we take care of them?

We know how many of our public sector workers are dealing with aging parents. They are the sandwich generation. Maybe they are trying to take care of their children, maybe they are trying to send their children to university, but maybe they are also trying to take care of aging parents. We know the home care system that we have in this Province is deficient, it is not state of the art, and it is backwards. We do not have the home care system that serves the needs of our people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

MS ROGERS: We know that, Mr. Chair.

The other thing, Mr. Chair, is housing. I love to talk about housing because it is such an

important issue. All of our public sector workers need to be housed. Some of them are having a heck of a time trying to find affordable housing.

I know public sector workers in this building who are living with friends or family because they cannot find affordable housing. What I find kind of interesting, Mr. Chair, is in today's paper St. John's city council is calling on this government, they want to see –

CHAIR: I remind the member – thank you.

MS ROGERS: They want to see this government's plan for affordable housing. Imagine, the city is asking the Province for this government's plan for affordable housing. I have been asking this government for its plan on affordable housing for two solid years, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS ROGERS: If this government appreciates its public sector workers, if this government loves its public sector workers, if this government respects its public sector workers, this government would invest the money that belongs to the people of the Province in ways that help the people of the Province thrive and live fully. That is not what we are seeing, Mr. Chair; we are seeing words. We are just seeing words.

The other thing, Mr. Chair, the pension liability, we have to stop talking about the pension liability as a liability. Our seniors, our pensioners, are not a liability; their pensions are not a liability. They have been paying into them. We must not call it a liability.

Mr. Chair, I am so happy to be able to stand, to support this bill, to support and thank the public sector workers – I am looking at the clock there – supporting the public sector workers of our Province and I fully support Bill 8.

CHAIR: Order, please!

Your time has expired.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As a matter of fact with all the split up that I witnessed over the last couple of weeks or so, I thought the rhetoric would be toned down as well. I thought some of the members in this House of Assembly, in certain areas of this House of Assembly, would actually read the fine print and get in tune with what has happened with the Province. What I have heard here this afternoon, I guarantee you, has blown my brain, whatever size it is, I will be honest with you now. That is only way I can say it, I will be quite honest with you.

I was listening carefully in this House of Assembly to the Member for St. John's Centre –

AN HON. MEMBER: Painfully.

MR. O'BRIEN: Oh, and it was painful, I guarantee you; it was absolutely painful.

She started out by saying and referencing each and every member in this House of Assembly, getting in their places and appreciating and showing their appreciation of our public service, and that it was an absolute contest. What an insult to our public service, Mr. Chair.

As a matter of fact, it is a great day when you get a chance to get up in your place in the House of Assembly and praise our public servants, I say to the hon. member, which they have no regard for whatsoever I do not think. That is absolutely shown in the fact that their leader is all about raising personal income tax and causing more costs to our public servants and the people of the Province. Where is all of that?

Here she is, out there talking about the housing market and the uncertainty in the housing market. The last time I checked, the housing market was robust in this Province and the reason why it is robust is because of the economy that we live in. Who created that? Who created that?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: We created that over the last ten years, I say to the hon. member. As a matter of fact, I will jump ahead here because as she went along, she went all over the place, and it was hard to keep track of the foolishness that she was getting on with in this House of Assembly today.

She talked about St. John's City Hall last night in regard to their discussion about affordable housing. Well, I will talk a little bit about affordable housing in regard to what we have done in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. I am actually glad that Deputy Mayor Ron Ellsworth was pointing out the importance of all levels of government. As a matter of fact, he referenced that no one level of government could address the issues in regard to affordable housing, because it is much bigger than that. It is absolutely much bigger than that.

In the meantime, I want to point out that we have 2,779 rental units here in this city, and that addresses affordable housing. We have reduced our wait-list in regard to affordable housing right across this Province down to between 700 to 800 people – and it used to be up to 1,200 or 1,400. We have been investing heavily; \$8 million has gone into the Rent Supplement Program as well. It is all about affordable housing.

AN HON. MEMBER: Two residences.

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, absolutely, and two residences built here for our students – all affordable housing.

This is the kind of thing – as a matter of fact, I think in regard to the two residences, if I am right, it is close to about \$90 million gone into the two residences, one here in the City of St.

John's and one in Corner Brook. It is all about affordable housing.

Then she gets up there with the doom and gloom and the bottom is out of her and there is nothing being done in this Province in addressing the issues and challenges of our residents here in regard to affordable housing. These are the kinds of things that we are doing. We have grants for seniors, \$3,000 for those in this Province and \$4,000 in Labrador, and most of that goes to senior citizens. It is all about, again, affordable housing.

Then she said – and what an insult this is – the home care system in Newfoundland and Labrador is backwards – backwards. So, essentially what she said was the workers are backwards. They do not know what they are doing in Newfoundland and Labrador; they provide a poor service. She thinks that if we do not come out with a budgetary item in regard to the home care system and the increase in the budget that the system is backwards. So, whatever the home care workers –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. O'BRIEN: – are doing in this Province, whatever they are doing, that does not matter. It does not matter at all. As a matter of fact, I had intentions to get up in my place in the House today because I became the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills only just a couple of weeks or so ago, and what public servants I had there – absolutely – and the services that they are giving. Front-line services to the people of this Province, and somebody should say it. As a matter of fact, I encourage each and every one of you to get up and talk about our public servants, absolutely, because I am sure that most of us here appreciate public servants. That is a fact, but some of us do not, absolutely.

I say to the Member for St. John's North, he is one of them who really appreciates public servants, coming from the public service

himself, absolutely. I know it. I see it in his face. I see it in his pride. I know he really agrees with the Province's direction and this government's direction in regard to investing in the public service. I can see that.

That is one of the reasons why he just cannot agree with the Leader of the Third Party. Let's raise their taxes, absolutely. We are going to deal with this now and we are going to raise their taxes. We are going to take away any kind of an increase the government might give them. We will take over government, but the first thing we are going to do is raise personal income taxes.

She talked about the cuts and all of that kind of stuff. Then she referenced, too, the cuts have not stopped. She referenced the Department of Health, I believe. I remember only a couple of weeks or so ago I came forward with the reorganization, and no cuts – absolutely no cuts, none whatsoever, not a glimmer, not a thing on the Open Lines, the media, and that kind of stuff. As a matter of fact, only praise for the minister in regard to the work she did to make sure we streamlined our services but kept our public service in place. Isn't that correct, from the Minister of Health? Absolutely, I commend you.

Now, I have a piece of work as well, in regard to CNA, which is a great college, absolutely doing some great things, especially in the labour market areas, addressing the issues of having our youth avail of the services and the programs they have within the College, and addressing the skilled labour issues we have, taking advantage of the opportunity in such places as Long Harbour. Out in Placentia now with a great announcement out there, that it is going to require a certain amount of skilled labour. Then you have Muskrat Falls, and you have all the work that is happening in the offshore. Absolutely, our young people are availing of that opportunity.

A lot of them, some of them are coming home. They are absolutely coming home. As a matter of fact, in my own district, I just had a person move back home. He was out in Alberta. He is

a welder and he came back home. He sold his house up there, bought a house in Gander, and now he is working in Kiewit down in Marystown. That is a good news story, absolutely, and that is happening.

Now, is everybody moving? No, absolutely not, but we are creating the opportunity. It is up to the people to seize it. We are giving them every opportunity to seize that as well, because we are investing in education. We are investing over \$1.3 billion in education today. You can see the dramatic effect and the impact that it is having on our society here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have been doing some great things, but the things we have been doing as a government has been done by public servants. That is what this is all about. They are the people who do the work. They are absolutely fabulous.

As a matter of fact, I do not mind saying; I have given this little story a couple of times now when I spoke to public servants in Public Service Week or whatever it was. I came into government with much the same attitude as a lot of people: that public servants do not work; they play all day; they play their solitaire, and all that kind of stuff, or whatever it may be. That is the attitude that is out there in the general public.

Do you know something? When I became a minister and I actually saw the work that was done by our public servants, I cannot say enough to support them. Can we give them millions and millions of dollars? Absolutely not.

I think the Minister of Justice referenced that yes, we have seen our downtimes. The key to our downtimes is being able to manage our way through it and be fiscally responsible not only to our public service but also to the rest of the Province and the people who live here. That is what that is all about. That is the key.

I appreciate public servants because I have first-hand knowledge of the work and the great work they do. I encourage each and every member to stand up and let this not be a contest, let this be recognition of our public servants.

CHAIR: I remind the hon. member that his time is up.

MR. O'BRIEN: Let's vote on this bill, and hopefully we get unanimous consent because it is so important to our public servants, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will just rise for a few minutes. I see I only have a few minutes. Before I sat down the other day I think the Minister of Health was going to have something to say. If you want to stand you can stand and I could wait a minute. I know I am just going to have a few minutes to speak on this bill, Mr. Chair.

Before I do, I want to let the people of Newfoundland and Labrador know that a lot of times we debate issues in this House and a lot of times we have disagreements but it is usually on policy, very seldom is it personality. Outside the House most of us get along and I just want to recognize something.

This summer, Mr. Chair, I sent out a birthday greeting to a person in Bonavista North, as Leader of the Opposition. While the certificates were being presented, the Member for Bonavista North was there. There was a lady there, a good friend of mine; I will not say her name. The member knows who it is, who was there. He realized I was good friends with the person from McIvers actually, and knew this person very well at this birthday party.

When the member was presenting certificates, he asked the lady from McIvers to come up and present a certificate on my behalf, because I was good friends with her and she was from the Bay of Islands.

I just want to recognize that from the member, and it was greatly appreciated from myself and the family who was related, just to show that we do get along, we do recognize each other, and I just wanted to recognize that from the member.

I just wanted to thank the member for being so courteous on that lady's birthday, and I thank you very much for that, Mr. Chair. Thank you, hon. member, for that.

Mr. Chair, we are here today discussing this \$1,400 and we are here to recognize the people who work in our civil service throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We also admit that there was a time when there were people laid off in the last Budget; we cannot forget that. Mr. Chair, I always said in this House on many occasions to everybody: There is no one here in this House of Assembly who wishes any harm on anybody in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our differences of opinion are how we go about things; we have differences of opinion.

I truly, honestly believe that every member in this House, on all sides, have the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador at heart. I really feel that, Mr. Chair. I know people out in Newfoundland and Labrador see us debating, see us arguing back and forth, but we do respect each other and we do understand that we do have differences of opinion, that we do have different approaches, but we are genuinely concerned about people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are times when we are going to have differences. When we look at the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who look at this bonus and say well, we are not doing that well ourselves; but we have to recognize our civil servants who go out and put their lives on the lines on many occasions. I heard the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair speak about the people in the highways. They are very important to all of us in this Province. Because I know just maintaining our road system, keeping us safe, people driving back and forth, Mr. Chair, it is very important.

We mentioned our health care. I do not think there is one person in this House who is going to dispute our people who work in the health care. Mr. Chair, I see the time is getting nearer, I will adjourn debate, and I will come back and finish this and speak about the great work that the

people in health care and other professions in the Province do on a regular basis.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I see we are running closely out of time and I do want to say before we adjourn, I certainly respect the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. As he has said, we do often disagree on many points here; but, in spite of all that, it is about the people of the Province and the good, hard work. So, I thank you for those comments in support of the public servants.

With that, Mr. Chair, I would move that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

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

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, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have advised me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred, have directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the Committee sit again?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted.
Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Given we are at just about 5:30 p.m. in the day I move, seconded by the Member for Bay of Islands, that the House do now adjourn for the day.

MR. SPEAKER: It has moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay'.

Motion carried.

Tomorrow, being Private Members' Day, the House stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.