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HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

Wednesday

February 28, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Public Inquiries Act, 2006, Bill 35, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Public Inquiries Act, 2006, Bill 35, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Public Inquiries Act, 2006," carried. (Bill 35)

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Public Inquiries Act, 2006. (Bill 35)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 35 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act, Bill 34, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act, Bill 34, and that the said bill shall now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against?

This motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act," carried. (Bill 34)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act. (Bill 34)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 34 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 3, An Act To Amend The Order Of Newfoundland And Labrador, Bill 31.

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

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

Good morning to our first Wednesday morning sitting of the House. It's a good session if we get the chance to debate in the House. This is part of the Standing Orders changes that we made yesterday. This is another part of that so we can be family friendly.

Mr. Speaker, the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, it's a great honour for anyone to be even recognized or to receive this Order. It was started in 2004. Since 2004, I understand there are 99 people that have received the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. These are business people. These are people involved in sports. These are heroes in our society. These are individuals that make a difference to every Newfoundlander and Labradorian.

Last night I was reading up a little bit on it and I went back and looked at some of the names of people that were there. It's amazing when you look at it because people, what they do for our society and what they do for Newfoundland and Labrador – it's so great that we can recognize what these people do.

I looked at Tommy Sexton's mom there. I realized how important what she's done. I know AIDS today is not the factor that it was back in the '90s and the '80s, but the Tommy Sexton foundation was – and she's the lady that mainly did that and kept that foundation going. She was recognized.

I remember one time going to the ceremony myself when I was on that side of the House. I went down one day and I have to say it was a complete honour to be there. It was an honour to be able to show these people the respect that they deserve and to be part of it. We have some great Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. This

honour is the greatest honour that a person can receive in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So I believe it's a great thing. I think it's fantastic that we do recognize, because we have so many people in our province, like I said, that are doing great things. I know the minister got up yesterday and he wasn't sure of all the names of the people that were inducted this year. So I got it out last night and there was Terence Goodyear, Dr. Falah Maroun, Dr. Robert Mellin, Wayne Miller, Kathleen LeGrow, Katarina Roxon, Marie Ryan and David Smallwood.

When I looked at those names last night, Mr. Speaker, one hit me and it was something that really affected my family. I remember my father who, I think it was back in the 70s, needed an operation, and it was very serious operation that he needed at the time, and his doctor that performed the operation was Dr. Maroun. I'll always remember my father saying – and I'll ask the Minister of Health, I'm not sure if he's still practising today, and he's –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. K. PARSONS: A small bit, yeah. But I know he must be up in age now that he's still doing his practice, and I hear his name quite often.

I remember, not only my father, but I remember another lady in Flatrock that was a very good friend of my family. She had again a very serious surgery, life-threatening surgery. I can remember her always saying to us God love Dr. Maroun. We, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, really appreciate the work that people do in our society. We really appreciate what they do.

I'm here this morning – and I read through the bios of each one of these people last night, and they're from architects to builders to doctors to you name it, to an athlete, a young athlete from Kippens, I believe. That's Kippens, right? And the variety of people that were selected this year and the eight that were selected are fantastic Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I'm sure that we can continue this for a long period to come.

It was interesting, too, when I was reading up a little bit on it, because I was wondering who can be selected, who can't be selected. Obviously, people that are in the Senate, serving in the Senate, people in the House of Assembly, people basically that are working in municipalities and so on. Once they retire and go on to whatever, then they can be recognized, but once they're in that role they cannot be.

Again, reading through the list of inductees over the years, it's the who's who, it's household names that we've heard for years and years and years, but these people who were inducted this year, like I said, the variety and the backgrounds that these people have is amazing.

I know, as part of the Official Opposition, we never had the opportunity really to congratulate each and every one of them. I just named them all that time, but as all House of Assembly, I know we really do congratulate these people. Not only congratulate them, we really thank them for what they do and thank them for what they did because this is what makes Newfoundland and Labrador the place we all want to live.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this bill that the minister is bringing in, it's interesting because what it does – I was trying to figure out what, basically, it does yesterday when I was reading up on it. What we're basically doing is we're changing the committee. It's not big changes. No, there are no big changes. I think we'll be fully supportive of what changes are being made here.

In 2004, this committee was set up and it was set up as the clerk, the president of Memorial University and a chief justice. There were seven in total, so four other people were selected as the committee to go on as the council, the Advisory Council.

What happens with the Advisory Council, people submit their application? There's a criterion you have to meet to be able to submit this application. People submit an application, and each year eight people are selected. Now it says up to eight people. So I guess some years it could be six, some years it could be seven, but I'm sure each year there are more than eight people who are nominated.

So there's a criterion those people have to do, and they look at it and they say: Okay, it meets this, it meets this. You have to be a Newfoundland and Labrador resident, obviously, and your background – like I said earlier, it's usually a business. It's something you contributed to Newfoundland and Labrador that makes a difference to the people in this province. That's what this award is about.

We had the clerk, we had the chief justice and we had the president of MUN. Those were the three people who were selected at the time. What government's proposal in this bill is, basically, they want to change it and they're going to change it.

The clerk will stay, but this time the clerk will automatically be the chair of the committee. Instead of the president of MUN, it'll be the chancellor of MUN. The chief justice, and also you, Mr. Speaker, will have the opportunity, which is a good thing, too, because you will be the one representing the House of Assembly, which is good to have somebody from the House, an elected representative on the committee to make this decision. Knowing you, Mr. Speaker, I know you'll do the right thing and make good decisions.

Also, the other thing that I really like about the changes they are making – like I said earlier, there are people right now that have been selected to the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. Those 99 people, two of those people will be selected as members of the committee. Those are two, obviously, distinct Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that were selected for reasons of what they've done for us over their years.

When I looked at the names last night, I was thinking, these are people that made a difference in everybody's lives. So we're going to select two of those people to be on that committee. Then there are two more people that will be selected through the Independent Appointments Committee. I guess people will have to be – some kind of advertising and stuff like that.

As I understand from the minister, and he can correct me if I'm wrong, I think it is two- and three-year terms that these people will be selected for. I think in reading the bill last night,

it said two or three. We're changing the composition of the committee to go from seven people, basically, to eight people.

Again, Mr. Speaker, just reading through this, I don't see any problem with the changes that are made. As a matter of fact, I think some of the changes are good. I think it would be nice for the people who were already selected to have the opportunity to serve on this committee because I'm sure they serve, and have served Newfoundlanders and Labradorians many times before. I'm sure you'd have no problem getting two people.

The general public out there, if they want to – like I said, we'd have to make sure they're aware that they can put an application into the Independent Appointments Commission to be able to go on this committee also. And you, Mr. Speaker, will be also added. So those are the changes that are proposed in this bill and I think they're good changes.

Like I said, Mr. Speaker, this is something that was started in 2004 and has grown. We're almost at the 100 mark, where we will have 100 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians recognized for their dedication to our province, to their commitment to their fellow Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I believe it's a fantastic thing we're doing. I'm sure it will grow, and I don't think we'll have any problem in the future finding people out there. I know we'll find them in every community in the province, that people are trying to do their best to make a difference in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So this bill today, the amendments that are going to be proposed to be changes in this bill I believe are good things and I have no problem with supporting what's happening here.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to have an opportunity to rise and speak about the changes that are being made to

the *Order of Newfoundland and Labrador Act*. Of course, the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador is the highest honour that the province bestows upon people in this province and it's a wonderful honour to be awarded this award.

I think the changes that are being made to the legislation and to the composition of the selection committee really strengthens and adds to the prestige of this award. It's a wonderful piece of legislation. I'm encouraged that the Member opposite supports this legislation and I'm hoping that others will as well.

It's the highest honour the province bestows. Really, this act strengthens it. It really establishes the independence of the selection committee. It reinstates the chief justice as a member of the committee. It reinstates the involvement of the university. It includes the Speaker. I understand in some other provinces the Speaker is involved as well. So there's sort of a cross-jurisdictional rationale for the way these changes are being made. I think by having such independent people involved in the committee, it really adds to the already prestigious award.

As some other people have, I just want to mention a couple of the people, just to give examples of some of the really prominent people in our society who have received this Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. I'll just mention two in my district, or close to my district. One is Calvin White. Calvin White is a former chief of the Flat Bay Band. He's an elder with the Flat Bay Band, very involved in the cultural revival and the political movement to see the recognition of Aboriginal people. He's still very active. He was one of the people that – I think two years ago he received the Order of Canada as well and received doctorate degrees from Memorial University.

That's the sort of calibre of person, someone who has been involved in the community, made significant contributions to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. These are the types of people who are being selected for this Order of Newfoundland and Labrador award.

Another person – just this year, people have mentioned Katarina Roxon. I don't know if she's the actual youngest person who has ever

received this award, but it's amazing what she's achieved and the sort of inspiration she has been for young people in this province through her activities around the province. She's someone else who recently received the award.

David Smallwood from the Corner Brook area is very involved in the arts. Just this year he's been past chair of the Winter Carnival in Corner Brook. Numerous other things involving arts and community activities David Smallwood has been involved in as well. These are just a couple of examples of people, from all walks of life really, who have been inducted into the Order of Newfoundland.

I've had the honour to attend a presentation ceremony. It really is quite the event to see these people who have done a lot for the community, done a lot for the province, to receive their awards with their families and to receive this recognition for the work they've done in this province.

As well, I want to say the nomination process for the Order of Newfoundland, we're approaching the deadline for nominations for this year's Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. I just want to encourage people to look at the website. Go to Google, type in Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. You can get the nomination form. You can get information on the award, who you can nominate, how you can nominate, what the process is.

I think the deadline is in early March and people can be nominated each year. It's my understanding if you nominate someone this year it's carried forward next year. My understanding is this year there were 80 people sort of in the queue for seven positions, I think?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. REID: Eight positions someone is telling me. It's a very competitive process and it's a very high honour, indeed, to receive.

I just wanted to say that I think the changes that are being made add to the prestige of this already very prestigious award. It ensures the continued success of this awards program. I want to support the legislation that's coming

forward and encourage other people to do so as well.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am very happy to stand this morning and to speak to the bill which is amending the *Order of Newfoundland and Labrador Act*. I think it's wonderful that we in this province have an Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our first investiture, of course, was in 2004 but when we started with our Order, we were following the history of provinces in the country having such Orders in place. Not every province does, but each province does have a system of Orders and awards to honour residents for their actions and for their deeds.

The whole thing of setting up something like the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador – so, for example, in Ontario they created the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship. Alberta followed with the Alberta Order of Excellence. Ontario's move was in '73; Alberta's was in '79. Quebec was the first province to establish a true order, l'Ordre national du Québec in 1984. Saskatchewan has an Order of Merit, which was established in 1985. The Order of Ontario – so they now do have an Order, they started with a Good Citizenship medal, they now have an Order of Ontario and theirs came in 1986.

The Order of British Columbia in 1989 replaced what they had, which was the Order of the Dogwood. It is now called the Order of British Columbia. Prince Edward Island has an Order, the Order of Prince Edward Island. And you have the Order of Manitoba as well. So all of these provinces naming their Orders the same way we name ours. The Order of Nova Scotia and of New Brunswick both came in at the same time that we put ours in, in 2001. So we joined other provinces in the realization that honouring members of our province is a good thing to do, and it is.

There was a Canadian honour system that was set up in 1967 and provinces did – that was when some of them starting putting some of their bodies in place, like the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship. It was hoped that Ottawa would take a role in setting up these provincial bodies, but it didn't. So the provinces moved forward, and I think it's really good that the provinces did move forward.

Initially, the federal government did not recognize the honours and the declarations, and the reason being they feared duplications because, aside from the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Queen had not authorized them. I suppose they were looking at the whole thing of the Order of Canada, which is our federal honour. But the provinces, when the federal government didn't recognize the various provincial honours and declarations, the provinces responded by stating that since provincial ministers did not constitutionally have the right to advise the sovereign directly, they would do so via legislation under the prerogative of the provincial Crown. In other words, the provinces, through MHAs, cannot advise the Queen but they can use their legislation, and that's what they did.

Finally, the federal government came to recognize provincial Orders after a compromise was reached between Governor General Ray Hnatyshyn – and I think we'll all remember when he was Governor General and Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan Sylvia Fedoruk. I think we'll remember her name as well. At that time provincial honours established by legislation or order-in-council would be ranked below all national honours but above national declarations.

That was a real step forward that the provincial Orders are now recognized below national Orders, but they are higher in rank than national declarations. It was really good that I think the provinces kept at it and didn't just stop when Ottawa questioned what they were doing. I think that's probably a lesson to us. While we are a federation and we all try to work together, at the same time, the provinces do have particular jurisdictions, particular concerns and particular responsibilities to follow, and I think it's really good they did it in this case. As we know it's the nature of our federation and we will always have

the provinces and Ottawa negotiating amongst themselves and all together as we move forward as a federation.

So what we're doing here today is taking the bill that was first changed in 2005 after the initial bill and adding what seem to be fairly simple changes to it. I think what's really important is that in looking at the bill, in looking at the changes – for example, we have the Advisory Council and that's the body that receives the nominations. There is a whole process for the general public to be able to nominate people, and the council are the ones who receive those nominations and make decisions with regard to who, at any given time, should receive the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I think it's extremely important that the people who are on this council are people who have been chosen in an open way, in a transparent way. That the council itself recognizes its need to be open and transparent.

So I think it's important to note that we have coming back into the council a position that had been there before, that had been removed and now it's coming back in. That is the position of “the Chief Justice of Newfoundland and Labrador or, where he or she is unable to serve on the council for any reason, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador.”

I think the stature of the Chief Justice, either of Newfoundland and Labrador or of the Supreme Court, their stature carries with it, I think, something that really makes us feel good about the concerns with regard to transparency on the part of the council, with regard to the council being non-political, because I think this is very important. The council is to be impartial. It's to be non-political and I think it has to be open to understanding how it needs to be inclusive and representative when it comes to the people who are chosen to be members of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

You just spoke, Mr. Speaker, yourself, and referred to, for example, Mr. White who was one of our Aboriginal leaders in this province having received the Order. I think it was significant this year, for example, that we had somebody who was an immigrant to our province and to our

country, Dr. Maroun – I'm actually going to be doing a Member's statement honouring him today – that he received it this year. Then our wonderful swimmer, whose parents came from outside the country – though, Katarina herself was born in Newfoundland and Labrador – and the family originating from India.

So I think this recognition of the multi-ethnic nature of our province is a real responsibility that the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador has as they go forward. I think that's why it's so important that the council have on it people of stature who see and understand that responsibility.

Now, there are four at-large members on the council. Two who shall be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, each for a term of three years; and not more than two appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, each for a term of three years.

I'm wondering, the two who are being nominated – the first two I named are members, people who have already received the Order. They're members of the Order. Two of the four at large will be people who have received the Order. Then there will be two appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, each for a term of three years. That means people who have not received the Order, just the general public.

I won't speak to that today. I'll talk more about that when we go into committee to get some answers around that. I'm hoping that maintains the spirit that I'm thinking about. That it maintains the non-political nature of the council. That it maintains people on the council who we know fully understand the issues of transparency and the issues of the need for inclusivity and the need for representation in those who receive the honour, so that we fully reflect our whole province.

I will be asking some questions about the at-large membership when we go into committee. Also, I noticed that the Clerk of Executive Council shall be the chairperson of the council. I won't speak to that now, but to point out that with what's happening across the country it's sort of hard to go to the other jurisdictions and say we're doing what another jurisdiction is doing because, in actual fact, different provinces

are doing different things when it comes to the chairperson of the council. When we are in committee, I want to pursue this one a little bit more as well, looking at why we chose to go the route we've gone, which is different from some other routes.

I do think, though, that we have chosen a way of going for appointment that, overall, I think is less political than some other provinces. For example, the Order of Nova Scotia has a chair appointed by the premier on their council. They have the chief justice. They have the Clerk of Executive Council. They have the president of a university appointed by the premier. They have more than one university in Nova Scotia, as we know, so the president of a university appointed by the premier. Two others appointed by the premier, one of whom is an Order member. Then they have a member appointed by the Leader of the Opposition and a member appointed by each leader of a recognized party.

I find their appointments rather interesting; pretty heavy politically, actually. I think we have a much more open and non-partisan process when it comes to putting our council together.

We can't go to other jurisdictions and expect them to have the answers for us. We want to do what we think is right for us here in this province. Having said that, I still have some questions about the new makeup of our council and I will question that.

The important thing, of course, is that we have people on the council who are qualified; who are people of honesty and people of stature that we can trust are going to be totally fair and just. I would imagine they probably get frustrated, because I can't imagine what it would be to get maybe – I don't know how many nominations they get, but let's say they get 50 nominations and they have to choose eight people or nine people. It must be a daunting job they have. That's why you have to have people on the council, some of whom, not all, but some of whom are used to having to make these kinds of decisions, to make judgments and to make fair judgments.

Overall, I do support the legislation, but I do have some questions about the appointment of the Chair, about putting it right in legislation that

the Chair is the Clerk of the Executive Council. I have some questions with regard to the two members at large who will be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, and I'll speak to those in committee.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a new audio system, but I don't think it's going to make my speech any better for me but at least it's on. I think it's working now.

For those watching here this morning, what we're doing is debating Bill 31, An Act to Amend the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador Act. I'm going to get into a little bit of the meat of the act and then I'm going to discuss some recipients we have had from the District of Bonavista.

If you look at the change in the bill itself, it's the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council which consists of four of the individuals each of whom is a member by virtue of his or her office. We have the Clerk of the Executive Council, who is the Chair of the Advisory Council. We have a new addition, which is the chancellor of Memorial University. Also, a new addition is the Chief Justice of Newfoundland and Labrador. I believe this is the (inaudible) justice, and if he or she isn't available, then the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court would fill in.

If you go back to 2005, those two positions were removed, a representative from Memorial University was actually the president, and right now we're proposing to put the chancellor of Newfoundland and Labrador back. As the time committed to reviewing applications and meeting with the Advisory Council, for this person who is largely a ceremonial figure within the university, it wouldn't be a strain on the time as it would be for, say, the president.

I know you've spoken a little bit about this, Mr. Speaker, but currently there are 80 applications in and those applications stay on file for a period

of three years. This year alone, we've had 25 new applications put forward. That's quite a significant amount of time that this council would have to put in to doing this work and, from my understanding, it's all on a volunteer basis.

So you've got the Clerk of the Executive Council, the chancellor of MUN, chief justice of Newfoundland and Labrador and a new addition to this as well is the Speaker of the House of Assembly, which is common practice for other jurisdictions. Largely, we use the Speaker of the House of Assembly as that person has a non-political presence or non-partisan presence within the House of Assembly, so that's the reason why we put that person in.

Also, we have two individuals who are members of the Order and they are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, each for a period of three years. Finally, there are two positions anyone can have. Let's say if the Member for Lab West's wife wanted to apply. She's not a recipient of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador but she could apply for it. So this is the point I'm trying to make, or anyone else.

Those people are actually reviewed by the Public Service Commission, and that's part of our Independent Appointments Commission that would actually make it independent from any political interference. She would have to go through a pretty good screening process. And because she's the Member for Labrador West's wife, she wouldn't necessarily get it. It's all independent.

The other change within this document itself is largely a housekeeping item. It talks about the resignation or termination of someone from the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. So it's just a sub-note on the side here which solely had resignation from the Order but now we put in the word termination from that. That's just more or less housekeeping.

This is a good step forward. We've added more people. If you look at the number of applications we've had, we're at 80 right now. That's very time consuming. So if you add three additional people, that's having more people have a look at those applications. At the technical brief we

were given yesterday, these applications are phenomenal. We only select up to eight every year, but all 80 of those are people who are well deserving more times than not.

I just wanted to get into a little bit of some of the people within my district, and one special person who I met a few years ago. Frances Sweetland of Bonavista was invested in the 2000s and if you look at Frances's background, my God, it's amazing. She has over 50 years of volunteerism, not just in Bonavista but our entire area, whether it be on the health care board, she was the librarian there for countless years, and truly a remarkable woman. If you have a chat with her, certainly a heart and soul member of the community of Bonavista.

We also have Henry Vokey, well-known boat builder out of Trinity. Just recently – well, a few years ago *Land and Sea* featured him, and he was building his last schooner. Seeing the precision and artwork that he puts – it's not necessarily a skill, it's an art to him. The experience and what he's able to turn out, it's truly amazing. The last schooner that he put out featured on *Land and Sea*, it certainly gets into great detail of the boat-building skill, and how certainly it's a lost art these days. You have people like Henry Vokey who continues the tradition and even though he's getting up there in age, he's certainly passing that on.

We have Donna Butt. What else can I say about Donna Butt? She's originally from the Whitbourne area, but we've adopted her out in our way. If you look at, this is the 40th anniversary of Rising Tide Theatre. Last year was the 25th anniversary of the Trinity Pageant. And we make a few jokes here in the House of Assembly who we figure would be the best actor for the Trinity Pageant. But that tells you a lot about what the Trinity Pageant means to Newfoundland and Labrador, and what Donna Butt and Rising Tide Theatre has done for this province, and especially the Trinity Bight area. But the summers in the Bight, it's certainly laid the groundwork of the tourism industry that we have booming right now on the Bonavista Peninsula, and Donna Butt is well deserving and certainly a strong force in that industry.

So the final person I want to talk about – and she's not from my district – is a former naval

officer – she had a very lasting impact on many people in the Canadian Armed Forces and myself – is Gladys Osmond of Springdale. Gladys was a phenomenal person; she passed away a couple of years ago. When you meet her, it's quite truly inspirational.

Gladys would write thousands of emails, letters and cards and send them out to Canadian Forces members all around the world. When I was on one of my ships, one of the junior officers, we called him the 'Gladys-O.' Whenever we get a letter from Gladys or a card from Gladys, we'd make sure that we'd have someone write her back.

She didn't necessarily want anyone to write her back, but she did that so that someone out there would know that someone was thinking about them. If you were lonely on a deployment or whatever and you got a letter, she felt that would brighten their day, and it certainly did. We took the time and effort to write back to her.

MR. LETTO: Did you get one?

MR. KING: The Member for Lab West asked: Did I get one? It was never addressed to any one person, but you'd get them in the wardroom and you'd read them. She'd tell you about her life and how her life was growing up, or just what the weather was like that day. It was just something that she did to bring positivity to your day and we'd always make sure.

I was fortunate enough to participate in Run the Rock in 2014. I got to meet Gladys in our stop in Springdale. She was very proud, Mr. Speaker, of her Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. She was wearing it. I asked her about it and she said she didn't even want anything in return, but she certainly felt great pride in the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Frances Sweetland, Henry Vokey, Donna Butt from my district and then people like Gladys Osmond, these are people who truly make a difference in Newfoundland and Labrador.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I support the changes to this bill. I certainly appreciate the people who receive the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and the great work they do for

their communities, the people's lives that they touch and also for Newfoundland and Labrador.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take my seat.

Thank you very much for your time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm only going to take a moment to speak to this bill, but I did want to put it on the record. I'll be supporting this bill, Mr. Speaker. I don't have any big issue with it. Basically, as it's been said, and there's no point in repeating it, we're just going to be changing the makeup of the council, and those are the people who select persons to be part of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. We're just changing the structure of the Advisory Council as to who the members are going to be. We're adding back some members who used to be there in the past. We're removing a couple of others. That's basically all we're doing.

At the end of day, we're going to end up with, what I would consider eight qualified individuals who are going to review applications as they're submitted for people to receive the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. I'm sure they will do a good job in reviewing those. I'm sure the people who deserve the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador will receive them. I have no reason to believe this would be partisan in any way.

I understand the Leader of the Third Party did raise the issue about the two at-large members. They will be going through the Public Service Commission so, at the very least, we know those two individuals will be qualified to do the job. Yes, granted, the minister or the Cabinet will decide from a long list who they want to pick for those two positions, but they will be qualified at least; and, whether they were partisan appointments or not, they're not paid appointments.

I can see no reason why anybody who is on this selection committee wouldn't be reviewing applications of qualified Newfoundlanders who deserve to receive the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. There's nothing I can see that would be a challenge there. So as long as the people who are there are qualified to do the job to assess this, then I don't really care who's appointed as long as they know what they're doing and they do a good job. I'm sure they will.

There are a number of checks and balances in the sense that the Speaker will be on this and the Clerk will be on it and somebody there from MUN, I believe. There will be people who have already received the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. Regardless of those other two people, it's not like they're going to control the committee or anything in any way. So I don't see it as a big deal.

It is a few administrative changes, housekeeping really, as far as I'm concerned, and I have no issue with it. So I will be supporting it.

Thank you.

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

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

I'm very happy to stand and speak to this bill, An Act to Amend the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador Act. How wonderful it is to be able to celebrate the champions in our province. We know that progress is made in our province on different levels, whether it be in sports, whether it be in economics, in business, whether it be in human rights or social advocacy, whether it be in the status of women and pushing those boundaries forward. How wonderful it is and how fitting it is, Mr. Speaker, that we celebrate those folks in our communities who are leaders, who lead us forth.

It's a good thing to do, because not only do we celebrate those individuals, but we celebrate the achievements in ways that all of us benefit from their work. We also inspire our young folks, because they are able to see ordinary citizens, sometimes extraordinary citizens in terms of the roles they have played, but how ordinary

citizens do extraordinary things on behalf of the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So it's fitting, it's absolutely fitting that we are able to do that. That we, as a province, are compelled to do that, and that we are building structures that allow us to do it in a transparent, in an accountable and in an open manner. What's very important is we do it in an inclusive manner. That we make sure we celebrate, because we know that often the advancements we make in human rights, the advancements we make in society in terms of how we live together, how we make our decisions, how we share our resources are often led by ordinary people doing extraordinary things. They are often the ones who lead this House, who push and prod and encourage and lobby and advocate Members of this House to move in progressive directions that benefit all of the people of the province.

I am very happy to stand again to support how important the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador is. What we really have to make sure is that it reflects the changing society that we live in, our changing population, and we make sure that the champions – who may not be sort of the mainstream, easily identifiable champions, but the champions who are working in the margins, bringing issues out from the margins into the centre, into the mainstream – are also fully considered as worthy of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

What that means to our children, to our young folks, to see women honoured, to see racialized people honoured, to see people from the indigenous communities honoured, to see people from the LGBTQ community honoured, to see people from the immigrant community honoured, to see people who work in business, in academia, in sports, to see that plethora of diversity included in those who are honoured to receive the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In light of that, Mr. Speaker, how important it is to ensure those who come to the table also represent that diversity, so that they come with the knowing experience, the life experience, the knowledge from the particular communities that they represent. It's not about creating further

silos; it's not about creating further divisions. As a matter of fact, it is enabling us all to come together to celebrate the diversity of our province and to celebrate the diversity of those who will be honoured as champions in our province, and who will be bestowed with the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In light of that, Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to asking questions about the issue of the composition of the committee who give of their time so freely, who work diligently and with openness and transparency, to help choose who the recipients will be for each specific year. I believe it's really important to ensure those who have that task of administering the process for selection for the Order of Newfoundland, in fact, represent the diversity of our province. In order that everyone has a chance, every diverse community has the chance to work together to come up with the best possible selections. Also, so that the committee does the work that's necessary to encourage nominations from diverse and geographically diverse spaces in our province as well, so that we truly do reflect the diversity of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I won't belabour the topic. I do think there are other models that we have looked at. My colleague, the MHA for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, very clearly and concisely looked at how some of the other provinces look at selecting and composing the committee that will make the decisions about who will, in fact, be inducted into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is my hope that we can discuss some of those specifics in the committee process. Again, I support this bill and I look forward to that discussion about how to best set up our process so that in fact we can honour, not only the people who are worthy of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, but also honour a process that is absolutely inclusive and absolutely reflects the diversity of the population and ensuring that the selection committee reflects that diversity, ensures that the selection process and the decision-making process is even that much more rich and informed.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

Thank you to my colleagues on both sides of the House for their contributions to this important debate. I'm glad to hear, I think there seems to be support for the changes we're making. I understand there will be questions during the committee stage, which is also important. I look forward to trying to answer them the best I can; but, overall, I think people see this as a positive change.

We all know how important the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador is. We all know the people who get it – to reiterate my comments from earlier – are the best and the brightest. So we need to do what we can to ensure it maintains the luster that it has, and that's going to continue.

I'm very confident in the amendments we are suggesting here, and that will continue to happen. We will have a tremendous advisory committee in place. Many of it based on people by virtue of their office, not on virtue of anything else. It's the person who sits in the office; it's not just that person. That requires change. These positions change over time. That will be one of the duties that come with some of these very esteemed positions, when you look at the Clerk of the Executive Council, chancellor of MUN, Chief Justice of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Speaker. Again, something that won't change is actual members of the Order, as well as at-large people who go through a rigorous screening process.

So, I'm very confident and comfortable. I look forward to the questions. On that note, once I sit we'll move this to committee and continue on with this debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The motion is that Bill 31, An Act To Amend The Order Of Newfoundland And Labrador Act, be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Order Of Newfoundland And Labrador Act. (Bill 31)

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

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Now, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Order Of Newfoundland And Labrador Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 31)

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, seconded by the Member for Labrador West, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 31.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion passed.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Warr): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 31, An Act To Amend The Order Of Newfoundland And Labrador Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Order Of Newfoundland And Labrador Act." (Bill 31)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

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

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

Yes, there are a couple of questions under clause 1 that I would like to raise, but a point first before I ask my question.

When we look at the makeup of the council, we have four individuals who are there by reason of their position or their role. The Clerk of the Executive Council, the chancellor of Memorial University, the Chief Justice of Newfoundland and Labrador or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Speaker of the House of Assembly.

So when it comes to concern about diversity, concern about inclusivity, et cetera, when it comes to those four positions, when we look at it from a gender perspective or we look at it from an ethnic mix perspective, there are no choices to be made there because the positions are in place and that's it.

Then it would be the members at large where we would, I think, have some ability to make sure that we get diversity on the council itself as well because, as the Member for St. John's Centre said when she spoke, if we're going to have diversity within those who are chosen for the Order, we also need diversity in the council. Because it's been proven sociologically in all

kinds of ways that if you don't have diversity in a decision-making group, very often you don't get diversity in the decisions they make. I think we as women understand that very well because of the place in society we've had, societies where men have made all the decisions. I think we all understand that. So with the four at-large positions, that's the only place where we can get any diversity on the council.

Now with section 12(1)(b), which is the suggested new section for the act: "2 individuals who are members of the Order who shall be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council." And that's fine, because we actually are getting a lot of diversity in those who are being appointed to the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. I'm not going to say a lot, but we do have diversity.

We do have members of our Aboriginal community who have received the Order. We do have members – every year there's a healthy mix of men and women. We do have, now, examples of people who are either immigrants to our country and our province, citizens, but who are immigrants or first- or second-generation immigrants. In the members themselves we have the ability to have a mix.

My concern is the other two: Not more than two other individuals appointed by the LG in Council – and I have to refer that down to section 4. In section 4 it points out those two individuals, or up to two individuals, will be chosen under the *Public Service Commission Act*. My concern about having two positions appointed by the LG in Council is that here we are going to be putting these choices or the ability to make this choice or this appointment into a system that does not recognize diversity in making choices.

We know, for example, from other cases that the Public Service Commission appoints on merit and does not bring into consideration the issues of inclusivity in the ways that I've discussed. I'd like the minister to speak to that. I'm very concerned. Why did we just not have it as four people who are members? Or if we're going to have two individuals appointed, not tie it into Schedule C of the Public Service Commission?

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I'll certainly try my best to answer that. It was a wide-ranging question, but I know the point the Member was trying to make. I'll disagree with one point that she said that the four at-large positions were the only ones where we can get diversity. The other four may promise diversity, but it depends on who's put in there. I know what you're saying. It's not a case of they won't be diverse, it's just we have no choice in that, but they very well may be diverse.

We just have to look at these individuals over the years that have held it. We look at the fact that there has been a pretty decent gender balance. I would point out that the chief justice of Newfoundland and Labrador right now is a vacant position that we're waiting on an appointment by the federal government. We have no choice in that.

I get the point the Member is trying to make. What I would point out, I think, is that I truly believe this is one of those ones where if we had gone a different way, you could also ask similar questions as to why did you take that approach. I get the point of the question which is: Why didn't you do it this way?

The question is you have – so we look at the membership. It's four by virtue of their offices, two from the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and two from the general public to go through that screening process. I would point out that we're actually removing two Cabinet appointments as it was before. Again, those people didn't go through any process that I'm aware of, except they're in Cabinet process. I'm not sure if the Public Service was involved or not, they may have been, but there certainly was no Independent Appointments Commission, which also does have a diversity lens that they put into their screening. That's there.

Again if the Members want to question that, I've seen some of the sheets that come over when you do the questionnaire, when you fill it out, which anybody in this province can do, you're able to list a whole plethora of information about yourself. I've seen these myself where people

recognize whether they come from an indigenous community, if there's anything else – I've seen it and I know that it's there.

So the question then becomes: Well, why don't we use all Order of Newfoundland and Labrador people? What I would point out is that that forbids the vast majority of the public from having any say in this. Because right now we have 99 people on the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. So should we let four out of 99 – that number will go up, but that's a pretty small pool. That's a pretty small pool, and that's why I don't think it should be four. I think that having two there is great.

I also think that we do need to have the public involvement. This governs everybody in this province that's eligible for this award. So I agree with the fact that we're letting the public have that say.

It's not just Cabinet saying we're going to pick these two people, it's Public Service Commission, which again because if somebody – I get the point you are saying, well, why would you do that. If we didn't do that, somebody could come at us from the other side and say well, look, you guys are just putting who you want in and you're not going through the Public Service Commission. In this case, we put the Public Service Commission in and now it's why are you going through that. I get the point; I'm not criticizing the questioner here, not at all. I'm just saying depending on the perspective, you could question anyway you go about this.

I think it's a fair process. We have the public at large that can apply for this, go through the Public Service Commission, going through the Independent Appointments Commission and then be selected, so anybody in this province can apply for that, have a chance to be a part of this.

The second part is that we have the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador which is a small, very select group of individuals who will also be represented. Then we have four public office holders who, by virtue of this legislation, will have no say over who goes there. I mean the House will determine who the Speaker is. We have no say over the chief justice. I'm not sure who picks the chancellor of MUN, but it's a public office holder. It's not just LGIC throwing

it in there. The last one is the Clerk of the Executive Council, which again is the top civil servant in the province.

I like the process that we've done. I just look at the fact that the committee that's been in place, I don't think anybody argues with the selections that have been made. I think we have seen great Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I think we have seen diversity, but I take to heart the point that the Member makes which is we have to do what we can to ensure that that continues and we can always make sure that that's an issue that's discussed.

I agree with the point by all means and I know what the Member is trying to ask and I agree with that, but I'd like to have the compositions done here. I think it's a fair way and I think it gives everybody an opportunity to participate. I'm sure that they'll continue picking tremendous Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I just wanted to ask the minister for clarification. I think he was referring to people who submit their names. They can, on the form, when they submit their names, put in all kinds of information about themselves personally, which would include gender, which would include ethnic background, which would include all kinds of things about diversity. But is the minister saying that when those names go in under the *Public Service Commission Act*, under Schedule C, that information is taken into consideration?

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Again, I might turn it over at some point to the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission who is certainly more able than me to talk about the Public Service Commission process. But I think we have to look at the process and why it's there. It's because we don't want a situation where

people come in and there are no merit screenings. I think there's a general positive reason why that's there.

So what I'm going to suggest – I think what the Member is asking is that when it goes to the Public Service Commission, is the diversity aspect included in the that screening. What I'm going to do, just to make sure – and I think that it is – I'm going to check with the minister and let the minister, if he wants, have an opportunity to stand up and maybe speak a little more broadly as to the Public Service Commission and how they screen applicants for this, or for any position within the public service.

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will want the minister to do so because it is my understanding – and I'm presuming – that's why I wanted to speak once more so we get all the information out – the statutory appointments are the same as paid positions. Let me put it this way, the statutory appointment that would relate to the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador would be the same as nominees, for example, that would go the IAC for appointment. If that's the case, it is my clear understanding that under Public Service Commission they look at things from the perspective of merit and gender.

When we had this discussion about the IAC, for example, it's one of the things that we discussed here on the floor, and that the issues around gender, equity, diversity are not considered by the Public Service Commission in their hiring process; it is merit only and those things are not considered as part of merit.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you.

I say to the Member, it is an important topic; it's an important issue. I will consult with the Public Service Commission on this particular bill to find out what the appropriate answer is and report back to you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Further to the minister, what I can guarantee the Member opposite is that when the profile does go to the Public Service Commission, a diversity lens is and will be included in this. I can guarantee you that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I didn't intend to speak any more, but now it's after raising a couple of questions in my mind, to be honest with you. I just want to be clear.

I say to the Minister of Justice, my understanding when you brought in the Independent Appointments Commission legislation was that for a tier-two appointment – which these are tier-two appointments as I understand it, and you can correct me if I'm wrong but I think it is – basically anybody could apply, in this case, for this particular Advisory Council or board or whatever the name is on it – a committee, I'll call it the committee. That's not what's in there though. You know what I'm talking about.

In this case, you would advertise through the Public Service Commission that there are two positions available, so anybody from the public can apply. In theory, there could be 50 people who apply. Those 50 people apply to the Public Service Commission for those two positions. The Public Service Commission will screen those positions and they will say of these 50 people, 40 of these people are qualified; they meet the educational, experience. Whatever the criteria is, these people are qualified to be on this committee or board or whatever it's called.

Then they would submit those 40 names – and I'm using 40 as an example, Minister, it could be 10, but you get my drift. Forty names go to Cabinet and say there were 50 people applied; we screened them down to 40. All 40 of these people could do this job. So then it's up to the Cabinet to pick two names out of the 40.

I guess if there is an opportunity for gender equality, that's where it is. When the names go to Cabinet and if Cabinet looks and says the four positions that we have in place now – whether it be the chancellor, the Clerk, the Speaker and the chief justice – they're all male. Four of those people are male and the two people that we have here, the two names of the people who already hold the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, those two people, they're male. We have six males and we have a list of 40 names. We have six males already on it and two positions.

So at that point in time, if we're going to look at gender diversity, that would be the point in time, as I would understand it, you can correct me if I'm wrong, that would be the time where you could look at it and say we have six males, no females and 40 names; so if we're looking through these 40 names of qualified people, we should make sure that we put two females or even one female or whatever, or maybe there's an indigenous person on the list of 40 names and there's a female on the list, we'll put those in there to make it more diverse.

That's the only opportunity for diversity, as I understand it, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I would like clarification.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

It's a good point by the Member and I understand what he's saying. Yes, certainly at the Cabinet table, diversity and a whole number of lenses, have to be applied for this. Now, what I would say is four are office holders, two though, the members of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, are also selected by the LGIC. So there are two there, plus there are the two at large, and yes, you take the names that are given to you.

All I can say there is, again, that's a Cabinet decision and a Cabinet or any group should be judged on the decisions that they make. I'd like to think that this government and our Premier have kept these things in mind when it comes to gender, when it comes to demographics. We try

our best to make sure we have people from all over this province. We keep everything in mind, but you have to judge us on the decisions that we've made. I'd like to think that's something that our Premier has made a priority, but again you have to base it on what comes out of it.

I think that you would hold yourself open to criticism if you didn't keep these things in mind. It would look awfully odd if you had an all-male board making decisions like that. I don't think that's where we are as a province. I don't think that's where we are as a country. I think everybody is getting in line with that line of thinking.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 4 inclusive.

CHAIR: Clause 2 through 4 inclusive.

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

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

We sort of got mixed between 1 and 4 because we couldn't help it, but now that we're specifically in the area of 4, I just have a couple of specific questions then.

I take it the minister is probably not ready yet to give the further information that he said he would give us. If he's not, I'll wait for third reading. But I do want to ask the Minister of Justice, the House Leader, in making the commitment that you made when we were discussing a minute ago with regard to diversity, you made a commitment that the two appointments that would be included under the

Schedule C of the *Public Service Commission Act* you're committing that diversity will be considered, how can you make that commitment? I just need to have that answered.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, it's a good question. What I can say is that after speaking to Cabinet Secretariat, what they are saying and what we are guaranteeing is that diversity will be considered when these applications go to the Public Service Commission. If something happens that that is not the case, then I'm very sure that this matter is going to end up on the floor of this House and I'll be asked why I said one thing and something else happened.

This is in consultation with Cabinet Secretariat. Diversity is something that should be considered; it will be considered. It's always considered by Cabinet, that's for sure, so that's basically what I can say to that point.

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

MS. MICHAEL: I ask the minister then: Was consideration given to putting that principle actually in the legislation? I think that would be really important if that is going to be, would it be possible to actually have an amendment, just putting that principle in the legislation around the appointments of the council itself and the formation of the council?

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you very much for recognizing me. The minister doesn't want to speak to it and I don't have an amendment ready to put on the floor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: The minister isn't speaking to it at the moment.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MS. MICHAEL: He is thinking, okay.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 through 4 carried.

CLERK: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Order Of Newfoundland And Labrador Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 31.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 31.

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

The hon. the Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 31 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 31 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

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

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

At this time I would call from the Order Paper, Order 4, second reading of Bill 32.

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

MR. HAGGIE: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, that An Act Respecting The Centre For Health Information, 2018, Bill 32, be read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 32, An Act Respecting The Newfoundland And Labrador Centre For Health Information be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, “An Act Respecting The Newfoundland And Labrador Centre For Health Information.” (Bill 32)

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

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

I’m delighted to rise in this hon. House today to open the debate on Bill 32, as I said, An Act Respecting the Centre for Health Information, 2018.

In light of the guidance you’ve provided in the shiny new Standing Orders that we have, I’m going to tell a tale of NLCHI and make the case for why new legislation governing this body is appropriate.

This, I think, is relevant because it is a story of evolution and it describes how health care, particularly in the IT sector, has evolved over the last 22 years. The centre was, in actual fact, first established back in 1996 and at that point it was a subdivision, if you like, of Eastern Health. It became fairly obvious not long after that, that that was not going to suffice and it had a broader reach and a broader impact.

So in 2007, the current *Centre for Health Information Act* was passed, and NLCHI became an agent of the Crown under that act. Basically, my next bit of my narrative will be to describe

how the centre has evolved over that period, what the gaps are and what problems this new act is designed to remedy.

At the time the current act came into force, the centre’s primary objective was to establish for the province an electronic health record system. For those who have not worked in that environment and may not be entirely familiar with it, an electronic health record is essentially a single unified repository of an individual’s health care history. It’s supposed to be comprehensive and it’s supposed to be accessible to those in the circle of care who need to have it at the time they need it. It does so in an electronic format.

The existence of such an EHR – Electronic Health Record – really cannot be understated. It provides real-time information from various sources for people who may need to access that information to determine changes in treatment and assessment of their patients. Really, it’s become an essential tool for clinicians, not just physicians, but anyone involved in what is now called, through other legislation, the circle of care.

To date, the centre has accomplished a lot of the work it was set out to do and some more. We do have now a fully functional health record, which is now working under the working title of HEALTHe NL. The information that presents to a clinician is generated from a variety of sources. We’ve had discussions about some of these in this hon. House already, and I would mention specifically the Pharmacy Network which was inaugurated last year and became the subject of foundational building block, really, for the Prescription Monitoring Program which we discussed in legislation in the last session, and I’ll come back to again.

It also includes the regional health authorities, a PACS system – PACS is an acronym for Picture Archiving and Communication System. What this essentially is, is imaging done for patients in a whole variety of ways – so it’s X-rays, ultrasound, CT, MR, and ultimately the new PET scanner when that is up to speed. And it allows a practitioner anywhere in the province to access both the images directly, if they choose to, but also the reports generated by radiology

reporting. It's truly a great asset for specialists, and the reports, I think, are of benefit to all.

Built on that, one of our recent successes – pioneered in Central Health, in actual fact, just to digress ever so slightly – is telepathology. We have replicated for black and white digital images of X-rays, for want of a better word, to full colour images of pathological specimens and slides which now allow for a virtual community of pathologists to provide input in difficult or challenging cases.

Just to go back to the Pharmacy Network, Mr. Speaker. This, for clarity and just to refresh folk's memory, is a record of all the prescriptions filled and medications dispensed by all 201 pharmacies across Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a foundational building block, it's a real-time repository and it's now the basis of the Prescription Monitoring Program. We had lengthy discussion and debate about that in the last session. This is to deal with the opioid issue we have in this province which is a significant, if not one of the major, public health threats to the citizens of this province.

I've referenced the Picture Archiving system, but in terms of how this works from a patient and a provider's point of view, it's a single portal for secure access for health care providers to a medication profile. It receives real-time data from the laboratories we have across the province and information regarding hospital in-patient admission. All of this is available at the time of need on the desktop of a practitioner so that they get the biggest possible, most complete possible picture of the health and problem status of the individual in front of them.

Over the last 22 years, the staff of the centre has dedicated a lot of work to improving HEALTH NL and making it still a success and a key initiative. That work is not yet complete; there are other strands that need to be drawn in. I may allude to some of these later on.

There is an electronic medical record which sits underneath the electronic health record, which is physician and nurse practitioner centric, but again provides that level of detail for the clinician at the time of point of care. NLCHI have been instrumental in rolling that out in conjunction with the Newfoundland and

Labrador Medical Association, particularly, to private physicians' offices to try and again integrate that missing piece into the bigger picture as it were.

Over the course of particularly the time since 2007, the centre has acquired or been given additional responsibilities. The Prescription Monitoring Program and Pharmacy Network were never envisioned in anything more than broad concept back in 2007.

One of the problems that this legislation is designed to fix is a provincial shared services model for IT and what we've called eHealth rather than HEALTH NL. We announced this is as an initiative in October of last year. What this is, is an approach which will leverage the expertise in each of the RHAs but eliminate and streamline the processes. Because, at the moment, we have four RHAs each with stand-alone, separate systems which while it is compatible with each other are not integrated, and we have duplication of administration and network functions and these kinds of things.

In a way, analogous to the shared services model for purchasing and inventory control across the RHAs, the background of the shared services IT, eHealth piece is that these functions will be steered, coordinated, maintained and updated through a provincial body based at the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information.

This initiative is a new one and, therefore, the existing legislation does not reflect the mandate of NLCHI. It also doesn't reflect other areas which the centre has been involved in since the original act was proclaimed in 2007. To fill these gaps, Bill 32 basically, in its crafting, will update the objects of the centre's act to include those areas in which it's engaged but weren't specifically referenced in the original legislation.

For example, the most prominent of these is managing the provincial databases related to health. We've had discussions in here, particularly around diabetes and chronic diseases. We now have a diabetes registry as part of a chronic disease registry. The centre will be the home of these, will look after the networking and the interfacing of this database and registry with other entities throughout the

health authority. We actually have the Newfoundland and Labrador Cancer Care Registry which was new and came into being within the last 18 months.

One of the other roles of the centre which evolved from its original format was the preparation of health reports. Its original funding back in 1996 and up to 2007, a lot of it came from Canada Health Infoway which was a federal method of flowing funding for IT to try and make a system of data collection across the country that was compatible. And, if you like, CHI – Infoway as it's now called – was the backbone; it was the pipes through which information could flow. NLCHI has been involved on our end at the provincial level in supplying data compatible with their reports, which go through Infoway to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, or CIHI.

A lot of the national benchmarks and the national data, from our point of view, go through the NLCHI, the local Centre for Health Information. That was not referenced in its original mandate.

The other piece is we are developing with these databases a significant repository of information about a very useful population, not only useful to the people of the province but useful to the broader scientific community. We are seen increasingly as a location, because of the integration of our health records and because of our unique founder population, for research both of an applied and a more theoretical nature.

We have no means of coordinating that in a sensible way that will benefit the people of this province. Much work and much thought has gone into this, but the enabling piece will be this new act which will allow and put into place, formally, conducting research and evaluation as one of the objects of the Centre for Health Information.

The final piece which is of crucial importance in an environment of evidence-based medicine is that, again, this data repository is a treasure trove of health analytics. I would like – and I have said to the CEO and to the board of NLCHI – to see the centre become a decision support tool for the Department of Health and for the regional health authorities where a question of

topical interest, incidents of Lyme disease, spikes in the rate of syphilis, these kind of things, can be addressed through one central repository and get real-time data back that can help inform public health decisions, health policy decisions and clinical issues related to population health. That isn't in existence in the mandate at the moment. It will be and it is enshrined in the new act.

These are problems of evolution. They were not envisaged in a granular way when the 2007 act came. Really, we need, as legislators, to make sure that our legislation is up to date and reflects the needs of the people.

Managing these databases, operating them and running the network is a skill or a set of skills that the staff at the centre have. The ability to pull out this data and analyze it is one they have developed and actually are building on. Really, I feel, as a legislator who's also responsible for overseeing the biggest department in government from a financial point of view, that really and honestly this is the way to bring evidence into policy and such decisions.

As I mentioned earlier on, the provincial eHealth model is part and parcel of that. The list of objects set out in section 4 states quite clearly this is now to be the responsibility of the NLCHI to manage, operate and maintain a consolidated and integrated system that contains all of it, the information, the application, the networks, to look after both the clinical and the administrative functions of the RHA. Those administrative databases have started to migrate into NLCHI as well. That provides decision support for senior management teams, as well as down to the director level at the RHAs.

The key in all of this, in anything to do with health information, is privacy. This act also then goes on to confirm the centre's obligation to continue to maintain the privacy of individual's personal health information which is collected, used, disclosed, stored or disposed of by the centre. Those are the words of the act. It does so in clear accordance with the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, but also the *Personal Health Information Act* which governs specifically those health regulations.

In section 4 it also leaves flexibility. Just as in 2007 some of these entities and activities I've described were never envisaged. In 2018, there are things we cannot foresee that may roll out down the road in 2021, 2022. This piece of legislation enshrines some degree of flexibility to do this by way of regulation.

Set against all this is a requirement and a need that the public and indeed the President of Treasury Board has mentioned in speeches in public, which is to enhance the transparency and accountability of the operations of the centre and its management.

So as such, effectively, the changes proposed in this act reconstructs, slightly, the Centre for Health Information as, if you like, a fifth RHA. It grants the minister authority to give direction to the centre in the same way he or she can to the RHAs. It does so quite clearly within the constraints of that section to further the objects of the centre, to provide guidelines to follow the duties and responsibilities and exercise of its powers, and to coordinate the work of the centre so it aligns clearly with the policies and work of government, other government agencies within the realm of health, as broadly defined, and community services in the province.

Because of gaps in the previous legislation, the bill also sets out the centre's powers to deal with property. It specifies, like the RHA, that while it may acquire or dispose of personal property, any dealings with real property as well as loans or investment must have ministerial departmental approval. That's entirely aligned with the arrangements in the regional health authorities.

The reason for this is essentially the government is the main source of funding for the centre, so we have to build into legislation these accountabilities so that we, as custodians of the public purse, can demonstrate to our constituents, the taxpayers of this province, that the financial contribution that we make, as government, is used in line with the objects of the centre and for the benefit of the people of this province, directly, as a whole.

In that regard, Bill 32 provides direction on the submission and approval of the budget for the centre. It again further aligns it with the RHAs, which all of the ABCs are most aligned in turn

with the desire of the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, from fiscal alignment with government and the government employees.

It entrenches in legislation, puts in legislation for the centre to appoint an independent auditor and an annual requirement for auditing of the records, accounts and transactions. It also, as a fail-safe, permits the minister to audit the accounts and if need be, heaven forbid, to appoint an administrator, should the centre ever find itself in unforeseen situations of serious financial difficulty.

To further expand the accountability, Mr. Speaker, Bill 32 expands the membership of the board of NLCHI. It looks to make sure that the governance structure also aligns with the mandate that we are setting out in legislation. Again, something of an evolution has occurred since 2007 when it was first set up as an agent of the Crown.

In addition to members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, a director to the board would be appointed from each of the Department of Health and Community Services and the Office of the Chief Information Officer. While, traditionally, an employee of OCIO has always served on the centre's board, it's not been a specific requirement. It's been a tradition, a precedent; it's not enshrined.

This legislation will change that now, that there has to be a member of the Office of the Chief Information Officer on the board. This is crucial, we feel, given the intersection where the databases and information assets held by the centre overlap and mingle with those held by OCIO. That perspective has to be present at a high strategic level.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, with accountability in mind, Bill 32 makes specific reference to the appointment of the CEO of the centre and now requires the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, in consultation with the board, to appoint that position. That has not been the case to date.

The CEO of the centre is obviously going to be an important employee of the centre. It's that person's statutory duty to be responsible for day-to-day management and to conduct the centre's

affairs responsibly and prudently. As such, in reflecting the seriousness and the importance of that position, the act makes it that the position's appointment will be conducted in accordance with the process established under the *Independent Appointments Commission Act* and puts it on a par with the case for other chief executive officers of other crown agencies.

Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information is a crucial, integral part of our health care system. It has been a leader in its field provincially and nationally in the development and management of electronic information tools in the health care realm with benefit to the people of this province.

Bill 32 continues the centre as a corporation and as an agent of the Crown. It updates the centre's enabling legislation to reflect its actual mandate, with also some flexibility for future developments and evolution that can't easily be seen through a crystal ball at this stage. It recognizes the centre's role in developing the provincial model of shared services for health. It allows for the expansion of its mandate and enhances its accountabilities as an agent of the Crown.

Mr. Speaker, I regard this as an important legislative initiative and would ask all Members of the House to support this. I look forward to answering questions and listening to feedback from the other side of the House as second reading and then Committee unfolds.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would like adjourn debate on Bill 32.

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

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

Given the hour of the day, I would suggest that we recess until 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: This House stands in recess, consistent with Standing Order 9(1)(b), until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I'd like to draw all the Members' hon. attentions.

In the Speaker's gallery I'd like to welcome and recognize Mr. Don Roche. He's the superintendent of Prisons. He will be referred to in a Ministerial Statement this afternoon.

He is joined by his wife, Terri Roche; his son, Lucas Roche, who I understand is studying political science; and his mother, Mary Roche, who it's her first time ever in the House of Assembly today. So welcome to you Mary, and also welcome to long-time family friend Ms. Barb Cadigan.

A big welcome to all of you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, from Harbour Main, Cape St. Francis, Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

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

I'm delighted to congratulate Dr. Falah B. Maroun for being invested into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Dr. Maroun came to Newfoundland and Labrador to do a three-week locum in 1967 and has been in the province ever since. Like many Lebanese before him, including my own grandparents, he chose to stay and make this province his new home.

Having completed training at the French faculty of medicine in Beirut and the Montreal Neurological Institute, Dr. Maroun held the position of chief of the division of neurosurgery in St. John's for almost 40 years.

Since 1968, he has been actively involved in clinical practice and teaching at Memorial University's faculty of medicine. For a number of years, Dr. Maroun was the only neurosurgeon in the province.

Dr. Maroun was awarded the Order of Canada in 2002 and has been appointed lifetime honorary president of the World Association of Lebanese Neurosurgeons. Dr. Maroun was instrumental in establishing the Lebanese Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, an organization of which I'm a proud member.

There is immense pride in the Newfoundland and Labrador Lebanese community in the recognition of Dr. Maroun's life and work.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Dr. Falah Maroun, who is watching us right now, for his outstanding accomplishments and contributions to our province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MS. PARSLEY: Mr. Speaker, this Sunday I was delighted to attend the annual Crystal Dip in the Town of Holyrood.

This year, 20 brave souls took the frosty plunge into the frigid waters of Conception Bay in support of the Canadian Mental Health Association. To give you an example of how cold it was, Mr. Speaker, the dip was moved from its original location of Holyrood Beach to Maloney's Beach on the opposite side of the harbour as there was too much ice ashore for the dippers to safely enter the water. Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, following the icy dip, we all were treated to a pancake breakfast complete with hot chocolate, tea and coffee.

Events such as these not only create a great sense of community pride but serve as a support mechanism for non-profitable in our province. I am pleased to inform my colleagues that a cheque for \$3,512 was cut for Canadian Mental Health Association after the breakfast. The dip is

very near and dear to my heart, as we all know how much mental health awareness and support matters to families and individuals who are suffering and, indeed, in need of help.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating the Town of Holyrood, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the dippers of this year's Crystal Dip and the brave job they undertook to help this very worthy cause.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I rise today in this hon. House to recognize Christopher Coady, an incredible 18-year-old karate athlete from Flatrock.

Christopher is a member of both the Junior and Under 21 National Karate Team and the Senior National Karate Team. He has proudly and successfully represented Newfoundland and Labrador throughout the country and around the world.

Last year, Christopher won two silver medals and a gold medal at the National Karate Championships in Quebec City. He won a bronze medal in the team fighting category and placed ninth in the individual category at the Senior Pan American championships in the Caribbean. He finished fifth in both the individual and team fighting categories in the Junior and Under 21 Pan American championships in Argentina. He was crowned champion at the Atlantic Canadian Karate Championships right here in St. John's. He also travelled to Spain to compete in the Junior and Under 21 World Karate Championships. He is the first Newfoundland and Labrador karate athlete to achieve such an honour.

Mr. Speaker, while partaking in all this competition and travel, Christopher also graduated from Holy Trinity High in Torbay with first-class honours and was named Senior Male Athlete of the Year for his school.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Christopher Coady on everything he has accomplished in 2017 and wishing him continued success in 2018.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am proud to recognize the late Eric Dawe of Bay Roberts. Mr. Dawe was known to many as Mr. Bay Roberts, as he spearheaded the formation of the town council in 1951. He was elected to the first council and later chosen as mayor.

Not long after, he ran for provincial politics and was elected as MHA for the District of Port de Grave, and eventually was appointed to Premier Joey Smallwood's Cabinet as the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Prior to his entry into political life, Eric was a businessman working with the family business in the nail manufacturing. He later entered into another family enterprise, Avalon Coal Salt & Oil Limited. It has been said by authors, such as Bill Rowe, that Eric Dawe was a natural when it came to political foresight.

This foresight was also evident in Eric's management style at Avalon Coal Salt & Oil, his family-owned company that has prospered for more than 150 years. It was an honour to know Eric Dawe and I am grateful to have received some strong advice from him. He was a husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend who touched the lives of many.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to commend Mr. Sheldon George for his exceptional career in

aquaculture and his recognition as NAIA's Aquaculturist of the Year for 2017.

Sheldon has a bachelor of science degree, majoring in biology and the advanced diploma in aquaculture from our very own Marine Institute, and has spent over 20 years engaged in the aquaculture profession. He started his career in New Brunswick for 10 years on fish farms and progressed to being a husbandry manager for a Norwegian company, then a buyers group.

Fortunately for us, he got back involved with the aquaculture industry in our province and has spent over a decade promoting, assisting and fostering the development of commercial aquaculture in Newfoundland and Labrador. Currently, as production manager with Cooke Aquaculture, he is very well known for his passion and energy for aquaculture, and we thank him for his commitment to growing the industry and serving his community.

Sheldon plays a key advisory role on various boards and committees, including the NAIA board, the Cabinet steering committee on Growing Forward and others.

I ask Members of this hon. House to join me in recognizing and thanking Mr. George for playing an instrumental role in proving that aquaculture is a viable, profitable, and community sustaining initiative.

Congratulations, Sheldon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this hon. House to recognize today as Pink Shirt Day.

Pink Shirt Day is an international movement which brings awareness to bullying, how it affects all of us, and what we can do to prevent it. This year's theme is "Nice Needs No Filter."

Pink Shirt Day is being celebrated by students across the province. This morning I had the pleasure of participating in an assembly at Larkhall Academy and I was amazed at the enthusiasm and kindness that was on display. Students, teachers and staff, wearing pink, celebrated friendship and created an important awareness that violence and bullying is not acceptable in any form.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that people subjected to violence and bullying know they're not alone and there's help and support available to them. To help with these efforts, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has provided \$13,000 shared amongst 32 schools through Safe and Inclusive Awards. These awards recognize the efforts of schools in establishing and maintaining safe, caring and inclusive learning environments, promoting effective actions to create positive school climates, and sustaining safe and caring communities. Congratulations to all of this year's recipients.

Ensuring all students throughout Newfoundland and Labrador have a positive, safe and caring environment in which to learn is a priority for our government. Our Safe and Caring Schools Policy helps to establish this through school-based protocols and practices that challenge all forms of bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, if we all make an effort to act with kindness toward one another, we have the potential to make a difference in people's lives and to provide the example we want modeled by children and youth. One kind word can change someone's entire day.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in celebrating Pink Shirt Day and to share the importance of being kind to others each and every day.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The subject of bullying and its effects have gone unnoticed for far too long. Victims of bullying often carry with them the hurt and trauma for years. Such instances are compounded when the victims are in their formative years, which is why it is incumbent on us to all promote safe and caring environments for our students.

While I'm pleased to see the Liberal Members publicly coming out against bullying, the irony cannot be lost on anyone that the Education Minister delivering the anti-bullying statement has himself exhibited behaviour that he is supposedly against.

This side of the House is pleased with the efforts of students, parents and teachers who combat all forms of bullying, but there is much more we need to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, 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 join the minister in recognizing Pink Shirt Day and thank all recipients of the Safe and Inclusive Awards for their work against violence and bullying in schools. These initiatives provide anti-bullying education at an early age within our school systems and help build a foundation against bullying and harassment into the future. We need to learn from them.

General education is needed in our schools, our workplaces and beyond to broaden our understanding of what constitutes bullying and harassment and how to prevent it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I'm pleased to rise in this hon. House today to welcome the new Superintendent of Prisons, Mr. Don Roche. Superintendent Roche began his career in adult corrections in 1982 and has more than 30 years of service in the field of corrections.

During his career, Superintendent Roche worked at the St. John's Lock-up and the Salmonier Correctional Institute, but spent the majority of his career at Her Majesty's Penitentiary where he served as a duty captain, a training captain and Assistant Superintendent of Operations. His previous leadership experience within our prison system is extremely valuable and he is certainly very well respected amongst his colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, Superintendent Roche has significant experience in the field of training and has provided mentorship and guidance within adult corrections throughout the province. He is a recipient of the Corrections Exemplary Service Medal and was a certified Suicide Intervention Skills Trainer and a certified Use of Force Instructor.

I have great confidence in the professional and hard-working staff we have at our correctional facilities and we are very fortunate to have Superintendent Roche in this role as we work to strengthen corrections and the justice system in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in welcoming Superintendent Roche and to thank him for taking on this important role.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement today. I, too, would just like to reflect on the 30-plus-year career of Mr. Roche so far. I can tell you, I have heard it said many times and I've heard it over the years how he's made a significant contribution to, not only the prison system, but also to those who work there and those who have been housed there over the years. He's highly respected by many and I can tell you, many have benefited from his role in the prison system and his contribution to our province.

I'd like to very briefly, Mr. Speaker, acknowledge his family that's here with him today, and specifically I'd like to address his mom for a moment, if I may, because I know from the Member for Cape St. Francis here sitting behind me, I hear that Mr. Roche's mother is a common dance partner of the Member. They've had occasion to have a dance from time to time. He speaks very highly of her and I know that she, as a person, is reflective in her son, Don.

I congratulate Don and his family. I wish him all the very best.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister. I thank Superintendent Don Roche for taking on this very challenging and crucial role. Many of our correctional facilities are antiquated and are often operating at overcapacity, which places an enormous strain on staff and inmates, also making true meaningful rehabilitation very difficult.

With his background and focus on rehabilitation, I am sure Superintendent Roche will contribute to positive change in the corrections system. My hope is that government will allocate the needed resources so he can effectively manage and do this important work with his dedicated staff.

Thank you, Superintendent Don Roche. Bravo!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

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

Yesterday, here in the House when I asked about the \$400,000 government funding grant awarded to the company –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: No interruptions, please.

Please proceed.

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

Yesterday, here in the House when I asked about the \$400,000 government funding grant that was awarded to a company –

AN HON. MEMBER: Humber Valley.

MR. SPEAKER: I remind – my first and final warning for the day. There's to be no heckling when I'm listening to someone else who's been addressed, please.

Thank you.

Please continue.

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

Yesterday, in the House when I asked about the \$400,000 government funding grant that was awarded to a company owned by the Premier, the Premier admitted that he intentionally delayed the funding process to allow his assets to be placed in a blind trust.

I ask the Premier: Why are your hands all over this file when you were aware that there is a clause in the \$400,000 funding contract that states that MHAs are not permitted to benefit from the funding?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We did answer quite a few questions yesterday. I think the Member opposite, he would be very aware of the facts surrounding all of these. This is not a grant. This is indeed a loan and the stipulations and the criteria around that loan are very clear, as he would have known since this was his preliminary announcement back in 2015.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take you back to what's been done, the decision that was made, and to be very open and transparent about all of this.

We've taken this to the Commissioner of Legislative Standards, yesterday, but prior to any of this, Mr. Speaker, all of my interests have been disclosed on an annual basis; secondly, proactively disclosed in the application. The Member opposite knows all this. This is simply, today, a debate in questions really about politics.

I heard him say yesterday, he called this a gift, Mr. Speaker. This is a loan. The beneficiaries of all of this are to the tenants that live in those housing units.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It is technically a loan but it's a forgivable loan. What that means is once the conditions of the contract are met then the Premier does not have to repay that loan. That's what a forgivable loan means, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier has stated that all money awarded goes, actually, to the tenants.

I ask the Premier: How is the \$400,000 going to be disbursed directly to those tenants?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, we're getting into some substance of this line of questioning. So it is a loan. He's acknowledged that. His first question called it a grant. So he's now acknowledged the fact that it's a loan. The loan in this particular case has certain criteria.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to speak to this in a general sense because there are many other people who would have been involved, many other companies, many other associations that could have been involved in this particular application that was announced on this day.

Here's how it works. The criterion is in place over a 10-year period. The rates are determined by the Housing Corporation. Even the footprint of those facilities is determined by the corporation. So the loan is put in place based on the criteria. The rates are set over a 10-year period, Mr. Speaker. That's how the money gets in the hands of the tenants.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

If the Premier wants to call it a loan he can, but he should make it clear, it's forgivable. It's forgivable after a 10-year period when all the conditions are met, but the contract points out that the funding is actually a capital –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Please continue.

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

The contract actually specifies that the funding is actually capital assistance. It means it's assistance to building the structure. It refers to approved capital assistance and it depends on construction progress.

Isn't it true, Premier, that the \$400,000 is directly tied to construction of the housing complex?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What we want to talk about here are rates, benefits to the tenants. The market rate would be very different than the affordable rate, Mr. Speaker. If these tenants had to go in and pay market rates, it would have meant for many of them that they would not be able to go in there. In many cases this could be a difference of \$200 to \$300, Mr. Speaker, depending on where they are and what the market rates would be.

This is where the benefit comes back to the tenants, Mr. Speaker. It is about rates. Those people that would have been excluded would not have housing options available to them because they couldn't afford the market rates. They could afford the affordable rates, which is determined by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. P. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, this is a great program that benefits lots of people, but it also benefits those who apply for the funding because the capital asset would be owned by the Premier. The \$400,000 offsets his capital assets and the cost of his capital assets and it becomes his equity. It says so in the contract, the approved capital assistance is dependent upon construction process.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier went on to say that the disclosure statement was made to the Commissioner of Legislative Standards.

I ask the Premier: Was the conditions around the \$400,000 forgivable loan, the loan that was signed eight months after he was in office, was that forgivable loan specifically discussed, those conditions –

MR. KING: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member for Bonavista need not rise to speak again today because I will not recognize him.

Please continue.

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

Did the Premier specifically discuss with the Commissioner for Legislative Standards the conditions of the forgivable loan, \$400,000, and specifically review the conditions that an MHA cannot benefit from that contract?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, once again when we go back to this scenario that we're talking about, but indeed the scenario as it applies to everyone that would be involved in an affordable housing project. As he just mentioned, these are good projects where people get affordable housing rates, where they otherwise would not have housing available to them.

All my assets are in a blind trust right now. Mr. Speaker, I could not tell you what is even in that blind trust.

So, yesterday, when I spoke to the Commissioner of Legislative Standards, what was asked – the direction would be to take it from start to finish, see this through, Mr. Speaker.

I want to be very open and transparent in this whole process. The Commissioner of Legislative Standards, which the Member opposite asked to get involved. That's exactly what we did. We've asked the Commissioner of Legislative Standards to get involved and he will do that piece of work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I take it from that the Premier didn't discuss the specifics of that particular contract requirement. At least he didn't acknowledge that he did.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday here in the House of Assembly, the Minister of Municipal Affairs was put up, or got up, by government to answer

a question that had nothing to do with his department, only so he could go on with one of his rants that we see here quite often and in a demeaning manner like we've seen before.

I ask the Premier: Do you support this type of harassing behaviour from one of your senior Cabinet ministers?

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

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

I'm happy to answer what I guess can only be deemed as somewhat of a question. The Member talks about harassing behaviour, yet he stands here in this House on a daily basis and engages in the kind of mudslinging.

I want to go back to the questions that he was asking today about a loan. Let's put some facts out there. His government approved it. His hand-picked CEO of Housing approved it. It was his government that announced it. He even acknowledged that the Premier disclosed all of this prior to, to the Commissioner for Legislative Standards and has agreed to do it again. Yet, he continues to stand up and act like something is going on.

What I would say is before you talk about mudslinging, look in your own direction.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Order, please!

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

I'm going to try and stay on point here. The minister should have a look at the release he tabled yesterday. It was conditional approval that was given in 2015, conditional that you meet the conditions. The Premier himself decided to meet those conditions while he was the Premier of the province, not anyone in our government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Municipal Affairs stood here in the House, looked across the floor at an Opposition MHA and said to him “stand up and be a man” That’s what he said here. It’s in *Hansard*. He told a Member on this side of the House “stand up and be a man” when he was asked a fair and direct question.

I’d like to know the Premier’s view on this. I know he likes to put the minister up to respond for him but I ask the Premier: Who’s going to apologize for your minister? Do you accept this kind of behaviour?

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you very much for the question.

It’s a great opportunity for me – a great opportunity. Here’s the Leader of the Opposition standing up talking about bullying and saying things. His staff, by the name of Sandy Collins, has called me a clown on government time, on government email with his knowledge because I posted him personally. He said I took a bribe. This Leader of the Opposition did nothing.

As I said to the Member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition: If you don’t stop him and if you don’t fire him from making those false, erroneous statements, which I challenge to stay outside, you’re a part of it. If he continues to make those slanderous statements, your staff, on your time, you are part of it. So don’t go looking at me about bullying when your staff is out making false, erroneous accusations.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Leader of the Official Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Speaker, I stood here in this House in December of 2016 and I told the Minister of

Municipal Affairs that I’ll not sit idly by and allow him to get on with his antics anymore. I’ve held him to that since December 2016 and I’m going to hold him to it in the future as well.

We’re here on the floor of the House of Assembly. The Premier and two of his ministers on Friday addressed the province on the seriousness of bullying. Many of us are here wearing pink shirts and ties and so on today to acknowledge bullying day and the Premier will not respond to my questions.

Is this behaviour by his minister acceptable to him? What is he going to do about it?

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

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

I appreciate the questions from the Member opposite. Perhaps we can remind him of some of the things he did when he was the premier. I can remember when he was premier he chastised the former minister of Finance for asking a question about a sexual harassment report saying she should know better as a female than to ask questions like that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: I would also suggest that the Member opposite maybe go back and look to matters that he’s dealt with when he was premier when people would make social media comments, him and the former minister of Health, the former Member for Mount Pearl North.

So, again, if you want to stand here and sling mud, I would suggest look in your own closet first.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last Friday – and I applaud the effort – in an effort to strengthen workplace harassment policies, the Premier and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women announced a new harassment and workplace policy.

I ask the minister: When will changes to legislation be coming to this House?

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

MR. OSBORNE: I thank the Member for her question because it is an important issue. We did put forward our new policy on harassment last Friday. Our department is reviewing legislation with the aim to upgrade and modernize legislation to ensure that all people in this province who go to work in a workplace feel free to do so without harassment. They feel safe in their own workplace.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: During the news conference, it was stated that there will be a time limit for victims to come forward.

Given what victims of harassment may have to endure, why would you impose such a short deadline?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Human Resources Secretariat.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you.

I thank the Member for her question. Again, the timeline was a recommendation of the Rubin Thomlinson report. We've accepted all of those recommendations. It's also consistent with the policies of the Human Rights Commission.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: I, myself, have endured incidents in this House where I have been bullied. Will the

new policy apply to all workplaces, including conduct right here in the House of Assembly?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for Human Resources Secretariat.

MR. OSBORNE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the House of Assembly accepts policies through the Management Commission.

There is a part of the Management Commission or the legislation put forward by former Justice Green that states if the Management Commission doesn't put in place a policy different than that of government, the policy government has will be in effect for the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: What will be done to ensure this new policy is not just lip service, not just in government but in the House of Assembly here as well, to ensure that those who perpetuate violence or abuse of power at any time in government will be held accountable?

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

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

I'm happy to stand, not only as Government House Leader, but also as a Member of the Management Commission. It's a group made up of MHAs from all parts of this House.

What I would suggest is not only do we have a brand new policy that's amongst the leaders in the country as it relates to workplace harassment, including here in the House of Assembly, what I would suggest is that we have many means and mechanisms to combat harassment.

Certainly, we, as the Management Commission and, me, as a Member of the Management Commission, would be happy to hear anything like this. I would suggest everything needs to be reported in a timely fashion so we can combat this.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: The ultimate responsibility here lies with the Premier to ensure that his executive complies with the new harassment and workplace policy.

I ask the Premier: Is the time up for bullying and violence or will it continue?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken provincially and nationally on this issue many times. The workplace environment, no matter where you are, people would expect to be safe and kept free from harassment.

If the Members opposite would actually listen to what was said and what I said on Friday – because I actually said that I believe MHAs should be the first to take the training that's part of this requirement. As a matter of fact, I said that our MHAs would be first to take the training.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at this House of Assembly, there are many days that we think we work in a fish bowl, but people are watching the conduct of what happens in this House of Assembly. I think it's extremely important that it starts right here in this House as quickly as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Minister, last week you said there was no one in DFO in this province and no one in DFO in Ottawa that knew anything about the Five Nations Clam Company.

Have you been able to learn anything about this group and who their partners are?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Yes, we most certainly have, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we've been on this as a top priority from our government.

We have been on this asking questions. In fact, I spoke with the minister of Fisheries and Oceans just last Friday. I asked him who exactly represents the Five Nations Clam Company and he informed me that the partnership had not yet formed, that the Five Nations Clam Company had not yet identified all of its indigenous partners.

I asked him: Is this consistent with the RFP? I asked him many questions. One of the things we did do, Mr. Speaker, is we asked questions. We did not clam up.

I also asked the minister of Fisheries and Oceans if he heard from Members of the Opposition on this. He said to me he had not.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, a very interesting answer.

The original application process was that it's a requirement that all indigenous partners would be identified in the bid. Was this the process they followed?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: It would appear the evidence would suggest no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, that's pretty funny, I guess. That's what they're thinking over there on the other side. But we were hearing this beforehand, the Five Nations Clam Company

was selected and then they reached out to get these indigenous groups.

Have you spoken to the federal government about this issue?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Perhaps the hon. Member has missed the first two answers that I provided to his questions. The answer is, yes.

Not only did I ask questions, not only did I reach out to the federal government, to the federal minister, beginning in September, but in October, in November, in December, in January and in February. In fact, the Member for Burin - Grand Bank also was actively engaged in this and promoting the interest of the community of Grand Bank.

We were making sure the process was legitimate, clear and transparent. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did speak directly with the minister of Fisheries and Oceans as soon as the decision was taken. He did inform me that there was a decision to advance the Five Nations Clam Company, but the decision had not been made final at this point in time.

We will intervene. We will fight for the people of Grand Bank –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BYRNE: – and for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BYRNE: – and our fishery, unlike that Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, it's a little late for your fighting now to get up and argue –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: – and showboat in the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: Minister, you had the opportunity since September to fight and you did nothing – absolutely nothing.

The Premier stated on Monday that he'd even question if this was the final decision. Was it because the federal process was flawed?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, there were many flaws with this process and we have pointed out those flaws. We not only felt this was not a proper process for indigenous reconciliation, that there was not proper respect and understanding of the indigenous situation in Newfoundland and Labrador, but we also pointed out that to take jobs from Grand Bank without any process in place as to how this would happen, to actually select a company from Arichat, Cape Breton Island, that has no harvesting, no processing capacity, to be able to actually extract benefit from this resource was a flawed process.

We will be meeting with the federal minister to make sure this licence does not get issued. Mr. Speaker, I will point out, there was not one word from that side of the table in the last six months (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member's time has expired.

The Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I will remind the minister, on December 5 I asked you about a meeting that you had in Moncton with the hon. minister. You told me it was a sharing policy

that you were looking at and you were working with your good friend Dominic.

AN HON. MEMBER: It didn't go very well.

MR. K. PARSONS: It didn't go very well, obviously.

In a news release, the federal government said DFO bases its fisheries decisions, including the Arctic surf clam, on consultations to those most impacted by this decision.

Can the minister tell us what consultations did the federal government have with the people of the Burin Peninsula prior to making this decision about the surf clam?

MR. SPEAKER: The parliamentary secretary for –

AN HON. MEMBER: TCII.

MR. SPEAKER: – Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

Thank you, Minister.

MR. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure the Member and thank him for his interest in the Burin Peninsula. I question where it was when the Marystown fish plant, an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction – when your government promised a future for the Marystown fish plant, I say, Mr. Speaker, do you know what the future was? A heap of rubble.

Hundreds of jobs promised for Marystown, for Burin, for the entire Burin Peninsula, Mr. Speaker. They sat in silence. They did nothing. They supported the Burin Peninsula none. So thanks for showing up finally.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: So, obviously, they had no consultations with the people on the Burin Peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, the mayor of Grand Bank has publicly stated that he's never had any direct statements with respect to the new entrants, never from day one.

Do you agree with that statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier and I just spoke with the mayor of Grand Bank this morning and had a very, very important and enlightened discussion as to how we are going to proceed jointly and co-operatively to protect the interests of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It would appear to me, based on the tone and tenor of that question, that he hasn't actually spoken to the mayor of Grand Bank. Do you know something? If he did, he'd say that he stood up.

The mayor of Grand Bank this morning said very publicly in front of all of the mayors of the Burin Peninsula that the Member for Burin - Grand Bank has provided the most amazing leadership on this issue that anyone could possibly expect.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BYRNE: And that was from the mayor of Grand Bank, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did speak with the mayor of Grand Bank. I'm after speaking to the mayor of Grand Bank several times, for your information.

Now, the mayor of Grand Bank also called this decision by Minister LeBlanc one of the worst examples of interference by the federal government in this resource, our fishery.

Do you agree with that statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister Responsible for Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, I think one of the greatest interferences by the federal government in our fishery was the destruction of the Northern Cod fishery in the 1980s and the early 1990s. But, yes, this is a very, very serious issue that we are seized with, and we don't minimize this whatsoever. That's why we are calling for a meeting, we are going to have a meeting directly with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. We are going to bring forward a solid voice from our province and we will seek a solution.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will agree, this was not a good decision. It pitted province against province, community versus community and First Nation against First Nation, and before this licence ever gets issued, the voice of Newfoundland and Labrador will be heard.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Your time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Minister, earlier this month you stated that adjacency is built into the Canadian fishing licence policy – and that's a quote. It's also built into policies of DFO, and has been for decades. It would have been nice to have seen it in the act.

If adjacency was built into the policy, can you explain to us why this quota is going elsewhere?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, that's exactly why adjacency is so important to us and why it has been built in since 1996 into the Canadian fishing licencing policy and into the new access criteria, which was established in 2008.

I'll ask the hon. Member this simple question. I have been talking about this for a long time. This government has been talking about this since we took office. Has he made one

reference? If someone were to ask him, please, table on the floor of the House of Assembly today one piece of correspondence where he has supported the policy of adjacency and brought forward that policy to the federal government, could he table one document today to state that he has supported it himself, like I have supported it?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. MICHAEL: Yesterday, the Premier told this House he wrote the prime minister on February 13 asking for a meeting to put in place the measures for the Atlantic Accord 2005 review which does not have to be done until March 31, 2019.

I ask the Premier: What exactly does he hope to achieve by opening the discussion early? Does he plan on trying to renegotiate the terms of the agreement by basing it on a different measure of economic activity?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the letter I sent to the prime minister and with the agreement that was amended in 2005, which we did speak about yesterday, outlines a number of areas that would be open for review.

Mr. Speaker, this is a review by both parties and we're going to engage in where the opportunities, what options we have available to them, but it's very clear – as the Member opposite, we talked about yesterday. It talks about the fiscal variances from province to province. It talks about equalization of the day. It talks about, have we received the benefits that we thought we would from offshore development.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of areas that this review will cover. Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, we can get to a place where Newfoundland and Labrador finally gets the benefits from its offshore developments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Directly speaking to that, we know the federal government has received approximately \$2 billion in dividends since oil started flowing in 1997 from its 8.5 per cent stake in Hibernia, over and above being paid back in full the \$430 million it put toward the projects construction.

I ask the Premier: Will he use the review to go after the 8.5 per cent equity share in Hibernia given that the federal government has more than recouped its initial investment, to say the least?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I would have to say, speaking to Noia and the oil and gas industry just within the last couple of weeks, I've clearly said publicly that the federal government so far, from the numbers we have, from the analysis that's been done, has received some \$13 billion in benefits from our offshore and there's some \$12 billion left to come for the future. So there are many areas where the federal government, as all of Canada, would have gotten some gain from our offshore development.

Mr. Speaker, these are the things that we need to sit at the table with the federal government. The review will be done within the next year. Mr. Speaker, I'm not here to predetermine where this would be, but I am looking forward to the review. I'm looking forward to finally getting at a table where we can have that meaningful discussion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, for two years in a row I have asked this government to apply a gender analysis while preparing their budget. I've asked for a copy of the analysis tool they

supposedly used and their analysis report. I even submitted an ATIPP request, but nothing was delivered proving that this was done, and the budgets themselves were proof that it wasn't done.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Is he doing a gender analysis for his current budget? If so, will he table the specific tool he is using and a report of the findings?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are going through the budget process. Mr. Speaker, there's a great deal of work by the officials in my department and in all departments that go into the budget process.

I am speaking with the minister responsible for the Women's Policy Office and with their officials as well. I'd be happy to sit down with the Member opposite and talk about what her ideas are as we go into this budget process as well.

I've offered all Members of the House of Assembly to provide us insight into what you thought were the issues leading into this budget. I open that invitation again today to the Member for St. John's Centre.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, it's clearly not being done.

Yesterday, government's Liberal counterparts in Ottawa proudly released their budget saying it was prepared with a gender analysis. When our minister was asked would he do the same, he said he didn't know what type of work he could get done in time for this year's budget, but a gender analysis is something that he would absolutely be interested in looking at.

So it is not being done. This provincial budget was their third opportunity to get it right.

I ask the minister: How could he and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women once again fail the women of this province so badly?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you very much.

I can sense the Member opposite's passion. I think it's shared by all of us on this side of the House and, indeed, I think the entire Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I applaud the federal government in applying a gender-based analysis on their budget. This will be the second year that's been done here in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was begun last year. They looked at all the policies, the programs, looked at all the decisions taken in the budget. It is happening again this year.

The minister responsible for Finance has been engaging with the Women's Policy Office to ensure that lens is there. There has been a lot of work done, Mr. Speaker, by this government to ensure equity, to ensure gender-based analysis, to ensure that women are well represented in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

In accordance with section 19(5)(a) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, I hereby table the minutes of the House of Assembly Management Commission held on November 8, 2017, and December 6, 2017.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS Budget 2016 dramatically cut home care hours to many of the province's most vulnerable people;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to immediately reinstate much-needed supports to those who need it and develop a plan to further address the growing needs of people requiring home care support.

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

Mr. Speaker, as the petition outlines, this is a very vulnerable sector of our society. I know the policies have always been – by the former administration and the present administration – to try and ensure that we keep people in their homes. For quality of life, for dignity, for supports within the family network and for savings on our health care, it's much more efficient and much more economies of scale to have people in their own homes being provided by supports. Not adding into the count that these people still have an ability to be active within their communities.

It may be restricted based on some access of –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BRAZIL: – their ability to get around, their mobility issues and that. That’s why it’s important, because in every quality of life we need to have the supports that encourage people to be as active as possible. As part of that process, the activities need to be supported.

Home care is something that, no doubt, in Newfoundland and Labrador our principles are based on family taking care of family, neighbours taking care of neighbours. We do that to the best of our ability.

As the economic tides change and as people have to work, members in the family have to work, as people unfortunately have to move away, as we don’t have larger families like we used to, it becomes encompassing on us as a society to try to prevent people not having supports and being at peril because there are not certain basic things that they would need. Sometimes it’s around medication, sometimes it’s around some basic home care and sometimes it’s around some of the other supports that are needed within that to keep them active, but also to keep them safe, and to give the families who themselves are under stresses because of trying to be able to care for a loved one.

These hours were put in play based on a principle, based on a formula. All of a sudden now, we’ve changed this because we’re going to enforce things that were outdated. Instead of going back and saying, you know what, how do we ensure that the monies we’re investing, not only are we getting the best return on it, but it’s having the response and the impact that we wished it to do. That’s what we’ve done. We’ve done it in the past.

We all have horror stories from people who are saying: We’ve had family members who had to give up working because Mom or Dad could not be left for those extra hours, going from six hours a day or four hours a day down to two, or getting four hours, three days a week. The same services they needed before are still very important to their life.

So this is about dignity. It’s about healthy living. It’s about safety and it’s about the stresses of the family and the community as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I will be presenting this again in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS many students within the province depend on school busing and transportation to and from school each day; and

WHEREAS there are many parents of school age children throughout the province who live inside the Eastern School District’s 1.6 kilometre zone; therefore, do not qualify for busing; and

WHEREAS policy cannot override safety of our children;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to eliminate 1.6 kilometre policy for all elementary schools in the province and junior and senior high schools where safety is a primary concern.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague – many of my colleagues – we’ve read this petition over and over again. It’s been a policy that’s been in place for a long time. We brought in a private Member’s motion; it was introduced by my colleague from Conception Bay East - Bell Island in our last session. There were some amendments made to our private Member’s motion which made it kind of null and void to what the real gist of our issue is.

It’s simple. We don’t believe children should be walking to school in that 1.6 kilometre zone, which is basically that mile zone. I understand

it's not a walk zone and the board don't like to use it, they say it's the parent's responsibility.

I say this again, and I think all MHAs in this House can attest, a lot of family models don't have that extra vehicle. They don't have the set up to drive their child to school and pick them up in the evenings. Sometimes they have to find their best way there.

We've been fortunate this winter, the weather has been decent, but on a regular basis, with a normal winter, it's a lot of pressure to place on most families when young children – it's the most demanding time as parents. It's a lot of stress and outside of school, with everything else in life, I feel, and we feel strongly it's an issue. It's something that the policy that government should make adjustments to.

I'm not asking for it right across the board. We're looking at elementary, the most vulnerable children, our youngest; our five to 11. They're all precious, but they are the most vulnerable and most precious, I guess, if you want to look at it, but I'd never want to put one over the other, but they are the most – junior high and high school never have pressures on busing like it is in elementary.

It's something that I've spoken on, like I said, my colleagues spoke on and we will continue to advocate for it because we believe in it. I think that a lot of the Members opposite believe in it. I do encourage government – I do know there are issues about providing this 1.6. There are cost factors. I understand all that, but as I said in my petition, I don't think policy can override the safety of our children.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, I'll try to respond. I'm still trying to get over the Opposition debasing a day that's intended to point out that children are bullied in school and commit suicide as a result of that, that the Opposition would lower themselves to the point of somehow exploiting and debasing the day of Pink Shirt Day to do some political messaging

on that. I'm still trying to figure that out, Mr. Speaker, but I'll figure it out in time.

With respect to the 1.6-kilometre rule, I hear about it all the time. The previous administration did as well. They'll remember that they paid \$20,000, was it, to the president of the PC Party, John Lundrigan, to do a study. I don't know if they forget that. Mr. Lundrigan did a study for the PC Party on it and then the report said that we should keep the 1.6-kilometre rule. So that was only just a couple of years ago that happened.

I have been mandated to look at all matters related to education, including the 1.6-kilometre rule. We work with the school district and with parents every week, really, to try to find solutions around busing through courtesy seating and so on, but I'm open to specific solutions.

Like I said, there was quite a lot of study of this when the previous administration was in power. They would have access to those reports. They're online and they all said, when they were in government, keep the current policy. But if they have specific suggestions, I'm willing to look at them.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time has expired.

Further petitions?

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, I now call on the Member for Conception Bay South to introduce the resolution standing in his name, Motion 3.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to get up today to introduce this private Member's motion on carbon tax. Actually, it's the –

MR. SPEAKER: You need to move and second it.

MR. PETTEN: I moved, seconded by my colleague for the District of Conception Bay East - Bell Island, the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House calls on the Government of Canada to fully and fairly credit to our province all green initiatives, such as the Muskrat Falls, Upper Churchill and Bay d'Espoir hydro developments, in relieving Newfoundland and Labrador of any obligation to pay carbon tax.

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, it's a pleasure to introduce that motion, the motion on carbon tax. I've spoken on many private Members' motions, but it's the first one to be introduced and it's in my critic role. The carbon tax is in my critic role since I was first elected into the House, Mr. Speaker, as I know you're well aware.

I guess the question some people will ask: Do the Tories support the carbon tax? The problem is maybe you're asking the wrong question. What you really need to be asking are two different questions; one, do the Tories advocate doing a better job in protecting our environment? And the answer to that is yes.

We've proven that while in government throughout our Energy Plan, our Climate Change Action Plan, our focus on shifting from oil burning for electricity at Hydro to hydropower, our focus on wind projects, the Ramea wind-hydrogen project, net metering, energy efficiency retrofits, smarter buildings, silviculture to replace trees to take carbon out of the atmosphere while providing other benefits, our efforts to curb overfishing and take custodial management of the Grand Banks – all initiatives to protect our environment for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, do we support doing a better job protecting our environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions? Absolutely. The project is called Muskrat Falls; it has problems;

but the whole point is to cut greenhouse gases and to make our province very close to 100 per cent reliant on carbon neutral means of electricity generation.

It also provides power to export westward, so another jurisdiction can retire its dependence on coal. As Donald Trump would say, beautiful, clean coal; we'd prefer to say beautiful, clean hydro.

So that's question number one answered, Mr. Speaker. Here's the second question: Is the Trudeau Liberal carbon tax the answer to reducing greenhouse gas emissions? More and more people are second-guessing the Liberal approach to a great many things, quite frankly including carbon tax. Now, to be perfectly honest, a great many in our province are not sure what the implications of a carbon tax will be for them. The Liberals have not exactly been transparent of late, and most people don't like to vote blind.

For the Tories, we like taxes as much as we like root canals. Liberals have had a long, added love for taxes because it allows them to take money out of people's pockets, spend it on their behalf and demand thanks and votes in return – it's the Liberal way. But the tax-and-spend Liberalism has done a great deal of harm to this province. It has sucked our consumer pockets dry, reduced spending, left employers with too little to invest, cost thousands of jobs and sent people out of the province in search of opportunities that the Liberals have been unable to cultivate here at home.

Newfoundland and Labrador needs another tax about as much as it may need another media strike. After raising more than 300 taxes and fees in 2016 and leaving them in place for two years, the Liberals are probably thinking of lowering a tax or two to make room for the carbon tax.

What we need is not a replacement of one tax burden with another, what we need is a net reduction in the total tax burden to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The Liberals are getting restless because they don't like the truth pointed out. But it's time to cut the truth out of the carbon tax, what exactly it is. The idea behind the carbon tax is that people are

bad, they make bad decisions and they cannot be trusted to make good decisions. Left on their own device, they will destroy our environment and kill the planet.

People need to be penalized for everything they do that leaves a carbon footprint. That means imposing a special tax on everything that leaves a carbon footprint. And what doesn't, really? This will, of course, rake in a great deal of cash for government to manage. The good governments will then make the money and invest it in projects that are supposed to do what poorly behaving people in our country will not, and that is reduce greenhouse gases.

The government will be hoping that by penalizing those activities that leave a carbon footprint people will actually be incentivized to choose low-carbon alternatives. Instead of driving a gas car, people will choose to drive an electric car, or maybe they'll carpool, bicycle or take the bus. Instead of taking a family vacation to Florida on the gas-guzzling plane, people will stay at home and have a family picnic in the park. That way, they won't pay some of those penalties so you will save the money.

There are two problems with that way of thinking, Mr. Speaker. Many families can't do without a gas car, considering unavailability of alternatives. Many people in Labrador can't get around without availing of transportation that burns lots of gas and costs a fortune already. But they'll still be punished through the carbon tax. The penalty will not be an effective incentive for them to change their behaviour because they do not have a choice to make, so they will simply have to bear the penalty.

We have mines in this company, Mr. Speaker, and a paper company. We need these jobs more desperately than Ontario and Quebec needs any single mining or paper operation. Our economy cannot afford to absorb the loss if those facilities go under.

Our plan was to protect those few industries from the punitive measures that might drive them under. And maybe we still can, but the carbon tax is so complex and broadly imposed that many individual families will not get the help they need to absorb the penalties of the tax. Families living cheque to cheque will be

punished over the edge into hard choices like doing without food, or doing without medicine and doing without heat.

Mr. Speaker, on that note when I say doing without heat, on a personal note and when it all pertains to the carbon tax, I hear all the critics of Muskrat, I hear all the people out in the public, they're always saying well why didn't you invest in Newfoundland Hydro, the Holyrood generating station. Why did you not invest money in that and waste money here? Why can't we just put an extra \$2 billion in that, save all the money that was invested in Muskrat Falls and develop and improve the Holyrood terminal?

What they're missing, Mr. Speaker – and it's something that really irritates me, actually, to be honest. They don't talk to the people that live in the proximity of that Holyrood generating station. They're the forgotten people. Ten years back or longer that was one of the biggest issues this House of Assembly was dealing with on a daily basis. There were questions, there were petitions and there were public meetings.

People are wiping soot from their windshields, from their houses. There are warnings out in my district not to eat berries because of the contaminants coming from the Holyrood hydro plant. I wake up every morning, I look out through my window and I see these stacks, just like you see out in Corner Brook; the white smoke coming out of those, billowing out of those stacks.

If you live 100 miles away or whatever, yeah, fine, put some more money there. What about the people, Mr. Speaker? We always refer to the people. We're talking about bringing in this carbon tax. Muskrat Falls and those investments in those other energy projects, the idea was to get rid of that. That was one of the issues that we talked about.

That's a big carbon footprint. You talk about your carbon and your greenhouse gas emissions. That is the biggest polluter we have in the province. People never look at that in the way they should look at it. That should be shut down. That is a contaminant to the people.

You talk about your environment; your environment is what we all live in. What about the people that live close to that generating station? That's an issue that I could go on for a long time telling anecdotal stories, but I know for a fact – I know a lot of the people up there, I've visited their houses. Some of them are in the Harbour Main District. I have a lot of family, actually, that live very close to the generating station as well. These are not made-up stories, these are facts. It's a big concern to those people.

One of their biggest issues is when you hear Members opposite or out in the public criticizing Muskrat Falls, they'll always throw out Holyrood like, sure, what's wrong with Holyrood? There's a lot wrong with Holyrood, Mr. Speaker. We talk about carbon tax. In the bigger picture it's a pollutant. It's one of the biggest polluters we have in the province and I'm sure you're well aware of that.

As I said, we're all about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We're all about carbon – we're all about it – but I believe the concerns of the people need to be taken into account.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: I think people's concerns should be taken into account, Mr. Speaker, because this is a –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have some order, please.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe people's concerns should be taken into consideration. Most people –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the Members to take it outside if you want to carry on a conversation. We're trying to do a debate.

Please continue.

MR. PETTEN: Mr. Speaker, it's too bad you're getting interrupted during a private Member's motion, and on a separate matter at that, but so be it.

My point, when we talk about the carbon tax, most people don't understand what the carbon tax is, Mr. Speaker. They'll hear on the news there's another tax or it's a carbon tax, but they don't get it.

The best example I can give personally is my own mother said to me when it was on the news a while back: What does this mean? Does that mean I have to pay more for this? It struck me because she's not one of those people who follow that in depth but it was cluing in, it was triggering. I said: It will be a cost to everybody. Our motion is we're already paying our fair share, Mr. Speaker.

We feel we are paying our fair share through our investments in green energy. We're going to be 98 per cent green energy. Hopefully we'll live to see the day that the gates will finally be locked in the Holyrood generating plant and we'll have the means that we don't have to use that toxic environment to create energy. We'll have our green energy and that's something we should be proud of.

We're paying for that as a people, Mr. Speaker. That's our share of carbon tax and that's our argument. The prime minister's national carbon tax is fine if it suits you, but we feel in Newfoundland we already are doing our fair share.

It's something that there's been a lot of debate. I know I've had a lot of conversations about it and I've brought it up in the House of Assembly and asked various ministers. It's not a decision you make lightly but it's a decision, I feel, that is the right decision, because we sometimes get caught up in the federal government are bringing it down, we're going to have to initiate it, this is the way things go.

The shoe has to fit, Mr. Speaker. In Newfoundland and Labrador I feel we've been ahead of the curve. We've done our share long before the prime minister came in and said he was going to impose a national carbon tax – pricing. We did our share before that, Mr. Speaker, and I think we should be recognized for that. That is, in a nutshell, basically what the gist of our PMR is. We've asked it. We've said it publicly.

Now, we know there are some initiatives coming down from the federal government the current administration is talking about dealing with. People don't need another tax, Mr. Speaker. We're overtaxed; we have 300 taxes now. As I stated in this House numerous, numerous times: We don't need another tax. We don't need that tax.

No matter what, if you're going to turn it into a sin tax for burning furnace oil in your house, unfortunately, the reality is with the prices and the way our economy is, I don't think that's going to be the end result. People are not going to burn less carbons because they're being penalized, unless the cost is just atrocious.

The cost of changing to something that's less carbon burning is an expense. If you've got a furnace in your home that's burning furnace oil, the changeover to something that you're not going to burn any fuel, you're going to be carbon friendly, you're going to be environmentally friendly, it's a big cost to that. Most people can barely keep the oil in their tank, Mr. Speaker. The last thing they can afford is to go out and have an overall wholesale change in the heating units in their homes.

The electric cars, I know you're well aware of, Mr. Speaker, and familiar with. They're out of the price range to a lot of people in this province. Most people in this province are lucky to get a tank of gas to keep and try to get a week out of their tank of gas. I have two daughters that can do better than that, but some of this stuff is not attainable to the average citizen. We can go to a place where there are a lot of high-use coal factories and whatnot. They should have to comply to some form of – everyone needs to do their part.

I'll come back to us. We are doing our part. I think we're doing it in spades and I think we're doing a great job of it. For any province in this country to say you're going to soon be 98 per cent green energy, I think it's a wonderful thing.

AN HON. MEMBER: We should be rewarded for it.

MR. PETTEN: I think that should be something we should be rewarded for.

Mr. Speaker, I'll connect another dot and it's a stretch to your mind, but when you think of it, it makes a lot of sense. If we look at the Upper Churchill, indirectly we are subsidizing – because that's what I think it is – Quebec in keeping their own greenhouse gas emissions down.

Through Upper Churchill, through their green energy, by getting what we're getting from that deal, we are actually indirectly subsidizing Quebec in keeping their emissions down. Again, you don't get credit for that but I think it's worthy to bring up. It's not the issue but it's something we should bring up when we talk about carbon and carbon pricing. Mr. Speaker, another example of us doing our fair share, we have the wind energy products producing throughout the province.

I'll come back and in my final few seconds I'll wrap up with the final comments. Holyrood generating plant; the people who don't know the difference think why not just put a few dollars into that and keep it running, even though it's the biggest polluter in the province.

Regardless of that, it's not only the biggest polluter; it's a lot of people. Aside from being the biggest polluter, it's a lot of people being affected by that plant, Mr. Speaker. We're all about reducing carbon. We're about making healthy an environment. We're also about protecting our people and doing what's right in protecting our province.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to stand on this motion today and speak about the private Member's resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if that Member was in this House of Assembly when the debate was on about Muskrat Falls. One of the things we always said about Muskrat Falls is that there were cheaper options for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – there were cheaper options.

I understand about Holyrood. I understand totally, but there were cheaper options, is what we said, as an Opposition, to get the electricity that Newfoundland and Labrador needs and also to shut down Holyrood. That was the point that we filibustered this House of Assembly on.

So for the Member to stand in this House and say we're against shutting down Holyrood, we're against the people out in that area, is patently not true. It's just not true.

We always said there are cheaper options. We presented cheaper options. We asked to go out and find the cheapest option. What we're doing now, Mr. Speaker, just to make it very clear, we're exporting electricity to Nova Scotia from what we are paying for here and they're going to get the credits for it. That's what we're doing.

Mr. Speaker, I hear the Member opposite. I can go down to Millertown, I can go down that way, I can go to the West Coast, I can go the Thanksgiving rainstorm, climate change is real; it's real. We can go by the disasters we're having and the severity of the disasters we're having. We have to do our part.

I know the Member opposite is saying: What's the use of this? I can assure him, and I can assure all Members opposite, I'm willing to stand in this House and bet everybody is correct on this. If we had a disaster tomorrow, every Member of this House of Assembly, no matter whose district it's in, will say: Make sure everybody is safe and let's go get it fixed – every Member. There is no Member here that wouldn't stand up for any part of the province and go and help.

That's the problem with some of the concerns we have with climate change, Mr. Speaker. This carbon tax, we did sign on to the Pan-Canadian partnership, Mr. Speaker, to do our part. This is the part from Newfoundland and Labrador for climate change.

What the federal government put in place is a proposal that here's the amount you need per province. It varies back and forth; \$50 and you have credits in between. This is a part of the credit system. What it said, the federal government told all provinces in Canada, is that by this date, January 1, 2019, you have to have it in place or we'll impose the backstop of where you're not at this level. That's what they said.

What we're trying to do in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have the industry to worry about, we have ordinary people to look out for and we also have to take advantage of the green economy for Newfoundland, the new innovations for all Newfoundland and Labrador to create employment. So that is the balance the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is facing right now. We're working towards it. We said we would have our plan out this year, and we will have it out this year, the carbon plan.

There is also some money from the federal government to start with some initiatives here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the province has matched that funding from the federal government. So this is an ongoing process. This is not just Newfoundland and Labrador saying: you've got to, we're getting hammered by the federal government. Do we wish there'd be some changes? Yes, but the federal government said here's what we're going to do. So we have to work within and do the best we can for the carbon pricing.

When the Member opposite stands up and says, well, there's nothing we can do, we've got – that's just patently not true. There's a green economy. We can go around this province, go around Canada. This is a time for all the people in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – and I'll give you a good example, Mr. Speaker, of some of the initiatives. I'm not saying it's going to happen, but just some examples that were brought to our attention.

How many people in this House of Assembly know people who have woodstoves? Woodstoves, just woodstoves alone?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yeah, a few.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, a lot of those woodstoves are so outdated that if you give some kind of subsidy to put in a new high-efficiency woodstove, it would decrease the carbon immensely, a thousand fold, just that alone. That's the kind of stuff we have to look at as a province.

Mr. Speaker, and I'm not being critical here, I'm definitely not being critical, but if we follow the step, let's just put our heads in the sand, that this is not happening in Newfoundland and Labrador, we're not being honest, we're not being true and we're not facing the severity of climate change across Canada and around the world.

So, Mr. Speaker, climate change is real. Canada has agreed, and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has agreed to ensure that we do our part, and we will do our part.

Mr. Speaker, again, when we talk about Holyrood – and I'll say to the Member opposite, and I know in his private Member's statement, he's talking about giving us credit for the Muskrat Falls. I know the intent of the private Member's motion, but you don't get credit for Muskrat Falls. What you do, you get credit when you shut down Holyrood for the emissions. You get credit when you shut down the emissions. It's not the electricity, because if you keep Holyrood open you still wouldn't get the credits from Holyrood. I know the intent you had, but the actual part of it is cut down on the emissions.

So we are working with the federal government and we're trying to get the credits for Holyrood that will help out the industry. Industry here in this province, Come by Chance, IOC, Corner Brook Pulp & Paper, there are many around that we have to work with here to ensure the viability of the companies to keep the employment in place.

It's easy to just put your head in the sand and say okay, cut them all out, cut it off. A lot of those companies are competing around the

world. There are other initiatives that are being taken around the world to make their companies competitive, so we have to help out the companies for the employment in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Member – and I refuse to get into it – talking about all the taxes and all the things that has happened in Newfoundland and Labrador, but he has yet – and I hope he will at the end of it – to come to the realization that climate change is real. If you don't think climate change is real ask Mr. and Mrs. Jesso who just lost their house, ask the people when we were down in your area if climate change is not real. We have coastal bays. We have to realize it, Mr. Speaker.

I, for one, have seen it first-hand. I'll give you a good example. A good example, Mr. Speaker, is Lawn. The mayor of Lawn, down there with the flooding over the road on a regular basis – and I have to give the mayor credit on it. So it is real and we have to accept that, Mr. Speaker.

We have to take the economy through sustainable growth. We have to find some way that we can still keep our economy moving, keep things moving along; look at new initiatives in a green environment. It has to be done.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government, again, I said it earlier, definitely did say if it's not done, you can either come up with your own plan or we're going to put the backstops in. What we said that we're going to do is work with all the industries. If you knew how many meetings we had – and also the Minister of Natural Resources – with officials of the companies to try to keep the employment in the province and make it competitive.

So this is just something you're saying oh, we just got to do, and who cares about it. It's easy to say, put your head in the sand, but the people on this side of the House can't put their head in the sand because we see it too often.

Mr. Speaker, the approach that we're going to have is try to help with the federal requirements. We need to meet the federal requirement; we need to meet them. Also, meeting the federal requirements means that we have to be innovative. We already said there's a fund put in

place, the federal government, that we're going to use. Then once the carbon pricing comes in place, we'll be working with the federal government on other initiatives of what we can do, how we can reduce greenhouse gases, Mr. Speaker. I gave a good example of the woodstove. People don't realize how many people in this province use woodstoves.

There are other initiatives that we could do. One of them, there is absolutely no doubt: change your behaviour of driving, go to a low-economy car, Mr. Speaker. Like you say, some of us might not be able to do it, some may be able to do it but that's how we have to start thinking, to work on initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, we, as a government, are committed to all the businesses and all the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. As I mentioned – and I know my colleague will talk more about the industry perspective in a few minutes, about what we have to do, the safeguards that we have to put in place. This is an initiative that we signed on, absolutely no doubt, we signed on because we want to be a responsible citizens Newfoundland and Labrador.

What I will do, I will ask all Members of the House, give us some great examples of what we can do. We're open. We have a great bunch of young leaders, older companies in place here that's giving us great ideas, great initiatives of what we can do.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to make an amendment to the motion. I'm going to read it in. I'm going to amend the following private Member's motion:

BE IT RESOLVED that the hon. House call on the Government of Canada to fully and fairly credit our province of all greenhouse initiatives, such as Muskrat Falls, Upper Churchill and Bay d'Espoir hydro, in relieving Newfoundland and Labrador of any obligation – I am going to insert: BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House call on the Government of Canada to fully and fairly credit our province of all greenhouse initiatives, as it develops the federal carbon pricing system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The amendment that was just read, I need a mover and a seconder, Mr. Minister.

MR. JOYCE: Seconded by the Member for St. John's West.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

It has been moved and seconded regarding the amendment just read – I ask the hon. Members that we'll take a recess to review the amendment to see if it's in order.

Thank you.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER: The amendment that was just presented is deemed to be in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I would ask the Minister Responsible for the Office of Climate Change to continue with his debate, please.

MR. JOYCE: (Inaudible) and this is not a slight on the amendment itself, the private Member's motion, this is just to show that we can't just walk in this House and say we're not going to have any – with the carbon tax whatsoever, to hamstring ourselves. If we all vote today that we're not going to have any carbon tax, if the private Member's motion went through, Mr. Speaker, it would just hamstring us because we just can't live up to that commitment.

What the amendment says is any green initiatives we can put through for an initiative to decrease the carbon tax in the province, Mr. Speaker, our carbon footprint. That's all we're saying. Everything that comes in that we can – that the federal government would accept it. Holyrood is a prime example of that. This is not a slight on the private Member's motion whatsoever, this is just making it more realistic and for us to strive for a greener economy and look at new initiatives around.

Also, under the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, Mr. Speaker, there's already \$44.7 million we're putting in over the next five years. There are other funds there that we can

match. The federal government has money that we can apply for that we have to match. Please God, when the economy gets better, we will be applying for a lot of those funds.

The Member is great to put the private Member's motion in. I know our intent from this side is to work with our federal counterparts, to work with all the industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, work with all the people who have the innovative ideas in Newfoundland and Labrador and work with the common people who do have a woodstove, who can't find other ways, Mr. Speaker.

This is a collaborative effort because like I said before and I'll say it again, Mr. Speaker, we all know climate change is real. We have to do our part. The federal government and the province have signed on. It is time for us collectively, as a House of Assembly, to show leadership in this. I know and I'm sure I have the support of all Members in the House of Assembly that any initiative we can do to decrease the carbon footprint and also help with climate change, I'm sure we'll all work together to do that.

No one in this province wants to see anybody go through what happened on the West Coast or what happened in the Coast of Bays, no one wants to see it. We have to try to work through it, Mr. Speaker, to do our part as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to decrease the carbon footprint.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It's a pleasure to rise in this hon. House once again. I'm glad to be back in the House of Assembly for another session to do very important work of the people. Sometimes that gets lost, but the work that does take place here is incredibly important and it does make a difference in the day-to-day lives of people in this province. We all have a responsibility in this House to do what we can to improve the lives of those people, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly can agree with Members opposite in that Newfoundland certainly has to do its fair share with respect to doing its part in protecting the environment, but we contend – this amendment is one that I cannot support because we contend that we already have done our fair share and more besides when it comes to our contribution to the country as a whole. Our fair share has been paid and then some.

I will proceed in what I'm going to talk about today with some arguments that perhaps we can use in our negotiations with the feds to ensure there is no undue, unnecessary, extra burden of taxation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were crushed in 2016 with almost 300 tax and fee increases. Virtually all that additional burden is still in place, weighing down on families, employers, communities and our economy. It's crushing the life out of Newfoundland and Labrador and we all see it every day.

So talk of yet another Liberal tax, the ominous carbon tax, has people really nervous, and for good reason, because additional taxation is really not something that the backs of the people of this province can bear. No matter what tax cuts the Liberals may announce in the 2018-2019 budgets, people will be bracing for the carbon tax that will come hammering down on them to replace anything that's removed.

Now, we will hear that we have to do the carbon tax because we have to save the planet. It's become a Liberal mantra, Mr. Speaker, federally, and that's a really big problem, that the Trudeau carbon tax is the only solution. It isn't the only solution.

A couple of years ago many Canadians were falling at the feet of Justin Trudeau, believing he had all the answers. Two years later, we're seriously questioning issues around some of the decisions that are being made, and one of them is carbon taxation. Cutting down on harmful emissions is something everyone supports, especially people living downwind from the Holyrood generating station.

Muskat Falls was part of the solution to move us away from burning oil for electricity toward

green energy reliance. We're investing billions of dollars to make that happen. We're also cutting emissions in other ways, both locally and globally. Car emissions have improved. Electric cars are on the market. People are retrofitting their homes to be more energy efficient.

Our administration's Energy Plan worked hand in hand with the Climate Change Action Plan, both of which were focused on solutions that made sense for Newfoundland and Labrador. We need to be in charge of our own destiny and do things sensibly so that we don't compromise our future. Made-in-Ottawa approaches all too often do not work for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The idea of a carbon tax is to motivate people to reduce their carbon footprint by punishing people for everything they do that leaves a carbon footprint, like burning gas in their cars, even if they have no reasonable alternatives for the time being. Some firms and companies also don't have alternatives for the time being, at least in some places, or have less of a buffer to absorb the impact of yet another tax. The tax could make them uncompetitive, costing jobs and perhaps even their very existence. It's something that's called curing the disease by killing the patient.

When neighbouring jurisdictions, like the United States, are not playing by the same rules, undermining our own competitiveness may not give us a greener economy; it may simply just give us a smaller economy. In Newfoundland and Labrador, these are losses that we cannot take right now. Our economy is the most vulnerable in the country.

We, as a province, were working on our own approach. An approach that respected the vulnerability of the few industries we have here and the importance of ensuring that we do not lose them. Other jurisdictions might be able to make sacrifices that our province cannot afford to make without destroying our economy. The cookie-cutter approach might seem fair on paper until you understand the implications of what it's going to do to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We brought this motion forward, Mr. Speaker, because we feel it's time for the government of

this province – and we are certainly happy to stand with them – to stand up for this province, not 10 seconds after decisions are made like the surf clams when the die has already been cast, but we need some real lines in the sand drawn over this issue now with Ottawa. We need to stand strongly with Ottawa against additional taxation for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador; again, when we've already clearly paid our fair share and then some.

If time permits, I will get into some of that, Mr. Speaker.

There's a perception in this country that Newfoundland and Labrador has plenty of fiscal room because we have such an enormous amount of revenue per capita compared to other provinces. That is the argument that was used against us when we complained about being denied equalization when our oil revenues fell to the floor.

Plenty of Ontarians and Quebecers made this argument on our behalf, telling us we needed to stop being so greedy. In the meantime, Quebec is raking in the lion's share of equalization each and every year while lowering taxes, subsidizing child care and doing all sorts of wonderful things that a province like ours cannot afford. When it comes to allocating money, we fail to understand what happens in the halls of the federal finance department, Mr. Speaker.

We even witnessed the spectacle several months ago of the parliamentary budget officer issuing a report saying our province's long-term fiscal future was unsustainable while Quebec's was on track in the country's model in fiscal sustainability, but in the same report they projected that Quebec would be receiving something like 75 cents of every equalization dollar by that time and an even greater percentage of the enormous slice than they already receive today. What worse definition of sustainability was the parliamentary budget officer basing his conclusions? It boggles the mind that people of this mindset are influencing the decisions about how funding is allocated in this country.

We have been making the case for years. Recently, the new finance minister said essentially the same thing, that Newfoundland

and Labrador's fiscal capacity cannot be reflected fairly by these per capita statistics because our population has been shrinking. We have all these communities spread thinly along thousands of miles of roads and coastline. The people in these communities need health care, long-term care, schooling, municipal services, roadwork and a host of other services.

It is relevant, Mr. Speaker, because we cannot afford additional taxation. The per capita cost of delivering services is extraordinarily high in this province compared to per capita costs in, say, Toronto or Ottawa or Montreal.

Pencil pushers in Ottawa, looking on from afar, might simply suggest shutting down rural Newfoundland and Labrador and cutting our losses. There have been times, Mr. Speaker, especially with the attack on ferries in rural Newfoundland and health care, that I sometimes wonder if provincial Liberals have bought into that same way of thinking.

But there's another attitude that says we need to grow our rural areas by building on the opportunities that abound there. That's our attitude, Mr. Speaker. We believe in rural Newfoundland and Labrador and we believe in building this province. There are opportunities in fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture, forestry, tourism and any number of other industries.

One approach that could be taken to dealing with rural Newfoundland and costs is to give up hope, but the other approach and the one we want to see happen is to double down the effort to turn things around.

There's a section embedded in the Constitution that guarantees every province comparable levels of public services –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: – at comparable rates of taxation. It's embedded in the Constitution. Every province should have comparable levels of public services at comparable rates of return, but we haven't seen that to be the reality here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Some people take the Constitution seriously, and some like to operate around the edges. The pencil pushers in Ottawa have played games to the disadvantage of our province with their convoluted formulas that always ended up benefiting one province in this country more than any other and leaving Newfoundland almost always at the bottom end.

When our oil revenues dropped precipitously, equalization should have kicked in to make up for the sudden loss of revenue so that we could maintain services without raising taxes to the roof, Mr. Speaker. That's an argument we encouraged the government opposite to make, but that wasn't to be. The argument never effectively got made.

Instead of getting equalization, our people got crushed by a burden of more than 300 tax and fee increases. Rather than risk hurting their relationship with federal cousins, they chose instead to tax the people of the province who elected them, and two years later we're seeing the impact of that. Bankruptcies, job losses, the loss of hope and confidence and the loss of our people. Making that connection is not rocket science. You don't need a \$22,000 study to figure out why people are leaving. The writing is in large print: high taxes crush opportunities. The reason I've spent so much time talking about that is because a carbon tax will crush opportunities even further to the point where – we think we have a problem with outmigration now, it will become far worse.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, many families and businesses have been unable to wait here in this province until 2019. They're not able to hang on. They have to pack up and move.

It's the same with the carbon tax as it is with equalization, the government opposite is either unable or unwilling to make a strong case for Newfoundland and Labrador. The motion we put forward today we feel was much stronger than the watered down amendment which still suggests that it's okay to pay a tax.

We believe we should all stand united here in this hon. House, as a group of 40 strong Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, stand up to Ottawa and say no more additional tax. If they are going to force us into such an additional tax,

give us our fair share of equalization, because we in Newfoundland and Labrador are by far paying more than our fair share. In fact, I feel our share, when it comes to the carbon tax, ought to be zero.

Given the billions that Quebec is receiving each year in equalization, they probably won't be complaining about their share of the carbon tax. Once it nets out against their benefits, they'll still be able to balance their budget, cut their taxes, improve their services and provide special benefits that no other Canadian can avail of. Something is fundamentally wrong in the federation when this state of affairs is tolerable.

Saskatchewan's former Premier Brad Wall saw this happening and he cried out against it. Unfortunately, we didn't join him at that time. It would have been great for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to have stood up with the premier at that time and stood up against Ottawa and negotiated for the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we brought this resolution to this House to help give the government opposite more ammunition at the table. Every watt of power that has ever gone from the Upper Churchill through Quebec, to Hydro-Québec's markets, has been generated at the expense of Newfoundland and Labrador. The entire carbon offsetting capacity of the Upper Churchill has been subsidized by Newfoundland and Labrador to the tune of billions of dollars.

I'm just getting into so much more of what I'd like to say but time is running out.

It was Ottawa's refusal to guarantee us –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: It was Ottawa's refusal, Mr. Speaker, to guarantee us a power corridor and interprovincial transmission rights across Quebec that helped create the situation that Hydro-Québec took advantage of. The power contract for the Upper Churchill contract was one of the most lopsided in Canadian history. It's not just the past wrong, the more galling point is that the contract is continuing to cost us

today and it will continue to cost us for decades. The unfairness we are enduring right now is even worse than it was previously.

We have repeatedly called for redress. We have gone to court seeking fairness. We have petitioned the people of Canada in the court of public opinion making our case for fairness. Brian Peckford did it, Brian Tobin did it, Danny Williams did it, others did it, but Quebec continues to reap billions at our expense on top of the billions they have already raked in.

If the contract terms had been fair and we were compensated for every dollar we could have been denied, the sum total over the life of the contract would be how much? Billions, tens of billions? Certainly more than our fair share of the contribution to the federation for pollution, Mr. Speaker, and so we certainly would be honoured to stand strongly –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: – with the Liberals and fight Ottawa in this.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time has expired.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before I recognize the next speaker, I'm hearing some chirping about relevance. I just want to remind the Members my ruling the other day regarding relevance applies most specifically to bills going into second reading and Committee of the Whole.

While I would suggest to all Members that while we are debating a very important topic here, we should stay on target, we are certainly a little bit more lenient in terms of what you choose to use in terms of your argument.

With that, I recognize the Minister of Natural Resources.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues for that rousing applause. I much appreciate it.

For the members at home listening today, for the people of the province, I'd like to remind us all that we are speaking to a private Member's resolution brought forward by the Members opposite. That has been amended, an acceptable amendment, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to read that amendment so the people of the province who may have just tuned in understand:

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House calls on the Government of Canada to fully and fairly credit to our province all green initiatives, as it develops the federal carbon pricing system.

It's an important resolution, I believe, as we move forward in discussing how we're going to have a green economy, how we're going to ensure climate change, how we're going to ensure that we're tackling climate change. Just before I get into the substance of my remarks, I do want to follow up on a couple of things that the Member opposite, the previous speaker, had just said. She said she wanted us all to stand up for our province. I say, Mr. Speaker, that today that is exactly what this government is doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: Exactly what we're doing with this climate change initiative, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the Members opposite who did very little – as a matter of fact, I'd say nothing substantive at all in this area – this government is really taking that work seriously. I know the current minister, as well as the former minister, has worked very hard on this file to make sure it's a made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution, Mr. Speaker.

We all know we are faced with changes to our climate. The Member from this side of the House who spoke before me, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, spoke about some of the incredible flooding, the incredible storms that we have had. I know as difficult as it is to address some of the issues around climate change, it is important that we do so. I don't think there's a person in this province – as a matter of fact, I don't think there a person in our

country who does not see the effects of climate change.

Ask the people of the North. Ask the people of Labrador. We have a number of colleagues who come from there. They see what's happening in terms of climate change. Ask the people of the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador with what happened in recent months.

Mr. Speaker, there have been horrific rain storms, horrific wind storms, horrific changes and we're hearing of this more and more often. So I don't think that we can rest on our laurels and say not up to us to do anything. We must do our fair share in this province. I think the people of the province are prepared to do their fair share, Mr. Speaker, to address that and, indeed, they have.

The Member opposite who spoke before me also spoke about equalization. I don't know how that's relevant to this debate, but I will say this, she said: It is unfortunate that we don't have equalization today. Mr. Speaker, it is not unfortunate. It is tragic that we do not have recognition, I think, under the equalization formula because this province has had some very difficult economic times.

When I hear the Member opposite, I have to ask: Why didn't the former administration show up for discussions around equalization when they were before Canada? I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, how they can speak to the issue around equalization and not answer that question, so I think that's difficult.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: Now, I did also hear her talk about the pencil-pushers of Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, I think that's disrespectful. I don't think there are people in Ottawa who want to see anything untoward happen to this province. I do think that from time to time we need to tell them more about what the opportunities are and what the challenges are to this province to help them understand.

I think, Mr. Speaker, based on the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change that the entire country has signed on to, I believe Ottawa has been working with us, the

Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, to ensure that we have a made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to point out one thing, that in 2011 the former administration had a climate change plan that committed to give sector by sector GHG reduction targets. By 2015, that had not even occurred; that's how serious they took this issue. So by 2011, they put out this climate change plan; by 2015, there were still no targets. Mr. Speaker, we all recognize, and I think we all understand, the problems and challenges around climate change, and the impact to the future generations, I will add.

Everybody in this House – the youngest of the House is still in their 20s; that world, we're passing on to the future generations. I think it's an obligation on all of us to allow for the best environment, the best climate, the best economic opportunity be passed on to our children.

Mr. Speaker, I did speak to the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and during those decisions of course there was recognition of the diversity between provinces and territories and that we needed fair and flexible approaches. That's why it was identified to be key to the framework.

This includes, for example, safeguarding the competitiveness of onshore and offshore industry. It includes taking account of the costs we are incurring to decarbonize the electrical sector. The Minister Responsible for Climate Change spoke about some of the investments, both provincially as well as federally, on the greening of our economy, on some of the decarbonization efforts, and the requirements around same and, under this framework, ensuring the province's full discretion to direct the use of carbon price revenues. Again, Mr. Speaker, a made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador solution.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the resolution as it stands, to fully and fairly credit our province all green initiatives that are developed under the federal carbon pricing system, I think is a very strong resolution. I think it's a respectful resolution to what we're all trying to achieve, but it also recognizes that we would have

recognition of some of the investments that we've already made.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that we've made a tremendous amount of investments. The former administration decided in their full wisdom, if I can say that – we'll see what comes out of the inquiry – to move forward on Muskrat Falls.

Mr. Speaker, that is going to have an impact on our rates in the province. It's going to have a huge impact on our finances of this province. It is also going to have an impact in that it does displace approximately a million tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually, because what we'll be able to do over time is shut down Holyrood. As we know, Holyrood is a big polluter when it comes to carbon and the use of –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MS. COADY: Sorry, I got distracted there. The use of, really –

AN HON. MEMBER: Dirty oil.

MS. COADY: – dirty oil, I'll say it. Thank you – and the use of oil, Mr. Speaker.

What we want to do is make sure that we are recognized – and the amended motion does speak to this – make sure we're getting credit for the reduction in GHG emissions. That will occur when Muskrat Falls is completed and how that will then fall into the carbon pricing model.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. COADY: It's an important point to make that it's about the shutting down of Holyrood; it's not about the development of Muskrat Falls. While it will certainly help us to ensure we are lessening our GHG emissions, it is the shutting down of Holyrood that has the impact. If we just built Muskrat Falls and didn't shut down Holyrood, we wouldn't be able to get these credits that we're looking to have.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister Responsible for Climate Change, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, has worked diligently on this.

I know his team. There are some incredible team members that have been working with Ottawa to make sure that when shutting down Holyrood, we're given that credit.

I think all those kinds of green initiatives that I'm going to talk about in a moment; we must have recognition of those because they're very helpful to us. Especially with shutting down Holyrood, I think, if memory serves, it emits about 47 per cent of our carbon, so it will have a huge impact.

You are starting to see the use of the line now, Mr. Speaker, because the transmission and the transmission to Nova Scotia have been completed. We're starting to be able to move power across those lines and really utilizing some of the lower cost energy today so that we're not spending it on oil for the Holyrood plant.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to tell you some of the other things that we've been doing. Of course, we've had a long history in the province of investing in green energy. We absolutely have to, as I said, ensure the federal government recognizes the sizeable cost of Muskrat Falls, but more importantly the retirement of the Holyrood thermal plant.

Now, I want to move away from diesel for a moment. We've got great opportunities in wind energy as well, Mr. Speaker, and we've lots of supply here. We all know how the wind blows and howls in Newfoundland and Labrador. And when you tie that with hydroelectricity it becomes a very robust system, because of course when wind is blowing – sometimes it blows and sometimes it doesn't, so it's not stable, but when you combine that with hydro it certainly becomes a very stable source of energy.

We are looking at how we maximize our wind opportunity in the province. We think there's a great opportunity. We already know we have two different onshore wind projects right now. We have two 27 megawatt private onshore wind projects. One in St. Lawrence on the Burin Peninsula, and one in Fermeuse on the Avalon Peninsula that are used from time to time in our energy mix.

We'd like to see more wind energy, not just on onshore but offshore as well. You're seeing a whole move globally to offshore wind opportunities. There's been a move in the oil and gas industry, for example, of marrying some of their technology for offshore wind opportunity. We are working with our colleagues in the industry on how we maximize our potential for offshore wind opportunities, and working with some proponents that are looking to do just that here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So we will have seen it in Advance 2030, Mr. Speaker, in the document that is driving the oil and gas energy sector. We just released that last week – very well received. About 150 industry leaders in the oil and gas sector came together and that plan was very well received across all stakeholders. In that plan, of course, it talks about the development of offshore wind opportunities, as well as oil and gas and how we start to marry those into a renewable energy source as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we also have a power purchase agreement with a 390 kilowatt private farm in Ramea to reduce diesel usage. That again gives us some opportunities in some of the rural and remote communities that we have around this province. We have about 21 communities in our province that are currently on diesel. We would like – as a matter of fact, we are working toward how do we reduce that, how do we offer alternate energy supply to these communities so that we can reduce our diesel consumption overall in the province utilizing wind, utilizing tidal energy, utilizing hydro, various mix. Hydrogen has been discussed as well.

I know that Nalcor has put a tremendous investment to the conversion of wind energy into hydrogen in the Ramea project. We're looking forward to seeing some ongoing results of that. I speak to my colleagues across the country, Mr. Speaker, with regard to energy opportunities and removing people from diesel energy.

I see that my time is running out. I speak very favourably to the amended motion before the House today. We all have a role to play with regard to ensuring greenhouse gas emissions are decreased, but we also have to ensure our industries are supported in doing their

responsible solutions and providing their responsible solutions to their carbon emissions. We're working very closely with industry. I have to credit my colleagues for joining the Department of Natural Resources and working with, for example, our offshore oil and gas industry, Newfoundland and Labrador refinery, in finding solutions to reduce their carbon footprint as well.

I say, Mr. Speaker, we're doing everything, again, to fully and fairly credit to our province all green initiatives, as it develops. The federal carbon pricing system is a laudable target and goal and I'm asking the House to support that motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: Thank you.

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

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

In Newfoundland and Labrador at this point, our province should actually be a little more proactive in taking a leadership role on carbon tax. When you look at what our targets were in 2010, our target was supposed to be 9.6 metric tons, but still here we are at 10.3 metric tons. In 2020, our economy-wide target is to be 8.6 metric tons, a reduction by about 10 per cent, but now it only looks like we may get to 9.6 metric tons because of the Hebron, White Rose and Long Harbour coming on stream. So we're not even meeting our own targets right now, and it looks like we're cumulatively falling behind our own targets.

This private Member's motion is a bit odd, in light of that. Also, when we look at who are we as global citizens and, really, what is our role in looking at climate change, not only on our Island and on Labrador but also in the global community – what is our role there and how do we play our part?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, that's something that needs to be considered. We're not even on track to meet our own emissions targets and, for a number of additional reasons, cannot claim a justification for exemption from tax. The province can, however, call on the Canadian government to ensure the tax is fair. By ensuring the tax is fair depends on how we use any revenue that comes from carbon tax, and that the tax is effective by ensuring revenues are used for projects and initiatives that are truly green, and this is what Alberta is doing.

In a few minutes I'd like us to take a look at what Alberta is doing and how they're transforming some of their taxes: (a) to make them fair; (b) to assist those who are most negatively affected; (c) to assist those in greening up their homes and their businesses; and (d) furthering the work that needs to be done around climate change, responsible climate change.

So while it is true, Mr. Speaker, that we have undertaken large hydro projects, the development of large-scale hydro is not the best practices. We know that. We've had so much debate in this House about Muskrat Falls. We are hearing public conversations, whether it be sponsored through the Harris Centre, Memorial University, individual activists, community groups, climate change activist groups, the conversation is out there, and best practices have been changing.

We haven't really necessarily kept up to that because we know large-scale hydro in and of itself cause emissions, but when we look at – it was interesting to hear the Minister of Natural Resources talk about the interest in tidal, the interest in wind. Mr. Speaker, we're far behind that as well. We haven't begun to tap our potential in wind energy, in solar and in tidal. Instead, what has happened is we have been stymied by the production of Muskrat Falls, by that damn dam.

Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of catching up to do. We have to examine where are we in terms of our own targets and our own plan for greenhouse gas emissions. Where are we in targets for our own climate change targets and

what we as a province must responsibility do, not just within our province but as global citizens.

I mentioned this last week in the House, that I was very impressed by Climate Watch Newfoundland and Labrador. A wonderful coalition of academics, activists, scientists who are looking at what is our responsibility, what can we do as a province in the area of climate change? Again, looking particularly on the needs of our province, but looking at our role as global citizens.

We all know we're in a tough economic situation, but we still have a responsibility to play. We cannot renege on that responsibility. I believe the people of our province do not want us to renege on that responsibility because they, too, have the best interests of their communities, of their children, of their grandchildren at heart.

I would really recommend that all Members in this House refer – it's a very accessible document; it's about five pages long. It's their submission on the upcoming Climate Change Action Plans. I know government asked for feedback on that and asked for submissions. It's available on their website. I highly recommend it.

We know for a number of years the province has been dependent on oil extraction. I can remember in the '80s, when we first saw the potential of pumping oil and a lot of oil, there was a fabulous program on CBC Radio that would come on, I think, at about 5 o'clock or 4:30 or 4 o'clock every afternoon. It was written locally and it was called *Oil in the Family*.

It was a very sort of prophetic piece, because people talked about the impact of oil on the lives of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It would be really interesting – I would think it would be great if CBC were to play that again in this climate, in this particular time.

In terms of our general economy, we do rely on oil for our revenues. Also, it's interesting that government in this particular climate has talked about doubling down on exploration. Then, of course, that would lead to, hopefully, the government said, doubling down on production.

The oil industry really only accounts for about 15 per cent of the jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I think people would be really surprised to hear that. I think people would think that in fact there would be more jobs than that, that there would be a higher percentage of jobs linked to the oil and gas industry in the province. It's a mere 15 per cent, nothing to smirk at, but in fact it's not as big as I think most people think.

It's an important industry in our province but, again, how can we – and the oil industry is a significant contributor to climate change, to global climate change. So how can we speak about a justification for an exemption from a carbon tax and further compromise our capacity to reach global climate targets? We are global citizens.

Instead of reacting irresponsibly to a tax, let's look at what we can do with that tax and how we could be leveraging funds for further green projects to ensure a just transition away from fossil fuel dependence. We should be acting to ensure revenues from the tax are being used to help the most vulnerable. In the case of Newfoundland and Labrador, any resulting revenues of carbon taxation should be used to help those already adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Revenues from the tax should also be used to help those who are transitioning to the green energy economy. For instance, by funding training programs for oil and gas workers, making the transition to working in renewable energy, as we have seen by Iron and Earth. Iron and Earth East started here in Newfoundland and Labrador about a year and a half ago and those are young workers in the oil and gas industry who are retraining to do work in the green energy industry.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to turn our attention, with the time we have left, and look at – the Minister of Natural Resources has talked about a made-in-Newfoundland approach to climate change and a made-in-Newfoundland approach to carbon pricing. We still do not yet know which direction our province is going to go in the area of carbon pricing. There are a few options. So we have to look at, how would we use our resources?

Again, as responsible global citizens, as responsible citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador, that we are stewards of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, that we have to have meaningful dialogue with the people of our province as well to see where it is and how they want to see this approached. How do we fulfill our responsibilities? What do we do with our resources?

At the beginning of 2017, Alberta implemented a \$20 per ton tax on carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels used for transportation and heating. The Minister of Natural Resources talked about what an emitter Holyhood is. On January 1, 2018, that tax rose to \$30 a ton. So they've had an incremental raise. They're looking at how can we do this in a reasonable way that's not a shock factor, (a), to our own people, that's not a shock factor to industry, but they're also looking at polluter pays.

So the breakdown, the carbon tax on gasoline will increase from 4.49 cents per litre to 6.73 cents a litre. We see a hike in the gas tax. On a litre of diesel the tax will increase – and this will be as of January 1, 2018 – from 5.35 cents to 8.03 cents. On natural gas, which is the most common form of heating fuel in Alberta – we don't use natural gas at all in our heating. Natural gas, the most common home heating fuel in Alberta, the tax will increase by about 50 cents per gigajoule.

On propane – a few folks use propane here in the province, not a whole lot, but a little bit. A lot of people use propane in their cabins. On propane it will increase from 3.08 cents per litre to 4.62 cents per litre. The tax doesn't apply to electricity, and farm fuels are exempt. I think that's also their approach to help a little bit with the whole area of food security.

Here's what they're going to do with some of their revenue from their carbon tax scheme. A carbon tax rebate will be provided to lower- and middle-income Albertans to cover the average cost of the carbon tax. So that's one way of helping those who cannot afford some of these tax increases. They're looking at fair taxation, Mr. Speaker, which is what's so important in this kind of approach.

Then the Alberta government is in the first year of a three-year plan to bring in \$5.4 billion from their carbon levy. There's no way we would bring in that, because we have a much smaller population and we have a much lower economy of industry. Approximately 60 per cent of that \$5.4 billion goes to Alberta households who will get some form of rebate. That's going to help those who are in lower incomes or middle incomes so they're not going to experience the shock of this.

Twenty-four per cent is slotted for green infrastructure spending on things like public transit. That's a dream, Mr. Speaker. How wonderful to be able to redirect that revenue into green infrastructure for public transit. That would be a dream here. We have so little in the area of green public transit right here in our province.

Eleven per cent will pay for energy efficiency initiatives like upgrading to LED light bulbs. We have a little bit of that happening right now in our province, not much, but a little bit. Ten per cent is for small business tax reductions; again, to help the impact on small businesses. That's a positive thing. What we're looking at is redirecting that revenue in positive ways to help stimulate the economy, to help for food security, to help people green their own homes, to help people make their homes even more energy efficient. Five per cent is for coal phase-out agreements. That's a very position thing; again, helping industry and even government for coal phase-out agreements; and 3 per cent is earmarked for indigenous communities.

There are some wonderful – Aki Energy in Manitoba started because a lot of the indigenous communities in Northern Manitoba were using diesel, also like what we see in Labrador, and there was a program, an initiative to train one indigenous community to install solar energy in their community. Now, they have developed a social enterprise where they go all over Northern Manitoba to indigenous communities and get those communities on solar energy. We could be doing that, Mr. Speaker.

The Newfoundland and Labrador government will either have to come up with a carbon tax scheme before this year is out or have Ottawa impose one on January 1, 2019. So we need to

get going. This province needs to roll up their sleeves. We need to have very viable, very significant conversations across the province on how we want to address this issue. We need to have that conversation with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador about what approach we will use. What is in the best interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador? What is best approach for rural Newfoundland and Labrador? What is the best approach to spur on the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador? Mr. Speaker, I believe we can do that.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. HOLLOWAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure for me to stand up today in this hon. House to speak to the private Member's resolution. I think it's a timely topic when we talk about greenhouse gases and carbon pricing.

The Member opposite brought forward a private Member's resolution. We've introduced an amendment to that. I just wanted to say to Members opposite, when the reference is that it's a watered-down amendment; I suspect that comment came because there wasn't a full understanding of what the amendment means.

The amendment really is broader in scope. So it's much bigger than just talk about paying carbon tax when we talk about the federal carbon pricing system. It's much more encompassing in terms of what we need to do with respect to protecting the environment and dealing with climate change.

I heard Members opposite talk about their climate action plan and that they focused on wind power. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that's a little bit funny, in a sense, and I'll give a couple of examples. Back around 2012 I remember distinctly when there were proposals to do wind energy in my district at White Hills near Clarendville. There was a proposal that was brought forward. Of course, the previous administration didn't endorse that. They turned that down.

There was also a proposal that was brought forward at Elliston Ridge for wind power in the Member for Bonavista's district. Again, that one was turned down. So I find it a little bit ironic, I guess, to have Members opposite talk about that they had a Climate Change Action Plan that focused on wind power when there were proponents who were coming forward and they were willing to help us in this province and we would be probably that much further ahead today when we talk about greenhouse gases.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that we're at a critical stage where we need to be tackling climate change in this province. We've seen the impacts of climate change vary across this country. We've seen that climate has brought warmer weather to this province. We've had wetter and stormier seasons in this province. I can speak specifically to some devastating weather events that have happened in my district, in the District of Terra Nova. I just think back to 2010 when we were hit so harshly by Hurricane Igor.

What we saw at that time was that Random Island was severed and completely cut off for days. We saw the Bonavista Peninsula was completely devastated, highways just totally wiped out. If I go back and think about Random Island, we also saw the loss of a life. In the Southwest Arm area, I still run into people today who talk about that they were cut off from places like Clarendville. They needed to access food and medical supplies, and they were using boats. They were bringing that material and those supplies to nearby communities.

We've certainly seen the devastating impacts of things like Hurricane Igor. We saw it as well in 2016 during the Thanksgiving weekend, when the Thanksgiving weekend rainstorm event happened and it severed the Trans-Canada Highway and Terra Nova National Park – not too far from my home actually, in Port Blandford. I can remember visiting to see that large culvert had been washed out from the Trans-Canada Highway and to see that the road was closed for days. Now we were fortunate that we were able to respond to that in such a timely manner.

We've seen it recently on the West Coast, when they've been devastated by significant rainfall

events that have washed into people's houses and have devastated roads going into communities. It's been extremely important that we must do something to impact climate change in this province.

As the minister said when he got up and spoke, he said climate change is real, and he's absolutely right. There is not one person in this province that has not had some witness to what climate change is doing to us in the last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, there's been talk this afternoon by my colleagues around the impacts on the green economy and there's been reference to the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment. I just want to talk about that. Back in November, I actually had the privilege of attending the Canadian Council of Minister of Environment in Vancouver. During those meetings I got the opportunity to talk to other Ministers of Environment around the country. I got to talk to the federal Minister of Environment, and we also got to talk to indigenous leaders.

I think there was a reference this afternoon by Members opposite about the need to engage indigenous leaders, and we did that as ministers, me as a parliamentary secretary. We had a round table with them to understand the impacts on indigenous communities when we talk about climate change. It was really a first step of understanding the impact on those communities as we look at a cross Canada approach to climate change.

While I was in Vancouver, I had the opportunity to go to an event on that Friday morning where Loblaws – and we talk about green economy and new technologies. That company was actually launching new innovations where they were getting away from gas fuelled, mid-transport trucks, when they were getting into more technology-based, electric-type vehicles. It was a tremendous event that got great coverage across the west coast of Canada. I saw a lot of it on local television. It was a great step for a company like Loblaws that were taking it serious about the impacts of greenhouse gases, about the need to deal with carbon and to use technology to help reduce that with their part of what is happening in this country.

Mr. Speaker, just last Friday our government hosted a technology summit here in St. John's. We brought together not only government, but we brought together the private sector. We talked about the need to – how we were advancing technology, but one of the discussion points, and the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation referenced the technological opportunities around a green economy. There were companies in the room that were taking advantage of those things.

I know the Minister of Natural Resources today talked about how the federal government, and certainly as a government here in Newfoundland and Labrador, that we're making investments. We'll be supporting companies like that as they utilize the technology to help us deal with climate change in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we're certainly making progress. We know there is a commitment to have a plan in place in this province. I just go back to the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. One of the things I was particularly impressed to learn as I was there, there was a launch of a video. It was the first State of the Air Report that was launched for all Canadians, and certainly accessible to all Canadians. It was called Canada's air. It shows that we're making significant reductions in air pollutants, including the main components of smog and acid rain.

I just think back a number of years ago, as we think about some of our larger cities. One of the key things we used to hear in the news all the time was about smog and acid rain. Certainly, it was having a tremendous negative impact and effect on the health of all Canadians, especially small children and our elderly. That's extremely important to places like here in Newfoundland and Labrador as we have an aging population, that we need to take all kinds of steps to improve the health of our children, of our elderly and those with heart and lung conditions.

I encourage Members of this House, if you haven't looked at that video, you should take the time. I was really impressed as I sat there around that table and I watched the video. I thought it was absolutely wonderful to give us a benchmark.

When we think about assessing the work we're doing and the plan that we put in place, we have to have benchmarks. The assessment that has been done on all provinces, including Newfoundland and Labrador, is a great first step. If you haven't seen it – and I encourage those who are watching at home that you should, because it also shows where we stand in this province in terms of air quality.

We are monitoring air quality. We have a number of stations that we have around this province that consistently monitor the air quality in a lot of our rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the amendment, we talk about the private Member's resolution that's been brought forward, it is extremely important. I'm glad the amendment was found to be in order, and I'll just read it again. It says:

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House calls on the Government of Canada to fully and fairly credit to our province all green initiatives as it develops the federal carbon pricing system.

I can remember when I was out in Vancouver and I spoke to my colleagues in the federal government. I said: Newfoundland and Labrador is such a unique place. I know it's been referenced by Members opposite about what's happening in other provinces. There's an opportunity here to look at a plan that fits for us.

I said that to not only my political colleagues but I also said it to officials. They agreed 100 per cent, that we have to put in a plan here in this province that fits the need here in this province. They were committed to doing that. I know that work is ongoing; there are a number of subcommittees that are helping advance that work. I know that when we bring forward a plan, it's going to be a plan that will meet the needs of our tackling greenhouse gases and climate change in this province.

Again, I thank the Members opposite for bringing forward this private Member's resolution. It is an extremely important topic to all the people of this province.

I'm glad that our amendment was in order. I thank the Speaker for the opportunity to stand and speak to this today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. Member for Conception Bay South to please conclude debate on his private Member's resolution.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Member for St. John's Centre and the Member for Terra Nova for speaking on this motion.

Just a few points I made, in conclusion. I know it's been said numerous times by the Members opposite about climate change being real. I think everyone collectively in this House all believe, yes, climate change is real. That wasn't my motion, Mr. Speaker. My motion was we feel we are paying our fair share. We feel we shouldn't be obligated to paying any more taxes. Our share now we're paying in our green energy is our carbon tax. We don't need another tax.

That was the motion that was put to this floor to be debated. I know the amendment that's come in now, it's basically saying in crediting our green energy initiatives towards a carbon tax. But my motion was that it was to fairly credit our province for all green initiatives such as Muskrat Falls, Upper Churchill and Bay d'Espoir hydro developments, in relieving Newfoundland and Labrador of any obligation to pay carbon tax.

The new amended motion states: BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House calls on the Government of Canada to fully and fairly credit to our province all green initiatives, as it develops the federal carbon pricing system.

So obviously, my motion was we were relieving ourselves of any carbon tax. This is not relieving ourselves of any carbon tax. This is giving us credits toward a carbon tax. So people need to be aware, there will be a carbon tax. There will

be that 301 taxes. Three hundred is going to be 301. There's a new tax coming.

I say that a lot of times, but it's the reality. It's going to be a reality that's going to hit a lot of people, Mr. Speaker, in the not too distant future. It's something that anyone that's probably paying attention to any of this debate in the House, a carbon tax is something that I probably spoke on numerous occasions, and I'm consistent in my message, for what that's worth.

People can't see this, Mr. Speaker, but when I referenced earlier about Holyrood Hydro generating station –

AN HON. MEMBER: No props.

MR. PETTEN: No props.

Well, anyway, it's worth – anyone can have a look; I can table it. I look at that every morning. That's real. That smoke out of those stacks is real. Members opposite then, like I said, the Minister of Municipal Affairs was saying when they filibustered and they debated, they were always in replacing of the Hydro plant in Holyrood. I'm not saying that's wrong, but that's not totally accurate, because I've heard lots of commentary over why would you proceed with Muskrat Falls when you could this and you can invest this money and have this generating plant in operation for years down the road.

That's one that I will not – I want to say on record, I feel strongly about it because I think that a lot of Members opposite – I know a colleague, a former Member who sat in our party, a former MHA said to me: I did not know what the Holyrood Generating Station was until I got elected. I'm sure Members opposite may not have heard more about it than Muskrat Falls, but if you live in CBS or you in the Holyrood area, you know quite well what the Holyrood Generating Station is and what it does to the environment. I want to be on record as saying that and I feel very strongly about, Mr. Speaker.

We do believe in climate change. There's no issue. We totally believe in climate change. We believe in controlling our emissions. We believe in looking after our environment. We just feel that we've done our part. We don't feel like

getting credits towards a carbon tax. We feel we're doing our carbon tax. We feel we're ahead of the rest of the country.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, in the motion, I heard the Minister of Natural Resources state and I believe the Member for Terra Nova also said, they were talking about their made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador approach, but in the amendment it says: BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House calls upon the Government of Canada to fully and fairly credit to our province all green initiatives, as it develops the federal carbon pricing system. It being the federal government. So where's the made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador approach? I don't see it anywhere in that motion, so I'm at a loss to where we're getting this Newfoundland and Labrador approach.

It's going to be another one of these whatever you say, Sir. So we'll go up and Prime Minister Trudeau and, I guess, Minister McKenna will hand you and say this is your new carbon pricing. We'll give you a bit of credit for this and that; now go on and carry on. So added on 301 taxes, Mr. Speaker, and that's something that we oppose.

Another point I'd like to bring up too is the Minister of Natural Resources made reference to our equalization and our fight about equalization. Back in 2012, the former Minister of Finance, Minister Marshall, he went to Ottawa with the federal ministers of finance and he did a presentation. Now, my year may be off by one or two but it was roughly 2012. He made a presentation to the federal government on equalization and what the flaws with equalization are and what needed to be done with equalization.

Unfortunately, the government of the day and that late Minister Flaherty, they decided to keep status quo and roll it into the existing formula, but to say that we didn't care or we never made a presentation is not accurate, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to be on record as saying that too. The former minister did make an effort. There were efforts made on this government side. Our words, there is meaning behind what we say and I want to be on record as saying that as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up and there are a few points I had there before I finish my conversation on this motion, because I believe the carbon tax is a very important issue for this province. It's a real issue; it's going to be real pressure on people's pocketbooks. As I say, now we have 301 taxes and fees, not the 300 now we have 301. And that is real. Just like climate change is real, 301 taxes are real too.

Mr. Speaker, our hydro resources have offset enormous amounts of carbon and our contribution ought to be fully and fairly accounted for as a contribution from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It offsets any moral obligation to pay more. This resolution is a way of making that clear. We simply don't have enough votes in this country for them to care about us but Ontario does. These days, even in Ontario, people are starting to question the idea of the Trudeau Liberals sucking their pockets dry to fund the Liberal carbon tax.

The water on the beans is changing, Mr. Speaker, and trust has evaporated; good will has evaporated. Our people's ability to bear another tax increase has evaporated. The Liberals opposite can choose to stand where they will and they have to live their choice, but we will stand with the people against another tax increase. Our people have paid enough. Enough is enough. The time has come to leave a different kind of footprint by putting our foot firmly down on the carbon tax.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: In my opinion, they ayes have it.

The amendment is approved.

On motion, amendment carried.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: In my opinion, this motion is carried.

It being Wednesday and in accordance with Standing Order 9 this House stands adjourned until tomorrow, at 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon.

Thank you.