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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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The House met at 10 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'd like to stand on a point of order under section 49 in the Standing Orders. Last night, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety spoke of me in this House in an unprovoked sense of rage, and I don't know if his intention was humiliation or intimidation, but this is my place of work.

Mr. Speaker, the tone and the vitriol with which he spoke of me in this House, I believe, is uncondusive to the work that we do here; particularly in light of all that we have undergone in the past few months, and I would appreciate if the Speaker could look into this.

MR. SPEAKER: Anyone else wish to speak to the point of order?

While I recall the exchange, I would prefer to review *Hansard* and I'll report back to the House.

Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise on another point of order. We have seen, periodically, and once again last night, with the Minister of Justice and Public Safety consistently referring to the Member of St. John's East - Quidi Vidi as the former leader of the Third Party. I'm not sure again what the intention is. I believe that it is necessary, Mr. Speaker –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: – to use the appropriate title for every Member in this House. The appropriate

title for the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi is the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi and Members of the government have consistently referred to the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, instead of her official title, as the former leader of the Third Party. I would like you to look into that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: And I will do that. Thank you for raising that point of order on your perspective.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, second reading of Order 5, Bill 39.

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Harbour Main that Bill 39, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2, be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 39, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2." (Bill 39)

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to stand once again in this hon. House on this very important topic of road safety. As the Minister of Service NL, I've had the opportunity to stand on numerous occasions to speak to amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* – a subject that has a great impact on all people in the province.

Service NL is committed to doing what we can to make our roadways as safe as possible for the travelling public. Part of this commitment is to periodically review and amend the *Highway Traffic Act*, as required, to ensure it is kept

current in its purpose of protecting highway safety.

We are all too familiar with the devastating effects of crashes on roadways and the many individuals, families and friends who have had their lives altered as a result. In fact, today, in the lobby I will attend an event for the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims.

This event recognizes and honours the many individuals in our province who have lost loved ones or suffered great injury on our roads. I have seen many tears shed and looked at many photos of people who have had their lives ended much too soon because of the actions of those behind a wheel. I read comments by one family member who talked about how the crash that took their loved one altered their lives instantaneously, and it was 100 per cent preventable, which is the hardest thing to take.

Since coming to Service NL, I cannot tell you the impact of the many stories of loss and injury on our roadways has had on me. I've met individuals and families who've had their lives forever changed because of incidents on our highways. That is why it is very important that we continue to take action and promote awareness in an effort to improve safety on our highways.

We know there are many unsafe driving practices on our roadways that are putting people in danger every day. When you hear national statistics such as 2,300 people lose their lives every year, and over 160,000 are injured on our roadways, it is startling, Mr. Speaker. I recently read information provided by the World Health Organization which says that more than 1.25 million people throughout the world die each year as a result of traffic crashes.

Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among people between the ages of 15 and 29 years. Nearly half of those dying on the world's roads are vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists. It also stated that without sustained action, road traffic crashes are predicted to become the seventh leading cause of death by 2030. That is why our government will continue to make public safety a priority.

In terms of vulnerable road users, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that one of the amendments we are introducing today is the expansion of the *Highway Traffic Act* to include the one-metre rule which provides for minimum distance between motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

Advocates such as Bicycle NL requested that we take action to improve road safety by implementing the one-metre rule to enhance cycling safety on our roadways in the province. With this change, motorists are required to maintain a one-metre distance from bicycle or pedestrian where the speed limit is 60 kilometres per hour or less, and a 1.5-metre distance where the speed limit is over 60 kilometres per hour.

The fine for this offence will range between \$100 to \$400, or two to 14 days imprisonment, as well as two demerit points which will be incorporated into the regulations. This change will make Newfoundland and Labrador among the most vigilant provinces in increasing both pedestrian and cyclist safety, given the rule will apply to pedestrian traffic as well.

When the MHA for Mount Pearl North tabled a petition in the House in March, I said at that time that we actively working on the one-metre law. And I am pleased to be presenting the results here today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, in the last session of the House of Assembly we debated Bill 23, regarding amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* around drug-impaired driving. At the time, we introduced a zero tolerance policy for novice drivers, drivers under 22 years of age and commercial drivers. The detectable presence of drugs in such drivers, unless they are authorized medical users, can result in their vehicle being impounded for seven days.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, police officers trained in standard field sobriety testing and drug recognition experts continue to use their knowledge and skills to assist in the detection of drivers who may be operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

We recognize the important role that taxis play in the transportation needs of our towns and our communities and the many people who rely on them. As such, we have expanded upon the amendments we introduced in Bill 23 to now include zero tolerance for drug use for a driver of a taxi and a person who has care and control of a taxi.

Mr. Speaker, many times I have stated that this is incumbent upon us as a government to ensure our legislation is adequately serving the people of the province. Legislation is most effective when it is clear and direct and easily understood by all whom it affects.

We also became aware last spring that amendments would be needed in the *Highway Traffic Act* to align with Part 2 of Bill C-46 which changes the numbering of certain driving offences in the *Criminal Code* of Canada, which are effective December 18, 2018. The legislation we are debating today includes these updates.

The penalties are unchanged. If a driver is convicted of a driving offence under the *Criminal Code*, there is an associated licence suspension under the *Highway Traffic Act*. Since the section number in the *Criminal Code* is changing, we need to make these amendments to ensure the right length of suspension is given.

These amendments follow recent improvements we made to the *Highway Traffic Act*, which came into force upon the legislation of cannabis on October 17 related to drug-impaired driving, as well as other amendments that came into effect on June 7 related to distracted driving, excessive speeding, stunting, street racing and other offences.

Mr. Speaker, our government prides itself on our stance regarding inclusion, diversity and accessibility, as well as our advocacy for persons with disabilities. Considerable work has been done in these areas, including the development of a Words with Dignity policy and Accessible Communications Policy developed by the Disability Policy Office.

It is important that our legislation mirror the work that has been done, and, as such, we have updated the definition of pedestrian in the *Highway Traffic Act*. The previous language in

the act included the phrase “a handicapped person in a wheelchair.” This language was contrary to government policies regarding respectful language.

The new definition of pedestrian in the act now references “a person in or on a mobility aid,” while mobility aid is defined as “a wheelchair or other device, whether motorized or not, designed and being used to facilitate the transport, in a normal seated orientation, of a person with a physical disability, including a physical limitation on the ability to walk or move.” The updating of the language aligns with other provincial government initiatives aimed at inclusion and accessibility.

Mr. Speaker, we also have an addition to the *Highway Traffic Act* which enables the Minister of Service NL to adopt codes or standards for accessible parking. Before I speak to the actual amendment, I want to take this opportunity to highlight the work that has been done in the area of accessibility.

Last fall, our government amended the buildings accessibility regulations and the designated mobility impaired parking regulations to improve accessibility and equity for all persons in Newfoundland and Labrador. The amendments represented our first step in a two-phased approach to addressing issues around building accessibility. The second phase is a review of the *Buildings Accessibility Act*, which is currently under way.

In terms of accessible parking, my department and representation from the City of St. John's on potential improvements to the designated mobility and impaired parking regulations to support enforcement and compliance regarding issues such as signage and the size of accessible parking spaces. The amendment to the act we are introducing today will facilitate such regulatory improvements by providing the Minister of Service NL with the authority to adopt codes or standards for accessible parking. These include those of the Canadian Standards Association and Transport Canada, for example.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see with the various amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* brought forward today, we are continuing our strong focus on road safety. As I stated at the beginning

of my comments, I have stood many times in this House regarding amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*. Each amendment represents another improvement we have made in our efforts to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador remain safe on our roadways. We made a commitment to continue to identify opportunities to improve highway safety with input for community stakeholders and law enforcement, and that is exactly what we are doing.

I want to thank everyone who helped us with the latest amendments including Bicycle NL, law enforcement officials, the City of St. John's, as well as other individuals and groups who have made representation to my department. We recognize the ability we have to change lives for the better, and amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* certainly span all residents and regions of our province.

I look forward to debating these amendments with my hon. colleagues in the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again it's an honour and a privilege to rise in this House. As the minister just stated, some of the bills we bring forward in this House really do make a difference in improving the lives of others, and that's really what it's all about, Mr. Speaker.

I commend the minister for bringing this act forward. I've only recently been appointed critic to Service NL. I have to say, I think it's an incredibly busy department, and some great work is being done in terms of the bills coming forward.

Bill 39, in particular, will amend the *Highway Traffic Act* to modernize the definition of pedestrian and add a definition for mobility aid. It also updates references in the *Highway Traffic*

Act to correspond to amended sections of the *Criminal Code* of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, many of these sections required amendments federally to be in line with the changes forthcoming with the introduction of the legalization of cannabis. So many of the changes we're making here are housekeeping changes to correspond with the relevant changes to the federal act.

There are some changes in particular that are substantive as well. Applying zero tolerance for drugs to taxi drivers is a new piece that didn't get captured in our last amendment. As well, setting minimum distances that a driver of a vehicle must keep from a bicycle or a pedestrian.

It corrects an error with respect to applying zero tolerance for drugs to taxi drivers because it was applied in the last bill to commercial drivers and various groups. So this just encompasses taxi drives as well. It allows the minister to set standards for accessible parking signage.

Mr. Speaker, the *Highway Traffic Act* is amended frequently. As the minister has outlined, a number of initiatives have been brought recently. Some of these include changes regarding impaired driving, increasing penalties for excessive speeding, stunting and street racing, and increasing fines for various other driving infractions, such as driving without a valid licence, failing to provide proof of insurance and driving without clearing snow from a windshield. So, these are some of the changes that have been made leading up to these changes, Mr. Speaker.

As was outlined in our briefing yesterday morning, a large number of these changes can be considered housekeeping, again in line with the federal changes; but, in particular, the more substantive ones of this bill would be the application of zero tolerance for drugs to taxi drivers, and the minimum distance that a driver of a vehicle must keep from a bicycle or pedestrian.

So, I'm just going to overview some of proposed amendments again for purposes of our listening public. I do know from talking with constituents that many people do watch the House of Assembly and find it very informative. So, for

that purpose, sometimes there may be repetition in what we talk about, but it's all about increasing the awareness and understanding of people with respect to these bills.

In terms of definitions, section 2 of the act is being amended to modernize the definition of pedestrian, and add a definition for mobility aid. When this bill was first drafted back in the day, scooters weren't as commonplace as what they are today, and, as technology changes, we need to adapt our legislation to ensure we're keeping pace.

Under the current *Highway Traffic Act*, a pedestrian is defined as "a person on foot, a handicapped person in a wheelchair or a child in a carriage or a sleigh." And just reading that sentence, Mr. Speaker, will certainly highlight for many people how that particular terminology really does need to be modernized. It's archaic language. The new definition will include a person in or on a mobility aid. And mobility aid will be defined as "a wheelchair or other device, whether motorized or not, designed and being used to facilitate the transport, in a normal seated orientation, of a person with a physical disability, including a physical limitation on the ability to walk or move."

I said a little while ago that many of these changes are housekeeping in line with the changes to the federal *Criminal Code*. I won't go through them in detail; they are quite extensive and quite comprehensive. But a number of the proposed amendments, specifically those which are outlined in sections 2 to 5 of the bill, 7 to 15 of the bill and section 18(2) of Bill 39, they will update references to the *Highway Traffic Act* to align them with sections of the *Criminal Code* of Canada that were just amended recently under Bill C-46, the new impaired driving legislation which took place in June of this year at the federal level.

Part II of Bill C-46 made significant changes to the *Criminal Code* and changed the section numbers for certain offences. The current *Highway Traffic Act* references the former sections of the *Criminal Code* of Canada, so consequently changes have to be made to our *Highway Traffic Act* to ensure that the penalties will be aligned with the new federal *Criminal*

Code sections. There will be no change in penalties for offences, Mr. Speaker.

The federal legislation will come into force on December 18 of this year, so it's only a few weeks away. It is imperative that the changes we are making here in this bill are proclaimed by that date. All provinces across the country will have to make similar amendments to their legislation as well.

In terms of taxi drivers, Mr. Speaker, there will be zero tolerance for drug use under this new bill. Under the current *Highway Traffic Act*, that zero tolerance was introduced already for novice drivers, drivers under the age of 22 and commercial drivers. These changes were part of Bill 23 which we actually debated here in this House last May of this year.

But amendments to paragraph 60, outlined in section 6, of this bill will result in zero tolerance also being applied to taxi drivers, and to a person who has care and control of a taxi, Mr. Speaker. That is a rather substantive change, but certainly an essential and necessary change that we're just trying to ensure is consistent across the board with respect to all public service providers.

The one-metre rule is emerging, as the minister outlined, as a result of consultation with various groups and a response to the voice of the people as brought forward to this hon. House through a petition from the Member for Mount Pearl North. Petitions are very important. They do bring awareness to this hon. House of issues that are affecting citizens, concerned citizens across this province. Certainly, I'm glad to be a part of the responsiveness to that request.

Amendments outlined in section 16 and 17 of Bill 39 set minimum distances that a driver of vehicle must keep from a bicycle or a pedestrian. The new rule, Mr. Speaker, will state that a driver must maintain a one-metre distance, or three feet, from a bicycle or pedestrian where the speed limit is 60 kilometres or less. In the event though, Mr. Speaker, that the speed limit is posted at 60 or higher that distance increases from one metre to 1.5 metres. So that will be an important issue for people to become aware of, both drivers and cyclists, moving forward.

Amendments outlined in section 20 of the bill outlines the associated penalties which will be the same as those for overtaking another vehicle. That offence has a fine of \$100 to \$400 or from two to 14 days in jail, Mr. Speaker. That is significant and it is very important that the public be aware of these changes because it is a substantial penalty in the event that the law is broken.

According to department officials, Bicycle NL lobbied for this amendment. As well, in our briefing, it was noted – and the minister acknowledged as well – that the MHA for Mount Pearl North presented a petition back in March of this year on this very topic and urged the government to help save the lives of vulnerable bicyclists using roadways in our province by implementing a one-metre law.

So it is important that people who have issues of concern do feel confident in bringing their issues forward to this hon. House via petitions because, where possible, to implement them they certainly will be considered. Similar legislation has been effectively implemented in five other provinces: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and PEI.

Mr. Speaker, I also spoke about correcting an error. The amendment outlined in section 18 of Bill 39 does exactly that. Section 186 of the current *Highway Traffic Act* states that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing the proportion of a drug in a person's body or blood that is prohibited for the purpose of this act. That section will be revised to state that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing the proportion of a drug or a combination of a drug and alcohol in a person's body or blood that is prohibited for the purpose of this act. That wording "or a combination of a drug and alcohol" is what was omitted. It was just an oversight, Mr. Speaker, in the last bill.

It's important that we have laws which state this is how much alcohol and this is how much cannabis, but the combination of the two also needs to be considered when it comes to a person's impairment for driving. That's a very important change that's being made to this bill, Mr. Speaker.

The last change that this bill is going to speak to is accessible parking signage. The amendments proposed in section 19 of the bill refer to the accessible parking signage piece. Currently, in our *Highway Traffic Act* there's no authority to set standards for accessible parking signage. So an addition is being made to allow the minister to adopt codes or standards. Officials in our briefing said this will allow for common standards that will be nationally recognized, and they also mentioned that the City of St. John's was consulted on this. These changes, Mr. Speaker, will also enable future amendments to the designated mobility impaired parking regulations.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in terms of commencement of the bill, which we're now debating here in the House, section 21 refers to the timing of when these amendments will take effect. Overall, the housekeeping amendments which put us in line with the federal bill, will take effect upon Royal Assent. But, as previously mentioned, the amendments regarding the *Criminal Code* will take effect on December 18, 2018, and those related to taxi drivers will also take effect on December 18. The proposed amendments regarding the one-metre rule will come into force 90 days after Royal Assent.

Mr. Speaker, just in listening to the minister's comments this morning with respect to the effectiveness of petitions and how they can make a difference in terms of some of the bills that come forward, on a light-hearted note, I'd like to close by saying that I hope the Minister of Transportation is responsive to our petitions as well, and we'll see more brush clearing to improve safety for highways as well in this hon. House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and certainly a bill we all support. It's a good bill, and it will make a difference to the safety of our travelling motorists.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PARSLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this hon. House to speak to Bill 39, an amendment to the *Highway Traffic Act*.

This is my first opportunity to stand as parliamentary secretary to speak to the amendments to help increase safety on the roads in our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PARSLEY: As the Minister of Service NL stated, we cannot state often enough how important it is that we keep the dialogue going on road safety. It is also important that we as a government regularly review the act to keep current with changes in safety codes, vehicle design and other highway safety improvements, as well as responding to driving behaviours. Any time we, as a government, can make improvements to help increase safety on our roadways it is a win for us all in this House and for every resident of our province.

Since I became parliamentary secretary for Service NL, I have come to learn the great level of interaction our department has with the public on a daily basis. There aren't many services you can avail of in our province that don't touch Service NL in some way. With this high level of interaction also comes the responsibility to ensure we are providing the best service possible to the people of our province. Service NL, through its Government Service Branch, is responsible for highway safety legislation in the province through administration of the *Highway Traffic Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the *Highway Traffic Act* is a very significant piece of legislation with more than 250 provisions as well as 17 associated sets of regulations. The act has been amended on a fairly regular basis since its original inception. Some of the amendments are designed to improve highway safety. Others have been made to ensure the act is responsive to changes in vehicle technology and drivers' behaviour and other conditions. All of the changes help us ensure that drivers, their passengers and other road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, are all protected.

A wonderful example of this, Mr. Speaker, is the one-metre rule we have introduced today. It is

another measure aimed at safety for vulnerable road users in our province, namely cyclists and pedestrians. It allows for a safety distance between vehicles and cyclists or pedestrians.

Mr. Speaker, the zero-tolerance policy for drugs or drugs and alcohol for taxi operators is another significant amendment we are introducing today. The last amendment made to the act introduces zero-tolerance for novice drivers under 22 and drivers of commercial vehicles. Both the taxi industry and their passengers will have an increased level of safety as a result of this change we are proposing.

We also have addressed language in the act that references persons with disabilities. It was important that we change the language in the act to ensure it is respectful. Our government has done tremendous work to help support a province that is accessible, inclusive and supports diversity.

These are just a few examples of the ways amending the *Highway Traffic Act* can improve road safety and help ensure it is modern and responding to today's environment. It is important that we continue to look at the information before us and determine what can be improved upon.

Every day thousands of people travel the roadways of our province. Each vehicle carries a mother, a child, a grandparent or a friend. It is incumbent that we take that into consideration every time we get behind the wheel of a vehicle. Every interaction under the *Highway Traffic Act* has the potential to have far-reaching consequences for everyone travelling on our roadways. That is why it's important that we take steps, such as Bill 39, to make changes and improvements wherever we can.

Our government hopes that the amendments we are proposing will once again remind motorists of their responsibilities when driving on our roadways in our towns and communities. Road safety is everyone's responsibility.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 39, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act.

When these petitioners presented the petition to me last spring, I had to recollect a story; own personal story of mine. Back about 40 years ago, when Brookfield Road was kind of a country road, we often used to travel up and down the road on our bikes. I can remember one day, and this kind of really sums it up in this legislation, this guy who was – back then we considered him a bit of a hard case. It was a local taxi driver who happened to indulge in some beverages, and he was kind of going all over the road. You know, back then that was – it was not looked at with the same lens as it is today.

As I was driving along on my little bicycle, giving her up the road, he came along and struck me with his mirror and sent me off into the ditch. He got out, and barely able to stand up, and said: Watch where you're going. So when you look at this legislation, we've come a long way, and thankfully so.

As I said, society has changed. The way our society operates and travels it's going to continue to evolve and change. As people become more aware of the impact driving to and from places in motor vehicles operated by fossil fuels has on our environment, there'll be more people biking.

I'm still a biker myself, and I do enjoy taking time and going for a leisurely ride. I don't do it for purpose, more than just relaxation, but you will see – and I'd like to encourage more people to take a cycle versus a car. Now that this legislation and the amendments that we're making are going to make it safer for these people to travel on our roads, I think that more people may think about it.

I'd like to thank the minister and her department for considering the petition and bringing this forward. I'd also like to commend them for including the taxi driver suspension analysis in this as well. Because, of course, when you jump into a taxi, you're doing it thinking that the

driver is a contentious and a fit person behind the wheel. There was a gap in the legislation where taxi drivers were not specifically referenced as it pertains to licence suspension.

Another thing I was really pleased with was the amendment to the definition of mobility aid. I often see motorized wheelchairs and mobility aids for people who have mobility challenges and people seem to look at them, or not people, but some people seem to look at them as an obstacle in travelling. They, I'm sure, would love to be able to run along with everyone of us, but because of the deck of cards or the hand of cards that life has dealt them, they require these pieces of equipment to carry on a normal life. We have to make accommodations and give them their right to travel around unimpeded by belligerent motorists.

Redefining that mobility aid is a big factor in making it more, I guess, concrete and acceptable for us to accept mobility aids as a commonplace.

Once again, when we go back to talking about bicycles and pedestrians, it's also necessary – because it's part of our initiative as a province, I believe, to get people out, get them being active and get them exercising and getting in better physical condition. Because, of course, it has great benefits to their health and great benefits to our health system. That's how we're going to change our dismal statistics about our overall health.

If we can do anything else within any other department or any other purview or realm to make it safer for people to get out and exercise or commute by using their own calories versus petro carbons, it's definitely a step in the right direction.

That's about all I have to say.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. HOLLOWAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm certainly pleased to stand today to speak to Bill 39, which is An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act.

I want to express my deep gratitude to the Minister of Service NL and her staff for bringing forward the amendments being proposed here today. As the department responsible for the *Highway Traffic Act*, I'm pleased to see that Service NL takes its role in protecting the public very seriously.

It is fitting today, Mr. Speaker, Wednesday, November 21, that we are furthering road safety by making these changes to the act. As many would know, the third Wednesday each November is recognized as National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims, and today is an opportunity to remember and honour those individuals and their families. The National Day of Remembrance draws attention to thousands who have died or have been affected by road crashes, and to the importance of driving safely on our streets, our roads and our highways. It is so important that we continue to take action and promote awareness in an effort to improve safety on our roadways.

Since coming into office in 2015, Mr. Speaker, our government has taken significant steps to improve road safety. Many of my constituents often talk with me about these important changes and feel we have moved in the right direction. The Members in this House would recall that we recently amended the impaired driving legislation in an effort to further strengthen both alcohol and drug-impaired driving laws in the province. The changes include tougher penalties for impaired drivers and new rules that'll help ensure young people develop safe and sober driving habits that will last them a lifetime. These revisions will help ensure we continue to protect public safety.

On Friday, I was in Gander, along with the Minister of Health and Community Services, and one of our federal MPs, Scott Simms, for the MADD Canada 31st annual Red Ribbon campaign launch. It's heartbreaking to listen to the stories from families about lost loved ones due to impaired drivers. Because of the changes we have made to the *Highway Traffic Act*, those who choose to drive while impaired by drugs, or

drugs and alcohol, will face more significant penalties.

While our most recent amendments following the legalization of cannabis, novice drivers, drivers under the age of 22, and commercial drivers will be subject to zero tolerance for the presence of drugs, while requirements for all other drivers will be consistent with the recent improvements to the *Highway Traffic Act* for alcohol. Anyone who chooses to drive while impaired by drugs, alcohol or drugs and alcohol will now face more significant penalties as a result of these changes to the act.

The amendments we are proposing here today continue our efforts to help make our roads, our highways and communities safer for everyone. There must be zero tolerance, Mr. Speaker. We need to work together with our community partners including our police services, our first responders and advocacy groups to ensure that we have the best legislation possible.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we are bringing forward an amendment to include zero tolerance provision for drugs or drugs and alcohol for a driver of a taxi and a person who has care and control of a taxi. I think this is significant. I want to reiterate the important role taxis play in our transportation network. As the Minister of Service NL said in her remarks, this change to legislation will help increase safety for both the taxi industry, as well as their passengers.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out, the inclusion of taxis was done after consultation with the industry. In fact, after we brought in legislative amendments regarding alcohol and drugs we were asked by the taxi industry, why was it not included. Well, today, Mr. Speaker, we are making these changes. I want the people of the province to understand that as a government we listen and we take the steps necessary to improve their lives. In this case, we are talking about improvements to road safety.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move on to another proposed change being made in Bill 39. This one involves the one-metre rule for the protection of cyclists and pedestrians in our province. As the Minister of Service NL mentioned, Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador is very supportive of this change.

I recall first being contacted by Andy Poole, a constituent from my district, back in January, who approached me about the need to introduce a one-metre protective zone for bicyclist who cycle along our public roadways. During our conversation, we discussed the legislation that was already in place in other Atlantic provinces, including New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. It is now my understanding that PEI and Quebec have similar legislation in place.

In New Brunswick, for example, Ellen's Law was developed in memory and in honour of Ellen Watters who was struck by a vehicle while cycling on a stretch of highway on December 23, 2016. Sadly, five days later Ellen died. Ellen's Law requires drivers to keep a minimum distance of one metre from cyclists.

In Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, Bill 93 was introduced in 2011 to encourage safe sharing of the road by cyclists and drivers and includes requirements for both. The motto in Nova Scotia is: I share the road; and requires that drivers leave at least one metre of space when passing a cyclist.

Mr. Speaker, in this province, we have developed a positive working relationship with Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador. I recall I meeting I had with the president of Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador, Kevin Flynn, in March. At that time I was trying to understand what was meant by a one-metre rule. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Flynn for taking the time to educate me and for following up by further engaging other key stakeholders, such as the Cities of St. John's, Mount Pearl and Corner Brook, in addition to some provincial organizations such as Sport NL, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, and of course SafetyNL.

Mr. Speaker, these legislative changes came about because of the advocacy from the community, as well as support from our police agencies and our municipal leaders. If I may quote Mr. Flynn, who said, adopting this law will bring us one step, or pedal stroke, closer to safer commuting on our roadways. Thank you to Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador for your support of Bill 39. We look forward to working with you again on future initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, there are also amendments to address the definition of pedestrian in the *Highway Traffic Act*. The new definition will respectfully address persons with disabilities. Our government has a strong focus on inclusion and diversity, and we have made significant strides in these areas since coming into office. Many would know that I spent the first half of my career working in the disabilities movement. So the changes being proposed gives us better, more modern and inclusive language, which is very dear to my heart.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, that we constantly review our legislation to ensure that language is respectful of all the people in our society. It is also important that we review our legislation to ensure that it is aligned with other pieces of legislation that will have an impact. As such, we have also introduced changes to the *Highway Traffic Act* which align with changes in the *Criminal Code* of Canada. I should point out that there are no changes in penalties for offences as of the result of the amendments proposed here today.

With the number of sections changing the *Criminal Code*, we have to update references to them in the *Highway Traffic Act*. Consistency, Mr. Speaker, is especially important. If someone is convicted of a driving offence under the *Criminal Code*, their driver's licence would be suspended under the *Highway Traffic Act*. I'm very proud of our governments continued commitment to ensuring the safety of drivers and passengers on our province's roadways. The changes we are debating here today follow a long list of improvements we have made to the act, with the travelling public of our province in our minds.

Over the past while, we have amended the legislation to reduce excessive speeding, stunting and street racing. I am sure that most of my colleagues have witnessed some of these behaviours on our public roadways as each of you drive through your respective districts.

Mr. Speaker, Move Over provisions were enhanced by requiring drivers to reduce their speed by 30 kilometres per hour below the speed limit and move to an adjacent lane when approaching law enforcement or other emergency vehicles stopped at the roadside.

When this first came into effect, I saw little change in the habits of some drivers. However, with time and with education, I am pleased to see that things are changing.

Also, a new offence for driving without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons causing bodily harm or death was also added. All of these changes, Mr. Speaker, were made in consultation with safety advocates including Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada, the S.T.A.N.D. For Hannah Foundation and their victims' families. These were also made in support of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

I was pleased – as I mentioned, I was in Gander on Friday – to see the representation from both police forces as well as our fire departments, and first responders were there in support of MADD Canada and that 31st anniversary.

All of these changes to the *Highway Traffic Act* speak to our government's commitment to safe and sustainable communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is our job as a government, and all Members of this hon. House, to do our best to further the protection of the people of this province. I am delighted to join my colleagues here today for the debate on Bill 39. As I conclude, I would like to once again thank the Minister of Service NL for bringing forward these proposed changes here today. I look forward to our continued debate and I am hopeful that we give unanimous support to Bill 39.

Thanks so much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Warr): I recognize the hon. Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

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

I am pleased, as well, to stand and speak to Bill 39, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act. I

note that it was only in the spring that we did amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*, and some of these today are new ones and some of them are actually corrections based on Bill 23, when we made amendments last spring.

I think it's really important that we are having regular amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* because, like all acts, it's a living document. But because of the changing times and new issues that continually come up with regard to the highway and traffic issues with regard to driving, it's important that government is always on top of that and making changes that need to be made.

Before speaking specifically to the act – and I thank the minister for her outlining of the act, and my colleagues have made references to the very specific points that are in the act, and I shall do that as well. But before doing that, I'd like to point out the whole issue of enforcement. It's fine to have an act. It's fine to be updating our act. It's fine to be bringing in tougher rules and regulations as this bill does.

So, for example, when talking about the use of drugs, having a zero policy with regard to taxi drivers, not just with regard to novice drivers, I think that's extremely important. But if we don't have adequate enforcement and resources for enforcement, what we have on paper will not mean anything. I continually hear people talking about how they see so many infractions on a daily basis of drivers, but we don't have enough police officers who are enforcement officers with regard to traffic, to catch the infractions. And we know you're not going to have somebody at every corner, but we really do need more resources with regard to enforcement of our traffic act; there's absolutely no doubt about it.

While this bill doesn't deal with something like the use of cellphones, we all, I'm sure in this House alone, can attest on a daily basis, seeing people using cellphones while they're driving. With all of these changes here today, it's the same thing. Who is picking up on the infractions? It's good that we have it in the rules, but who's picking up on it?

One that I'd like to make reference to, in particular, is the change with regard to the

definition of a pedestrian. The current act says that a 'pedestrian' means a person on foot, a handicapped person in a wheelchair or a chair in a carriage or a sleigh." The change says: a person in or on a mobility aid. This is good, but it's not inclusive enough, and I'm actually going to want to speak to the minister about this, and maybe bring up a suggested change when we're in Committee.

It says: a person in or on a mobility aid. As a person who, right now, because of a knee injury, is using a cane, a cane is a mobility aid; so, in or on doesn't cover that. I have friends who are visually impaired. I have one, in particular, who uses a white cane. Her complaint is that people pay no attention to the white cane, and how nervous she is at various intersections in the city. I know that's not a provincial highway, but various intersections in the city, because people pay no attention to the white cane.

So, I'm going to speak to the minister about – and her people would have to look at it, and maybe even the Department of Justice would have to, but a person using a mobility aid, rather than a person in or on a mobility aid. Because I think if we really are going to be concerned that we're covering all, then I think that's a bit more inclusive language than "in or on," because "in or on" narrows the interpretation of the mobility aid. But I'm really glad to see the more modern language and, perhaps, we could make it even more inclusive by what I'm going to suggest to the minister outside of second reading.

The enforcement issue is a key one. Then that becomes key, also, with regard to the drugs. This bill is a mixed bag of different amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*. So we also have a number of references to drugs, the use of drugs and how that is enforced. So for example, the zero tolerance – I've already mentioned this – for drugs being applied to the driver of a taxi and a person who has care and control of a taxi, not just zero tolerance for drugs for novice drivers, drivers under age 22 and commercial drivers.

I think it's really important and I understand that it was consultation that led to the addition of taxi drivers, and that's extremely important. But the bottom line is – and I make reference, also, to the change to the act which talks about the

current act makes reference to the proportion of a drug in a person's body or blood that is prohibited for the purpose of this act. I think it was accidental that the notion of a combination of a drug or a combination of a drug and alcohol in a person's body or blood that is prohibited is now the change. And that's good, because we know that it's not just drugs by itself or alcohol by itself, that you can get a combination.

However, once again, how does one enforce that? And we had this discussion when we were debating Bill 23 in the spring, and that was the whole issue of detecting drug-impaired drivers. I think we all know that the roadside sobriety tests which are being used – they're called standard field sobriety tests – is the only way that we have of on the road determining whether or not somebody may be under the influence of a drug.

We do have drug enforcement experts, and I've listened to the drug enforcement experts when they've been interviewed in the media. I'm not putting down their expertise. They are trained; there's no doubt about that. I know that the RCMP and I think the RNC also have people who are trained, but the thing is we also know that the drug recognition is not a science. That the field sobriety tests are highly subjective, and are determined by what an officer or the drug recognition expert is recognizing in the person that they suspect is under the influence.

We know that they can bring a person whom they suspect of being under the influence back to police headquarters, and we know that urine and blood tests can be done, but we also know that none of that is scientifically definitive either. As I recognized last spring, the federal government needs to really take very seriously the fact that we don't have definitive scientifically approved ways of showing whether a person is under the influence, how much it takes to make a person impaired when they're on drugs, how much it takes when the drugs and alcohol are combined. It's still a problem.

I know it's not just a provincial problem, but I would hope that the provincial government and the minister would be working with their federal counterparts to see what the federal government is doing to come up with various roadside screening devices for cannabis that are effective, that can give answers.

I haven't heard anything recently. I know that in the spring there certainly wasn't anything coming forward and I certainly haven't heard of anything definitive being found yet. Once the federal government does find a device that will work, then we would have to make sure that on a provincial level the province would be involved in making sure that provincial officers would be trained to use it but, right now, we do not have anything definitive.

So, in all cases with regard to the amendments that are here today, overall enforcement is an issue, from different perspectives. Overall, enforcement is an issue. We do know that enforcement takes resources, but we have to put more money in in order to make sure that we have adequate enforcement so that people are safe. People are not going to be safe because of what's written on paper. They're not going to be safe because something is in the act. They're only going to be safe if we can ensure that people are following the new rules and that the roads are safer, so that my friend who uses a white cane can go down to Elizabeth Avenue and Portugal Cove Road and not feel her life is in danger. So that she can walk to her physio appointment without feeling her life is in danger. That's as practical as we have to get, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I make the point: Enforcement is the key issue and that takes resources.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to stand and speak to Bill 39, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act No. 2. I will say up front, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this bill, these amendments in this bill, as I'm sure all of the Members will likewise be supporting it. There's no reason why we wouldn't.

There are a few changes here to the *Highway Traffic Act*. I don't want to be too repetitive, but I will say I think the change in definition to a

pedestrian, where it references somebody with mobility issues, I think it's very important that that language be changed to be more inclusive and more respectful of persons with mobility issues. So I'm certainly supportive of that one.

Of course, there are also a number of changes here in terms of where the *Highway Traffic Act* references the *Criminal Code*, because apparently the *Criminal Code* has changed, or the numbering of the *Criminal Code* around impaired driving and so on has changed. There are codes on over .08, impaired driving, refusing the Breathalyzer and so on.

Now that we've added cannabis in there, they've changed the numbering of the sections of the *Criminal Code* to incorporate cannabis on the federal level. Of course, the references currently that exist under the *Highway Traffic Act* are referencing the old *Criminal Code* numbers for those offences, not the new ones. So, basically, there have been changes made to the provincial *Highway Traffic Act* to reference the new *Criminal Code* numbers. So that's more of a housekeeping issue, but something that needs to be done all the same. Of course, I'm sure nobody would have an issue with that.

I think the zero tolerance for taxi drivers is a good move. If I'm not mistaken, at the time when we debated the bill this spring, I believe it was a number of Members, I believe myself as well, including others, referenced the fact that we found it a little strange that taxis wouldn't be referenced. Anyway, I'm glad to see the taxi industry themselves have come forward and requesting that change, that it would be zero tolerance for taxis.

One question I would have for the minister when we get to Committee, is that it talks about – so now we have zero tolerance for taxis, zero tolerance for drivers under the age of 22 and zero tolerance for commercial drivers. So I'm just sort of wondering – and I forgot to ask this at the briefing. Actually, it didn't occur to me at the briefing, it occurred to me after the fact. But when we're talking about commercial drivers, I'm assuming – and I'll get clarification from the minister – that would encapsulate people driving buses, because there are people – for example, Metrobus drivers.

Now I don't know if that's considered commercial drivers, if that's considered taxi, if it's a classification onto itself, but I just use Metrobus as an example. If taxi drivers have to be at zero tolerance because they're transporting passengers around the city, then I would assume that a Metrobus driver should also be zero tolerance. I would assume that a school bus driver should be zero tolerance. I would assume that a GoBus operator should be zero tolerance. A daycare bus should be zero tolerance.

Of course, then we have those tourist buses that you see when the cruise ships are around taking tourists up to Cape Spear and Signal Hill and all that kind of stuff. Or the DRL buses that are taking people around the province, or buses being hired to take seniors on their day trips to Carbonear or whatever the case might be. All of those buses.

So busing in general, and there are a whole range of categories, but I'm wondering if all of those buses, including school buses, Metrobuses and so on, do they all fall under the category and the catch-all of commercial drivers. Because if they don't fall under commercial drivers, then I really believe that bus drivers should be zero tolerance the same as taxi drivers are going to be zero tolerance. Even more so when you think about school children and stuff like that, depending on the bus. We certainly would want zero tolerance for our school bus drivers. So I throw that out there just for some clarification.

I also want to echo what the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi said as it relates to the equipment that is available, or should I say that's not available to enforcement officers in the field when it comes to detection of cannabis. Because, yes, we all know when we debated the various pieces of cannabis related legislation that we do have police officers that are trained – I forget the terminology now, it eludes me at the moment. Anyway, they have special training to be able to detect if somebody's impaired by cannabis. That's impaired, that's the key point here: impaired by cannabis.

So if someone has had enough cannabis that they are actually driving impaired, then the police officer is trained to detect that, give a person their rights and caution, charges them with impaired, bring them to a hospital for a

blood test or whatever the case might be to confirm that, but there's no way a police officer who is trained in impairment can tell if someone has had, say, one puff. Because we're saying zero tolerance, that means you have zero in your body. That means if someone had one puff of a joint or whatever, they might not be impaired but they still have some in their system which means the zero tolerance kicks in.

How are we going to know if someone has had, not enough to be impaired but they have had some? So there's no way to prove zero tolerance, is my point; unless you have some kind of a device, the same as an alert that is used for impaired driving, that someone could – a police officer could do, I don't know, random road checks, or haul someone over and say, here, and give them the alert, be able to do the same thing for cannabis.

So until we have such a device – and it's my understanding they have these devices in some provinces now, the Draeger something it's called. I forget the name of it, but I understand there are a couple of provinces that have something now; we don't.

So I guess this legislation is kind of – it's still good to have this, because once we do get the device the legislation will already be in place. Plus, it sends a message, if you will, to the public that the expectation is zero tolerance. But, at the end of the day, there's no way to enforce it, unless you have a device to tell if someone has anything in their system in terms of cannabis.

As I said, I think the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi raises a very good point in that regard. I concur with her on it for sure.

The next thing, of course, the one-metre rule for persons that are riding bikes, bicycles. It could also apply to pedestrians, which would include people in wheelchairs, scooters and so on.

I had a meeting – I don't know, I'm going to say a month or a month-and-a-half ago – with a representative from Bicycle NL. That's what he was asking for on behalf of his group. So I'm sure he and his group are pleased to see this legislation come into effect. It is being done in other provinces.

It's kind of like the Move Over law to some degree; it's kind of like the Move Over. The police have someone hauled over, you take the other lane or you try to slow down and you try to give them wide berth if there's an emergency vehicle stopped on the side of the road. It's a similar type concept to someone on a bicycle. You pass them when it's safe to do so, giving them a wide berth of a metre or 1.5 metres, depending on if it's a bicycle or a pedestrian, which could be someone in a wheelchair, scooter or so on.

I would certainly support that. I know that there will be some people that – I can see areas where that could be challenging; there's no doubt I can see areas where that could be challenging. It could work fine in an area like Mount Pearl, as an example, or the newer parts of the city, where the roads are wider and it's easier to do that. I could see it being a little more problematic in the downtown core, where you have narrow streets and on-street parking, and there's barely enough room to get through in a car, at the best of times, and now you're going to add this.

I could see some potential there where it could be somewhat problematic but, at the end of the day, under our *Highway Traffic Act*, persons on bicycles – and like I said, there are people that use scooters, for example, people with mobility challenges that have to use scooters. That's their mode of transportation, and they have to use the side of the road, particularly in the wintertime, the sidewalks are not there and so on. So they have no choice, and they have a right to get around, just like everyone else.

So, it's important that we put in legislation that allows them to navigate our city streets safely, but, by the same token, I'm sure that I can envision, in the downtown core of St. John's, where there's no doubt that people would suggest that it could be somewhat problematic because of the nature of the streets, the narrowness of the streets, and the on-street parking and everything else. But, at the end of the day, people have the right to be there, and drivers are going to have to get used to the fact that they have to respect people that are on bicycles or are using scooters and electric wheelchairs and everything else.

One of the things that's not identified here – although, staff said they would certainly try to promote this – is the fact that under *the Highway Traffic Act*, according to staff at the briefing, the only thing that it talks about, like bicycles and so on, is basically a reflector on the front of the bike and a reflector on the back of the bike. It's only a little reflector. I'm not sure how effective that is in terms now if potentially more people are going down the street on narrow roads, in the nighttime, with just a little reflector, I don't know how effective that would be. It would be great – I would like, personally, to see something here that would say that you should be required to wear some sort of a vest or something in the nighttime if you're driving a bike on a city street, a requirement to wear a safety vest as opposed to a little reflector on the back of the bike so that drivers could see you. If we really want to talk safety, that's to my mind where we should be going.

There's a gentleman in Mount Pearl, I see him all the time, and he has a scooter and he actually has a safety vest attached to his backseat, the back of his seat, and he has a pole attached to the scooter with a flashing light on it. It's really neat. There's no chance that you're not seeing him. He's really done a good job and he got her covered in reflectors and everything else. He goes down Old Placentia Road or down Smallwood Drive or whatever; there's no missing him.

If we're going to encourage more people on bicycles, people on scooters, the electric wheelchairs and so on to be utilizing the roadways, along with vehicular traffic, then I really think it's important that we place some more onus and ensure that people on bikes, on scooters and so on to have that requirement that they can be seen by drivers. Like I say, a little reflector on the back of a bike, underneath their seat or something, doesn't cut it to my mind, but there should be some sort of a balance – maybe what this gentleman is doing is over the top. I think it's perfect, to be honest with you. I think it's awesome because you cannot miss him. I think that's something that needs to be considered.

Accessible parking – this is, I think, really the final thing, is accessible parking signage. Basically we're putting in a reference here now

that will allow the minister to adopt standards for blue zone parking signs. Basically when we're talking about the blue zones, there's a requirement of course with blue zones that, in addition to blue zones, there has to be permanent vertical signage in place along with the blue zone. Because in the wintertime, of course, if it snows and there's no sign, you don't even know there's a blue zone there. So, there is that requirement for that signage.

Basically now, what we're saying is that as opposed to different businesses and so on sort of creating their own version of what a blue zone sign is going to look like, perhaps the size of it, the layout, the design, what it says and all that stuff, that we're actually adopting a uniform standard to be applied so that everybody's blue zone signage, wherever it's to across the province, will be the same.

That's important because at least then, once you've set a standard, everybody knows what it is, what it means and so on. So, it eliminates any possible confusion or debate. Of course, the other thing is when it comes to enforcing blue zones, apparently we were told that there had been some issues perhaps where somebody may have knowingly, or unknowingly, parked in a blue zone and because the sign that was there was perhaps not that standard signage, someone had their own spin, or own version on the sign, maybe where it was placed, how high it was, what it looked like exactly, that when it went to court and they challenged it, the judge threw it out because there were questions around the signage.

What's being done here is to say all signage must meet a certain criteria. Here's the size of it, here's what it looks like, here's the height of it when it's put up, all those things so that it's standard right across the board, everyone knows what it is and if anyone parks there, there'll be no tickets thrown out. You're getting your ticket because everything was done in a standard manner, and then it eliminates people getting off with tickets that they shouldn't get off with.

So I want to certainly thank a constituent of mine on that one: Craig Reid. He really was the catalyst for a lot of the changes we've seen over the last two or three years as it relates to blue zone parking, signage, building accessibility.

Even when we had all the ministerial spots moved from the front door and put blue zones, that was all Craig's doing. A pilot project that was done with the English School Board on the Avalon to doing inventory of all the schools and bring them all up to snuff, that was all Craig's doing. He was certainly the catalyst behind it and I want to thank him and congratulate him for all of his advocacy.

I also want to thank and acknowledge the Minister of Service NL because I have to say we may not agree on everything all the time, fine and dandy, which we never all do, but I got to give her credit when it comes to issues around accessibility and blue zones and other things, even other issues we've had here at the Confederation Building, things that I've brought up, other people have brought up relating to persons with mobility issues, with disabilities, she really has risen to the occasion and done some really, really good work in that regard.

While I might criticize her tomorrow on something else, I have to say today, on this one, and in other cases, when it comes to this whole idea of persons with disabilities and access and inclusion, she has done a really, really good job and I want to acknowledge her for it.

Mr. Speaker, that's really all I have to say. Generally, it's good legislation. Like I said, there are a couple of challenges with the cannabis that we still have, in terms of the enforcement piece, hopefully that will get resolved over time. In the meantime, these things, no doubt, are helping make our roads safer tomorrow than they are today, and I think that's a good thing. I think we should all support it, and I know we do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Minister of Service NL speaks now, she will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

The proposed amendments we have introduced here today are an important part of our government's public safety agenda. These amendments help us continue the dialogue of enhancing safety for the travelling public and help ensure our roadways are as safe as they possibly can be.

The *Highway Traffic Act* is a substantive piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, it includes 215 sections, plus a schedule of penalties. The amendments represent one more step in our ongoing efforts to improve safety on our roadways in every town and in every region in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'd like to close debate by specifically highlighting a few of the amendments we will be making, namely enhanced safety for cyclists and pedestrians, increased safety for both the taxi industry and their passengers, modernized language to respectfully address persons with disabilities, as well as a number of changes to implement updates and to reflect changes in the *Criminal Code* of Canada. All of these changes would not be possible without the input we receive from numerous community stakeholders and law enforcement personnel in our province.

Groups like Bicycle NL lobbied government to strengthen the province's regulatory regime in order to increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians in our province. I want to express my gratitude to the numerous individuals and groups like them who provide government with feedback on the *Highway Traffic Act*, and I want to highlight their willingness to continuously work with us in our efforts to improve road safety in the province. I cannot state often enough how important it is that we keep the dialogue going on road safety.

It is also important that we as a government regularly review the act to keep current with changes in safety codes, vehicle design and other highway safety improvements, as well as responding to driving behaviours. We've had numerous changes to the *Highway Traffic Act* in the recent past. The amendments we will put forward today in the House of Assembly help us continue the ongoing focus on strengthening road safety in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Every person who gets behind the wheel of a vehicle must realize the responsibility that is theirs. Every single one of us must make sure we abide by the rules of the road and make decisions that will help us improve safety on the roadways of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I want to conclude by thanking all hon. Members for contributing to this debate today. We must all remain committed to making public safety a priority.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 39 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2. (Bill 39)

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

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

MS. COADY: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 39)

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 39.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (P. Parsons): Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

We are now considering Bill 39, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2." (Bill 39)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair, and what a pleasure it is to say Madam Chair.

I don't have a lot of questions, Minister, but there are a few questions we did have with respect to the bill. A lot of people are unaware, confused about certain aspects of the current

legislation regarding cycling. They are not laws that are often talked about.

We were wondering if there will be a public education awareness campaign to inform the public, both cyclists and drivers, as well as pedestrians, about the new one metre and 1.5 metre rule.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Yes, Member, we are committed to ensuring that the general public realizes that there has been a change. We are also committed to the educational component regarding the current rules around cycling because we understand, and it has been brought to our attention, that people really don't know that you shall not ride on a sidewalk, that you shall ride as near as practical to the right-hand curb or edge of a roadway. And there are a number of other rules around cycling that people are not aware of.

So, yes, we will continue to work with Bicycle NL and anyone else in the province who is willing to assist us to get it out.

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Minister.

In terms of one of the proposed amendments regarding the one-metre rule, the bill said they will come into force 90 days after Royal Assent. So will that awareness campaign occur during that 90-day period?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, we'll start immediately informing the public.

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The changes with respect to accessible parking signage, can you expand on this in terms of what else is being considered or what some of the

thoughts of the department are with respect to future amendments?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: So what has actually happened is the City of St. John's has brought it to our attention that they are having difficulty with enforcing fines because the standards for the blue zones signing is not consistent. We are going to be consistent with the Canadian regulations, and it will give me the authority to do that, to make sure there's consistency so that they can actually enforce the law around the blue zone signage.

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister.

Is there any plan to work with the municipalities in installing the permanent signage, advising motorists of this new rule, and can you explain how this new rule will apply in areas where there is construction or other obstacles?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: What I can say is a plan to address the issue related to signs, as was highlighted by the city, will require an amendment to the regulation and the ability to adopt the standards for the signs for the national standards in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Canada or the Canadian Standards Association. So, we're working alongside and with the municipalities.

Are you asking me if there's funding? No, there's not funding; but, as Service NL, we are the regulators and we are willing to listen to the concerns of the municipalities right across Newfoundland and Labrador as it pertains to the blue zone signage, and to work with them.

It's done on an individual basis. You just brought up construction zones. We would have to deal with that construction zone when it occurs. But, yes, we are the regulators of the blue zones, so we will ensure that the blue zone signage, to the best of our ability – and the

Member brought it up a few minutes ago regarding the blue zone parking at Confederation Building. That was brought to our attention and it was changed. So, as we move forward and as municipalities and interested individuals bring this to our attention, we work to change it.

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you.

Can you inform us if there's a plan to educate and inform taxi drivers of the new zero-tolerance amendments?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Well, our department is working very closely with some of the taxi drivers. Newfound Cabs, Jiffy Cabs and the Alliance, we've had conversations with. There's no doubt there are times that we don't totally agree on everything. However, yes, we will definitely work with the taxi companies to ensure they are aware of the change.

We actually consulted with them and worked with them before bringing this change in, so they're aware this is happening today.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, just a couple of quick questions that I raised in second reading. I'm just wondering, in terms of buses – and that would include, as I said in second reading, things like Metrobus, school buses, daycare buses and so on. Are they considered commercial vehicles under this catchment that you have for commercial vehicles and, if not, is there a plan or a willingness to also create zero tolerance for buses the same as you've done for taxis?

If an individual is in a taxi, our children are riding a school bus or a daycare bus, safety is paramount there and I can't see why they shouldn't be zero tolerance – if they're not already covered under commercial.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: So what I'll do is just read out the definition of commercial for clarification. It means "a vehicle designed to carry goods, and includes a bus, a school bus, a truck, a truck tractor and other motor vehicles designed for commercial use but does not include camper type vehicles designed or adapted exclusively for recreational purposes."

So the answer to your question is yes, they are included in commercial.

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

MR. LANE: Perfect, thank you for the clarification, Minister. I'm glad to hear that.

The only other question I have, again, is something I raised in second reading. I'm just wondering what your thoughts are. As we are going to be with this legislation, we're kind of being more inclusive to bicycles, scooters, motorized wheelchairs and so on, of sharing the roadways – which they already have the right to do, but the fact that we're bringing in this one-metre rule and so on, we're on that topic and it's creating a sense of more inclusion and recognition of their right to be on the roadway.

So with that said, I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on – because right now, according to staff at the briefing at least, the only requirement under the *Highway Traffic Act* is that they've got to have a reflector on the front and on the back of the bike. I would submit to you that that's probably not doing the job that it should in terms of people driving cars actually seeing people in the nighttime.

I would certainly think that we should be looking at requiring people who are riding bikes in the roadway in the nighttime, or on scooters, or whatever the case might be, to have reflective vests or other means on their bicycles or scooters, whatever, so that they can be seen by the operators of motor vehicles. I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that. Would you be willing or open to making an amendment at some point, perhaps, if necessary, to make sure that happens?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, I agree with you regarding the reflectors, and I'll certainly take that under advisement, but would really need to consult with my colleagues across Canada just to see what they're actually doing to address that. Because an individual on a scooter is considered a pedestrian, so that's where they fall under.

I will certainly take that under advisement, and I really can relate to what you are saying there and will go back and check with my colleagues.

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to extend that point that the minister just made, because I had raised the issue of the definition of pedestrian and the definition of mobility aid. The minister and I have had a chat, but I think we should also put it on the record because I was questioning the use of the words "in or on" in the definition – a person in or on a mobility aid.

The minister, clearly, said she, too, actually had questioned that. When you look at it as coming after a person on foot, then a person on foot who would have a cane, for example, would be a person on foot. Subsection (2)(ii), a person in or on a mobility aid, then is somebody who is not on foot, but does not exclude somebody who's with a cane. So I just want to make sure, from the minister, that I'm interpreting that correctly.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, that is correct; that's exactly what it is. The act is repealed and the following substituted: Pedestrian means a person on foot, a person in or on a mobility aid, or a child in a carriage or sleigh. So, in fact, it is an individual on foot, with a cane or any other type of mobility aid, is included.

CHAIR: Seeing no further speakers, shall clause 1 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 21 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 21 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 21 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 Highway Traffic Act No. 2.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: I move, Madam Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 39.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 39 without amendment.

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 (Warr): The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

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

The Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 39 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 her to report Bill 39 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MS. P. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MS. P. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 4, Bill 37.

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

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

I'm very happy to speak to Bill 37, which is the *Public Health Protection and Promotion Act*. I would like start off by saying that this is a very important bill. It's very comprehensive, and it attempts to modernize our health policy and our legislation around health promotion, prevention, treatment.

I would like to congratulate government and the Minister of Health and Community Services for bringing forth this bill. Again, it's a bill that's long overdue, and we do need to modernize these different areas. I would like to congratulate him and his team for looking at this bill, because it's a comprehensive bill and there are over 50 pages.

There's a lot of work that went into this bill. So I would like to congratulate the Minister of Health and Community Services and his team for doing this very important work and for bringing it to the House. It is important legislation. Again, its goal is to rewrite and modernize an area that was long overdue, and it takes years. There are often years in between times when we see rewrites of legislation on this scale, and it happens in a number of government departments but oftentimes it takes years before we do this because it's a significant amount of work.

In this legislation itself, there's a mandate in this legislation that requires the Minister of Health and Community Services to ensure that this legislation is reviewed every five years. So we'll be back in this House, Mr. Speaker – some of us will, some of us won't – looking at this legislation once again. The Minister of Health and Community Services will be reviewing it and looking at what needs to be updated. We're living in a time that is changing so rapidly, and there are such complexities that arise in the area of Health and Community Services.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the folks who gave us a briefing. It was Dr. Claudia Sarbu, who is the chief medical officer for the province, Ms. Gerrie Smith, the legislative consultant for the Department of Health and Community Services, and Mr. Michael Harvey, the ADM for Health and Community Services. They kept saying throughout the briefing they realize how comprehensive this bill is, all the intricacies in the bill, and they said, well, I'm sorry there's not quite enough time, but they also went over time for us to help accommodate us in terms of the questions that we had.

The bill really gives more authority and orders to the minister and to the chief medical officer of health, and it's around communicable diseases and non-communicable diseases. There's an order for looking at also chronic diseases, because we have chronic diseases, outstanding chronic diseases in our population around diabetes, heart health, et cetera, that really affect the health of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So there's a balance here in this bill. It's about giving more orders, more authority with the minister, the department, and with the chief medical officer and regional medical officers, but balancing the rights of people. They have an incremental approach, a last resort, because at times they're looking at enforced treatment, looking at access to people's health information, at times when permission may not be given, but it's a balancing act between the rights of individuals and the rights and the safety and the protection of the health and well-being of the people of the province.

So it's always a delicate balance, and there are new challenges. Since the last public health

legislation there are new challenges. We see more and more global travel. We see more health challenges. We see the emergence of more diseases that may be more complex, more complex to diagnose, more complex to treat.

When we look at what happened here a few years ago with SARS, when we look at what happened in the past 20 – longer than 20 – 30 years around HIV and AIDS. So it's good that the minister has done this work and his team has done this work.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, in our briefing is that those who were part of developing this legislation and bringing it forward, we're proud to say they believe this is the most modern and comprehensive approach in the country, and that Nunavut has the most recent policy but they have not yet proclaimed their policy. They've not yet enacted their legislation. Actually, its legislation, they have not yet enacted their legislation. They're still working on their regulations.

One of the wonderful things that this bill will do, Mr. Speaker, is that it addresses the issue of health in all policies, meaning that every decision in every department that makes any legislation or policies has to look at how it impacts the health of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That's a good thing. That's something that many of us have been calling for. That's something that the minister has been speaking about in the past few years. So this is a really good approach to this particular legislation.

And the other thing is, it specifically identifies, as a consideration, the issue of the social determinants of health. I know, Mr. Speaker, that I have stood and my colleague from St. John's East - Quidi Vidi have often spoken about the social determinants of health in this House when we look at the Adult Dental Program, when we look at accessible, affordable housing.

How many doctors have said to me that, at times, it's almost impossible to treat their patients if they don't have access to affordable and safe housing, or if they don't have access to transportation to be fully involved in the community? These are really important issues

when we look at the social determinants of health.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just go through some of the details of the bill. I have mentioned before how important this kind of bill would have been to be to an all-party select committee to review this bill – again, because it's so comprehensive and it deals with such intricate matters. We're looking at issues of balancing people's rights with this wide-ranging number of orders and how important that is that this legislation be the best that it possibly can.

When government talks about being proud of making it the most modern that it can be, that an all-party committee, a select committee on this legislation, would have ensured that even more so. I've done some consultations with folks in the health field who have pointed out some potential gaps or areas that they would like to have seen identified. That's the kind of work we could have done in committee.

The other thing is because it's such a major piece of legislation – we received this legislation at 5:35 on Friday evening; most people had gone home by then. Then, we got our briefing at 11 o'clock on Monday morning, and now here we are, Wednesday morning, debating this. We've worked really hard –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: We've worked really hard to be able to do as much consultation as we can and a thorough examination of the bill, but really that gave you, after the briefing, only a little more than 24 hours to be able to do that. Because here we are, it's Wednesday morning, Mr. Speaker. I would say that this is a prime example of why we need to use select committees, why we need to update our democratic processes here in the House.

One of the issues that is outstanding from some of the folks we talked about is that there's no real imperative in the bill to do public engagement. We know that for the benefit of health promotion, health prevention, health treatment that the public has to be engaged.

Now, the bill does speak to giving more powers to our public health nurses. Already we know, Mr. Speaker, that our public health nurses are over extended. They were cut to the bone over the last few years, and they are over extended, but we are asking them to do more work. I believe that that's important. That we must once again expand the role of our public health nurses.

I've heard the Minister of Health and Community services speak in this House about the important role of nurse practitioners, of public health nurses, and I believe he's committed to that. But, will there be resources committed to this? We asked in the briefing will there be extra resources required and they said no, but maybe what's going to have to happen is that the regional health authorities may have to reallocate and move resources around.

The other thing that this calls for is for an update of five-year plans developed by the regional health authorities. We know that it's only Eastern Health that currently has a health plan in place. The minister would like to see the regional health authorities all do that. That requires, we believe, probably extra resources to, (a), develop the plan, if the plan is really comprehensive, helpful and useful, and it also will require monitoring and assessing that as well. So, that may require extra resources.

The other thing in this, we do not see any imperative around the issue of research. The legislation does speak about the collection of data but, actual research, we don't see anything really specifically pushing for that. Again, that would require extra resources as well. In order for us to continue to be – as the minister has said, that this will be modernizing our health care system and I believe that he wants to do that. Then that's going to require primary research and it'll require resources for that research.

There's also really nothing, which I was surprised by, nothing explicit – the minister, in the legislation, talks about the diverse populations. But there really is nothing explicit about Aboriginal health and rural health. Those are some of the areas where we see a real need for health promotion, prevention and different forms of treatment. So, I'll have some questions

about some of these issues when we do go to Committee, Mr. Speaker.

The other issue is that also the legislation speaks about water quality, but we know that we have incredible – a surprising, here we are near the end of 2018, number of communities in Newfoundland and Labrador who don't have access to safe drinking water. I would've liked to have seen a little bit more in the legislation that gives it more of an imperative, that access to drinking water is a human rights issue.

I also would've liked to have seen explicitly stated in this legislation the authority of medical officers around the health conditions in correctional institutions; so looking not only at the delivery of health, but specifically something mentioned, because we know it's a huge problem, the issue of social determinants of health, and the Health-In-All-Policies in all of our corrections facilities.

I know that in the legislation it identifies that the chief medical officer of health has access to a number of facilities. I know it would be impossible to list them all, but I believe when we see what has happened in our Justice facilities, our incarceration facilities, corrections facilities, that I would've liked to have seen a specific reference to that as well, because it is so problematic and has been so problematic over the years, and again we're talking about people's rights as well.

The extra orders that we see enshrined in this legislation, and as well there's a lot left to regulations, and the minister has said that he would like to see this enacted by July 1, 2019, so there's still a lot of work yet to be done, and that work will be primarily around regulations. We were also informed in our briefing that not all the regulations will be completed by July 1.

The powers of the chief medical officer of health and the regional medical officer of health are extraordinary, and at times they may need to be so. We know that the Privacy Commissioner has been consulted on some of these issues, because they're about accessing a person's personal health info without consent and, at times, again, I'd like to state that in this legislation they say that it is a stepped approach, a last approach, the least intrusive, that there are incremental

approaches to this, and again it's that constant balancing of the health, the well-being, the rights of an individual and the health and well-being of the population.

I have an outstanding question as to whether or not our Human Rights Commission was consulted on this legislation. Again, because of the extraordinary powers that can be used in times of emergency, or to be able to prevent a health emergency. So, I have some questions about that that I'll ask during the Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I have just a few other issues that I think might be important to raise. For instance, will be a commitment to resources, where the minister sees some of their extra resources might be needed? I do like the overall direction of this legislation and where government is going with it, and I would think that government should take some pride, and the team of people, who've worked on this, should take some pride.

We have a province with among some of the worst health behaviours around smoking, heavy drinking, bad diet in the country. So, for the chief medical officer of health to be able to look at chronic diseases, not just communicable diseases, is so important. I believe this is going to take more resources for the chief medical officer of health, to be proactive, to be able to reach out and to reach in, and to give direction, so that we are looking at Health-in-All-Policies and also the social determinants of health.

One of the issues that I have raised, constantly, in this House is the issue of boarding houses, and how unhealthy they are. People with very complex, people with severe mental illness, people with intractable addictions issues, who may be solely dependent on income support, how they don't have enough money to eat properly. They don't have enough money for transportation, to attend doctor's appointments, to attend support groups.

I would hope that this legislation will also impel the chief medical officer of health to be able to assess what's happening when people are on income support and don't have enough money to eat properly. What happens when people who are on income support and have diabetes and can't afford their strips or can't afford good food, or someone with heart disease who can't

afford – we know that the amount of money that people are expected to live on income support is way below the poverty level.

Then let's look at also our seniors. We have the highest percentage of seniors in receipt of OHS and GIS, also living right at the poverty line, in some cases below the poverty line. What does that mean when they can't afford their over-the-counter drugs? What does that mean when they can't afford good food? What does that mean when they cannot afford dental care? What does that mean when they can't get dentures and, therefore, are limited to the types of food that they can eat? What does loneliness mean and isolation when they can't get around?

Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping that this legislation will be far reaching and, again, reach into a number of departments who are responsible for issues such as this. I believe that the intent is to ensure that we have the healthiest possible population. We have a lot of work to do. If this is to be truly modernized and to be a gold standard in the province, I'm hoping as well that the minister will do further consultation. I'll be asking him about some of the information about what he has done in consultation in preparation for this legislation.

I see my time is running out.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

If the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services speaks now, he will close the debate.

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

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

I hadn't planned on speaking but there's a point I want to strengthen, from what the Member for St. John's Centre has mentioned. Because I think it's important for the public to understand what the breadth of it means and that has to do with the social determinants of health.

While the bill says it and while it says that this has to be part of all policies within government and departments have to look at it, there's no direction on what that might mean. I just want to speak to it for a minute because it is so important.

As my colleague mentioned, both she and I have talked about this in the House, but also as somebody who has been involved over decades with the women's movement, for example. It really was the women's movement that first started using this language of the social determinants of health. It has such an important depth of meaning.

For example, one of the big ones is poverty. Poverty is one of the most serious social determinants of health. There is so much research that shows the poorer people are, the sicker they are in our society. The people who have a longer lifespan and healthier lives are people who have more resources to be able to eat correctly, to be able to exercise, to be able to have people who even help them with their exercise. Research shows that. So one of the most serious issues is poverty.

A direction of this government has to be looking at that and how that relates to housing. Poverty and housing go together. That, too, is a social determinant of health. How people live, the circumstances under which they live is a social determinant of health. My colleague made reference to some practical things. For example, which is not housing, but it is the accessing needs that people have, like, for example, teeth. If you do not have good teeth, if you can't chew your food, if you can't really help that food digest well, then that affects your health. Then the food that you're eating is determined by whether or not you can buy good food. So this is why this is so important in the bill, and I'm sure the minister knows that; that's why it's here. But I also think it needs to be really spelled out and really determined. Do we have a real focus on this in all the policy making?

Gender is a social determinant of health. That, too, has to be in there. Also, a person's status in society. So, for example, one group that I'm aware of, trans persons. By nature of their being trans, by nature of where they are in our society, that also is a determinant of their health. How

does the health care system, for example, relate to groups with special needs, who have special needs because of their status in society?

So it's excellent that the words are in the bill. It is excellent that they're there, but there is so much work that will need to be done in government to make sure that it's just not on paper, that this has to flow through all aspects of government, because it is so wide and it is so important, that we have to look at all of these things to understand what is necessary to bring good health promotion.

On Saturday, I was at one of the flu shot clinics, and I have to say it was a wonderful experience. It was here in St. John's, of course, and it was almost like a social event that was going on. I was really quite pleased. There were so many families there, so many children getting the flu shot, and I have to say Eastern Health did a great job. There were resources – what's the word I want – things for people, coffee, tea, juices, water. People were speaking with each other. Everybody was talking about it, look at the turnout, isn't it wonderful? So that spirit we have to also get at.

We also have to make sure that people who have fewer resources can access that, for example, and that's part of the determinant of health, because when I looked around there were people who could drive to get there, who were there. Because it was at the Hampton Inn & Suites on Stavanger Drive, so you don't get there by walking.

I know it's only one of the clinics that happened in the city, and Eastern Health did do a good job of having the clinics spread out throughout the city at different times, but most of them, for people who do not have transportation, could they get there? Could low-income people who couldn't use a bus pass to get there, could they get there to get their flu shot for example? So it's so broad.

It's like when we talk about using a gender lens in doing policy work. It's the same thing. If we're going to use the lens of social determinants of health, then we have to have a tremendous amount of work done on helping all departments understand what that means.

So that's all I wanted to say, Mr. Speaker. As I was listening and doing more thinking, I thought I just wanted to add my voice to that point.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services speaks now, he will close the debate.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

I think it's been an interesting and informative discussion around second reading on this bill. What I've taken from it is essentially fulsome support from all sides of the House for what I still maintain is a landmark piece of legislation.

I did have a little concern when the Leader of the Third Party talking about attempting to address, but her subsequent comments really I think are very supportive of this bill. At least I took them that way.

A couple of things I would comment on before we move into the Committee stage, really in general, this bill doesn't actually prescribe more in the way of authorities for medical officers of health. The bulk of the bill, the expansion of the bill, has actually been around those balancing rights that did not exist in the previous legislation. To be fair to the drafters, simply because that framework was not there in the 1970s.

Really and honestly, the bulk of the expansion around orders has been around balancing of the orders against the rights of the individual. Indeed, some authorities that existed under the old legislation were, quite frankly, not constitutionally sound and have been removed. They've been taken out.

In terms of comments from the Members of the Third Party and one of the independent MHAs around the issue of resources; fundamentally, what is happening in the health care system in this province is nothing less than a C-Change, a shift. What we are doing is we're moving away from the historical institution-based, provider-

centric approach of the first iteration of Medicare to very much a patient-centred approach with services delivered in the home where possible, in the community ideally, and only further afield if there are reasons of safety or quality that drive that imperative.

Essentially, we are changing the face of health care in this province. This bill is a fundamental part of that shift, and, yes, resources will move. Resources will move out into public health. They will move out over the course of time into the community, and we've seen that through threads from *Towards Recovery*. We've seen that through initiatives in the Home First philosophy. We've seen that in primary health care teams and a lot of the other initiatives that have come through Health.

This bill, however, puts what we have now in a logical and sensible framework, and it does it in a way that recognizes the fiscal challenges the province has at the moment.

I would take issue and really reiterate some of the comments my colleague, the Government House Leader, made last night around the process. This bill is 50 pages, and, essentially, four days of study should be adequate to deal with what is a self-contained, internally coherent, cohesive bill that stands alone, and when read carefully, will stand by itself.

Quite frankly, I think those issues around process have been addressed. And out of deference to the Third Party, we are completing second reading today, rather than yesterday, at their request. So I think there has been some give and take, and I wouldn't like *Hansard* to reflect a slightly one-sided view of this.

I did try and avoid reading some of the comments around specific services from a partisan point of view, but there are some myths that keep on getting repeated around over-the-counter medications, for example. Those are available to people with limited income should their prescriber feel that that is necessary. We have had very few requests through the prescribers for those kind of medications.

The last time I looked, we covered around 130,000 individuals through the Provincial Drug Plan. The last time I checked for over-the-

counter prescriptions, we had been asked to approve just shy of 600 requests. That, to me, means the percentage of those individuals who medically need those medications is small, and it is available for those people who need it.

On that note, I'm not going to take any more time. I think the interesting piece, from my point of view, will be the Committee of the Whole stage for this bill. I thank all the Members for their clear expression of support for this bill, and I'll take my seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 37 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting The Protection And Promotion Of Public Health. (Bill 37)

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

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

MS. COADY: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting The Protection And Promotion Of Public Health," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill 37)

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Considering the hour, I move that we recess until 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: It's been moved that this House now stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I would like to bring all Members' attention today to some very special guests in our public gallery. Joining us today from Mothers Against Drunk Drivers Canada, some very good friends of all of ours, Ms. Patricia Hynes-Coates, Terry Coates, Amanda Hynes, Christine Care, Michelle Martin, Wayne Power and Matthew Byrne.

Also joining us are Frankie Ralph and Sara Pittman. And, with the organization S.T.A.N.D for Hannah Foundation, we're pleased to also introduce you to Gail Thorne, Linda Vincent and Pam Vincent.

A great welcome to all of you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: They will, of course, be joining us for a Ministerial Statement today.

I'm also pleased to advise the House that earlier today, in fact just an hour or so ago, I was very pleased to meet with Members of the Press Gallery Association to formally adopt their newly developed constitution.

The Press Gallery Association of Newfoundland and Labrador was founded in 1969, when its first constitution was formally adopted. Various changes occurred over the years to the constitution and how they operated, leading to a

more informal arrangement from the mid-1990s onward.

Following consultation between House officials and the president of the Press Gallery Association in recent months, a draft constitution was proposed which formalizes criteria for membership, as well as expected conduct of press gallery members.

The House of Assembly recognizes the important role of the press in the proper functioning of our democratic system, and we are pleased to welcome them to cover proceedings of the Legislature. It was an honour today for me to formally adopt the Press Gallery Association's new constitution with the president and other members. I look forward to continuing our positive relationship.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: For Member's statements today, we will hear from the Members for the Districts of Lewisporte - Twillingate, St. Georges - Humber, Mount Pearl North, Placentia West - Bellevue and Windsor Lake.

The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thousands of people across this great province dedicate an immense amount of time and skill to their community through volunteering. There's also a population of volunteers who go above and beyond their call of duty for professional volunteerism. One such individual is Rev. Arthur Elliott.

His career has consisted of providing spiritual guidance at St. Matthew's United Church in Lewisporte. In addition to that, Rev. Art also volunteers for a significant number of causes. For years, he has been actively involved in the Calypso Foundation, the Lewisporte Area Chamber of Commerce and the Gander Airport Authority, just to name a few.

One of Rev. Art's greatest passions is advocating for improved health care services for

Lewisporte and region. He has spent considerable time with the Concerned Citizens Committee in Lewisporte to ensure this reality. While he is not one to seek accolades, he has certainly been one to receive these. In 2011, he received the Seniors of Distinction Award; 2014, Queen's Diamond Jubilee Award; and, most recently, Senator Ravalia presented him with the Senate 150 Anniversary Medal.

Please join me in recognizing Rev. Arthur Elliott for his dedication through volunteering – which strengthens our community, making it a better place to live.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to pay tribute to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the organizers of the Red Ribbon Campaign. The red ribbon symbolizes the innocent victims of impaired driving and reminds us to always drive sober.

MADD's Red Ribbon Campaign has been raising public awareness about the risks and consequences of impaired driving for 31 years. Over these years, it has grown from a single event to a nation-wide campaign, distributing millions of red ribbons.

This weekend the Bay St. George chapter of MADD launched their local campaign with a parade down Main Street in Stephenville and a public information booth at the Stephenville shopping centre.

While great strides have been made over the years to reduce impaired driving, it continues to be a deadly problem on the roads of this province and this country. Continued awareness efforts are vital, and the message is especially important in the holiday season when parties and celebrations are plentiful and the risk of impaired driving is especially high.

I ask all Members to join me in wishing Mothers Against Drunk Driving success in their important Red Ribbon Campaign.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the community of Mount Pearl, and most particularly the hockey community of Mount Pearl.

This past weekend, Mount Pearl hosted Rogers Hometown Hockey festival. The festival is a celebration of local talent both on and off the ice. It also brings with it the opportunity to spotlight local NHL players and grassroots stories of community hockey heroes. In addition to an extensive slate of local hockey tournaments, there was an appearance by NHL alumni and, of course, the one and only Ron MacLean.

Mr. Speaker, while this weekend of hockey and community was of celebration, the hockey community and the Hendry family in particular were also mourning the tragic death of Keith Hendry – a devoted husband, father, hockey coach and community volunteer who passed away due to a vehicle accident in Central Newfoundland. Keith's wife Tammy did a ceremonial puck drop at the opening game of Rogers Hometown Hockey weekend. And she can be quoted as saying "without the support of her hockey family, it would have been very difficult to get through this tragedy."

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to rise, not only to celebrate Rogers Hometown Hockey weekend in Mount Pearl, but to celebrate the spirit of community, family and Keith Hendry, a Mount Pearl hockey hero.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Miss Achievement Newfoundland and Labrador is a premier scholarship program for young women aged 13 to 18, and gives young women in our province the opportunity of a lifetime.

The program is aimed for participants to challenge themselves to be the best they can be – driving determination and leadership, with the ultimate goal of developing well-rounded leaders and individuals who will guide our province in the future.

This past Sunday, 30 participants gathered at Holy Heart Theatre, showcasing their academic abilities, their physical strengths and their personalities which make them shine as leaders in their respective communities. Two of these young women hail from Placentia West - Bellevue, Taylor Reid of Chapel Arm and Theresa Caul of Southern Harbour. Both Taylor and Theresa have been leaders in their schools and communities, and are deserving of much recognition. And I extend additional congratulations to Theresa on winning the Academy Canada Future Leader Award.

I congratulate both these young women on stepping forward. I was particularly pleased to visit with them prior to the event, along with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in saluting these two young women and wish them the very best. Young people, and young women in particular, are not the leaders of tomorrow, but rather the leaders of today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer congratulations for the academic excellence achieved by some very bright students in my district, who were awarded Electoral District Scholarships this month from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Recipients from Gonzaga Regional High School were Benjamin Wall and Neil Rajan; while at

Holy Heart of Mary High School, it went to Zachary Smith.

Additionally, some students in my district were also recipients of the Centenary for Responsible Government Scholarships. Congratulations to Abdullah El Nass and Katrina Picco of Holy Heart of Mary High, and Oishi Hawlader, Samantha Johnson, Tristan Hamlyn and Julia Hill of Gonzaga Regional High on their success. I also offer my congratulations to their teachers, friends and families whose support was surely appreciated and essential.

With fine young adults like these, Mr. Speaker, we can have no fears about the capability of the next generation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, today I rise in this hon. House to observe National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims.

Annually, more than 2,300 people are senselessly killed in road crashes in Canada and more than 160,000 are injured.

Mr. Speaker, within seconds lives can change forever because of a crash on our roadways. It also only takes a moment to make the decision to drive safely.

We can save lives by eliminating distractions, driving defensively and never driving impaired. We each have a responsibility to consider ways in which we can be safer and more responsible drivers.

Mr. Speaker, we frequently revise the *Highway Traffic Act* to improve road safety in the province. In fact, just this morning we proposed changes to improve safety for cyclists,

pedestrians and taxi drivers and to adopt accessible parking signage standards.

I commend our highway enforcement officers, the RCMP and RNC for the valuable work they do to raise awareness and enforce the act. I also thank safety advocates, as well as victims' families, who provide valuable input as we continually seek ways to make our roads and highways safer. It was an honour for me to meet many of them just a short while ago for a remembrance ceremony here in the lobby of East Block.

Today, I encourage all Members to please take a moment to reflect upon the tragedy faced by victims and their families, and help raise awareness of the importance of safe, defensive driving.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. Mr. Speaker, I also attended the ceremony of remembrance in the lobby of Confederation Building earlier today. It was certainly a very touching tribute to those who have been injured or lost their lives on our roadways, as well as the many others whose lives have been forever changed as a result of traffic accidents. The speakers were very articulate and should all be commended for their courage and determination to stand against any type of dangerous driving.

As someone who broke my neck in a car accident because a careless driver did not have their garbage properly secured, I thank God every day for my many blessings. Most others are not as fortunate as I am to be able to continue to walk. It missed my spinal cord, Mr. Speaker, by a fraction of a millimetre.

Today is a solemn reminder of how important it is to take the time to reflect on road safety and to

consider our own driving practices. We all have a responsibility and a role to play in keeping our province's roads and highways safe.

I commend all the individuals who work so hard every day to make our roads safer, and I encourage all road users, whether drivers, pedestrians, motorcyclists or cyclists, to adopt safe behaviours while sharing our roads.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy. My sincere condolences to the families of the too many road crash victims in our province, and I, too, thank the many groups and agencies promoting road safety in our province.

Our highway enforcement officers and the RCMP and RNC are essential to the enforcement of speeding and distracted driving laws. Government must ensure these agencies have adequate resources to permit effective enforcement on our highways because there's always someone out there who is not going to follow the rules.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

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

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is my pleasure to rise in this hon. House today to acknowledge a significant milestone in our government's efforts through *The Way Forward* to grow the province's agricultural industry.

With an investment of \$1.4 million over two years through the Labour Market Development

Agreement, College of the North Atlantic is introducing a new Agricultural Technician program at its Corner Brook campus.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: Students will learn soil fundamentals, agriculture safety, livestock genetics, nutrient management and more. The program will also include a business component with training in agricultural sales and marketing and land use.

The Agriculture Technician program will enable graduates to take advantage of exciting opportunities in the growing agricultural industry here at home. Building a sustainable economy is a top priority, and one of the key requirements to achieving this goal is maintaining a highly skilled workforce – one that can maximize each and every opportunity.

With the program being offered at the College of the North Atlantic Corner Brook campus, it will benefit from proximity and access to government's experimental farm located at Pynn's Brook. Additionally, the program will include a field camp component which will be based at the government's significantly enhanced Centre for Agriculture and Forestry Development in Wooddale. The Wooddale facility will provide a great opportunity for students to apply their skills in a hands-on setting.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with the College of the North Atlantic and the industry to support growth in priority sectors identified by the Cabinet Committee on Jobs, including agriculture, technology, forestry, mining and aquaculture.

I ask all of my hon. colleagues to join me in commending the hard work of industry associations, employers, community organizations and College of the North Atlantic in encouraging the growth of agriculture throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I join with the minister in commending the work of the College of the North Atlantic for instituting a new Agriculture Technician program. Expanding our knowledge base for our people in the agriculture sector is paramount for achieving sustainability in food independence.

Newfoundland and Labrador remains one of the most food insecure provinces in Confederation, and both our weather and proximity to markets can amplify this problem. The answer to be masters of our own destiny is to increase our local agricultural output until we are truly food secure. Our post-secondary institutions, in particular College of the North Atlantic, are world-class and punch well above their weight.

I look forward to hearing the results of the College of the North Atlantic's initiative and the fruits or vegetables of its labour.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. It's great to hear about this new program. Students will have an opportunity to stay in the province and learn successful agricultural technics appropriate for our climate and soils. Very exciting. Now government needs to come up with a concrete, comprehensive plan for supporting local growth in agricultural production and marketing to meet our food security needs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this hon. House today to highlight further improvements our government is making towards our snow clearing services on our highways for the 2018-19 winter season.

Last year, our government introduced the province's first tow plow – an effective piece of equipment that clears snow and spreads salt on two lanes at the same time – and we also launched the Provincial Plow Tracker application that began providing real time locations of equipment on our busiest routes.

We later expanded the Provincial Plow Tracker service to all routes on the island portion of our province over the winter.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that in December, we will be expanding that service once again adding the highways in Labrador.

In addition, we have purchased another tow plow and two new brine tankers, which help us ensure we use our salt efficiently.

Earlier this week, we added a new highway camera on Route 461, St. George's Highway. As we announced in *Budget 2018*, we are also adding cameras in Stephenville, Rocky Harbour and Lumsden and we will continue to expand our cameras network.

The new tow plow, brine tankers and highway cameras complement our equipment, our online road condition repots, our Snow Means Slow campaign, and Twitter updates to help motorists plan for a safe trip.

Finally, when the new section of the Team Gushue Highway opens, it will be one of the now 14 routes to have overnight snow clearing.

The top priority for the 700 people who work long nights and early morning on our highway is to keep people safe. We are thankful for the services they provide often in poor weather conditions,

Mr. Speaker, while we improve services and safety for our travellers on all of our highways,

we remind motorists the best way to ensure safety is to slow down, drive to conditions and ensure your vehicle is properly equipped for winter driving.

Mr. Speaker, Snow Means Slow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, we welcome any improvements to snow clearing services across the province. We certainly hope the use of additional equipment and expansion in service will increase road safety.

We are glad, after two years of lobbying, that the government has finally recognized the value of 24-hour snow clearing services – that was cut in the 2016 budget – and we are pleased to see the 24-hour snow clearing services will be implemented on the new section of the Team Gushue Highway.

Mr. Speaker, safety of the travelling public and our snow clearing equipment operators, workers, is paramount. I encourage individuals to appropriately equip their vehicles, adjust their driving to suit winter weather conditions and be safe this winter season.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. It's good news that this plow tracker service will expand further in Labrador, which will be so helpful to people there; particularly in Southern Labrador where storms often play havoc to essential travel in that

region. There's also welcome news, at other regions that deal with heavy snowfalls will have some new technology.

I would stress that there are many drivers on secondary roads who still face a considerable challenge and one that will increase due to the more serious storms we are experiencing because of climate change.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday we focused, in this House, on the SeaRose. We understand that Hebron has resumed production.

So I would ask the Premier: Does he have an update on the other offshore installations, including what damage was done to them, and when can they expect to resume production?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, coming from the storm damage that was done last week, we now have, as you mentioned – as the Leader of the Opposition has mentioned already, the Hebron is now back in operation. But there are a series of checks that would need to be done as a requirement to actually go back into operation, based on the operational plans that were put in place. But just not the installation of those, but there are also some drill rigs out there too.

There are a number of things that would need to be done before they would go back into production, go back to work, Mr. Speaker. So it's really hard to predict what the timeline would be. The main thing is we will make sure

that all the checks and balances that are required so that when they do go back to work, they can go back safely.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: I thank the hon. Premier for that, but could he enlarge on the question of what damage might have been done?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: We do know there was some damage that was done to the Hibernia platform where we saw three lifeboats that were unfit to be used. So, therefore, there were some safety concerns there and a number of people would have had to be removed from that site. So those repairs are ongoing now as part of the operational plan that would be required for Hibernia.

Mr. Speaker, we're not going to rush this process. We would not expect every Member of this House – plus people in Newfoundland and Labrador recognize that there's an amount of work that would need to be done before those rigs go back into production or into the joint platforms. It's a little early to tell, but Hibernia did get some damage as a result of the storm last week.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Yesterday, when we asked the minister what would prevent another spill from happening in the next adverse weather event, she said they're monitoring the situation. I would say to the minister that monitoring does not directly prevent spills.

What assurances can you give the people that preventative actions are being taken?

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

MS. COADY: I thank the Member opposite for the question; but, I will say, I said a heck of a lot more than monitoring yesterday.

I was very fulsome in my responses to both the Opposition as well as to the people of this province. And I will say this, Mr. Speaker, there are a tremendous number of checks and balances that are done with all of our offshore installations, and they are a requirement to do so, Mr. Speaker, both from a safety and environmental protection plans. They are continuously reviewed.

I will say to the Member opposite and to the people of the province, we do have a chief conservation officer that is responsible for the environmental protection plans. We have a chief safety officer who's paramount over all plans, Mr. Speaker, and so therefore there is an awful lot being done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: The official, Trevor Pritchard, of C-NLOPB said that the board is not the best place to give stop-start orders when it comes to adverse weather conditions.

I'm asking the hon. Premier, if he agrees with that?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: First of all, Mr. Speaker, just to clarify; Mr. Pritchard is with Husky Oil, not with C-NLOPB. He's an operator on the site there.

Mr. Speaker, there is an operational plan in place. We do know there will be an investigation that's required. It's been mentioned by the minister already; it's the chief safety officer that makes the final decisions in terms of those operational plans and so on. He provides the oversight into these operational plans.

So, right now, there is an investigation that will be done, and the recommendations that will come back – I will assure the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and all Members of

this House, if indeed it needs to be strengthened that in some ways there is a recommendation that comes back that would make a recommendation that we can actually strengthen and make those rigs more safe, we're more than willing to do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: I thank the Premier for his factual correction and the rest of his answer.

The board is in charge of regulating our offshore and with ensuring safety and environmental protection.

I would ask the minister: Will she advocate for the board to be given the authority to permit producers to restart operations only when they are satisfied – that is the board – that it is safe to do so?

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

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

Indeed, as the Premier has informed this House, and as I've informed the House over the last number of days, the chief safety officer and the chief conservation officer are responsible for both safety as well as environmental protection. Their role in all of this is very, very important. We will await the outcome of the investigation to see what indeed happened, were protocols followed appropriately, and what protocols may need to be implemented.

So I will say to the Member opposite, we will do whatever it is required, whatever is necessary to protect our environment, as well as the safety of our workers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday an official from Husky indicated that the valve which failed and ultimately caused an oil spill normally has 31 pounds of pressure. At the time of the failure the pressure was approximately at 4,000 pounds.

I ask the minister: Has the C-NLOPB given any information as to whether this pressure was problematic prior to the actual weather hitting, and the problem was there with the valve before that?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Member opposite indicates, it was a component failure. At this point in time, C-NLOPB has been there when the remote operated vehicle was put in the water. They are investigating, Mr. Speaker, why this valve failed. This was what's called a weak link. It's designed that if the flow line gets snagged, it's designed for easy release.

So there is something that's going on here. Whether it's storm-related or not, we don't know. This is what's under investigation. But I will assure the people of the province, I will assure everybody in this House that whatever needs to be done coming out of this, just as we increased the oil spill requirements and regime post an oil spill previously, Mr. Speaker, we'll do so again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a report yesterday said that oil was leaking for approximately 25 minutes. I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: Does she have any information whether a sensor alert went off with Husky before and after the oil was leaking?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that there is an investigation underway right now. I was informed of this incident last Friday. I can say to the Member opposite, as Husky has indicated to the people of the province, there was an incident last Friday afternoon that did occur. There was a cause for concern over the pressure in this valve. Therefore, they shut in to make sure that there wasn't further damage and there wasn't a further oil spill.

I will also say that there have been increased and improved oil spill regime regulation changes. I remember back in February of 2016, we stiffened the requirements around oil spill regime. I'm happy to give more details as required.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister. I'm just trying to get to the issue of there was a failure with the valve, which the sensors would indicate there was failure with the valve because of that. The spill went on for 25 minutes.

So my question is: Have you been notified whether a sensor was part of that infrastructure? Did it go off? And why was it 25 minutes that we had leaking oil?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm listening to the Member opposite; he's giving the indication of the full 25 minutes. I am not sure that that is the case. That's why an investigation is underway to see what occurred, when it occurred, what protocols were followed and what protocols need to be followed in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, maybe I'm not correct. I took yesterday from some media reports from Husky officials that it was 25 minutes; maybe it wasn't. But anyway, the point still exists in terms of the timeline and getting a sensor.

The subsea infrastructure for the SeaRose contains, obviously, multiple valves, just like the one that failed. I ask the minister: Are you confident or have the other valves been checked and that we are confident that there are no problems to the other valves in the similar infrastructure?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you again – an important question, Mr. Speaker. That's why the remote operated vehicle is taking its time. It's going over the entire flow line. It's making sure there is no other weakened links damaged; there's no other damage at all occurring. They are taking their time to do that, Mr. Speaker.

We are taking our time to look at all installations. That's under the chief conservation officer and the chief safety officer's purview. They are heavily engaged in that, Mr. Speaker, as we speak.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for that. As well, she referenced other installations, so this happened with the SeaRose, I assume, I'm not sure if some of the infrastructure would be quite similar, including the valves.

Could she confirm that these valves, if used on the Terra Nova or other installation sites, are also being checked and certainly the decision would be made that they're operational before any restarts are put in place?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

C-NLOPB has been working with the operator of the Terra Nova, as well as the other operators offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, to ensure that the environmental protection is there, to ensure that safety is there. They are doing their checks, that is why they're still shut in, and they'll continue to be shut in until such time as the chief safety officer and the chief conservation officer is satisfied that everything has been checked.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday the information was that the restart wasn't in the control of the C-NLOPB, but was in control of the operator. The minister is indicating, and the Premier indicated earlier, that there were different checks needed to be done and nothing would be restated until those checks were done.

So, has the former protocol changed? Is the ability to restart still with the operator, or now has it been transferred to C-NLOPB?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've had a serious incident in our offshore. We, as the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Petroleum Board are really consumed with ensuring safety and environmental protection. Therefore, these checks that are required, based on the fact that we had a weak link incident, that we've had a component failure last Friday, they are taking that extra step of making sure that everything is under a closer scrutiny and closer eye.

Today's safety and environmental protection plans remain in place. If there's something

further that needs to be done to ensure that the safety and environmental protection is there, we will do it, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the Minister of Natural Resources said to the media, quote: They have to find it in order to clean it up.

So I ask the Minister of Environment: Who has the responsibility to clean up the spill?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What I was speaking about, and I've told this House and the people of this province, that there are no reports of sheens at this present time. There have been multiple flyovers – multiple flyovers – of the area to detect. They were there over the weekend.

In the last 24 to 48 hours, they seem to have dissipated. It'll always remain Husky's responsibility to clean up, should there be a find that needs to be cleaned up.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the oil spills outside the 200-mile limit, what happens? Does the province face a penalty or are we responsible for this?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you.

A very important question, and I was asked it yesterday in the media and I did get an answer to that. Husky remains responsible. Husky remains responsible no matter where it is in the world. So no matter where this oil – if a sheen is found in some other location, Mr. Speaker, it will always remain Husky's responsibility to clean up that oil spill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Minister of Environment provide an update on the seabirds and other sea life which may be impacted by this?

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

MS. COADY: I want to be a little bit more, even more fulsome in my response to the last question. We did do some oil spill liability changes in 2016 to enshrine that polluter-pays principle. And I want to remind the House that was in February 2016 reinforcing that polluter-pay principle.

In response to the question that had just been asked, there are 15 seabirds now being observed. Five are under reclamation and clean up. Mr. Speaker, there remain vessels offshore Newfoundland and Labrador with observers on board to ensure we're looking at what the wildlife situation is and to provide assistance where possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Environment said: "I myself as minister have not had any direct contact with Environment Canada."

So minister: Have you since reached out to them?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure the people of this province that Environment and Climate Change Canada have been involved in this since Friday. I can assure the people of this province they've been on board multiple flights that have taken place. Also, Canadian Wildlife, also the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have been involved.

As you can tell, Mr. Speaker, there have been a tremendous co-operation, both federally, provincially, as well as with our offshore, to ensure that we are doing everything possible, absolutely everything possible to protect our environment and to ensure safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on November 9, the Privacy Commissioner released a report revealing that 50 boxes containing sensitive personal information under the responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Works were left in an unsecure area, accessible to staff members and the public for weeks.

Minister, there is a legal obligation to employ reasonable safeguards to protect sensitive information. How could this have happened?

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for the question. Mr. Speaker, as a department we recognize that this type of breach is not acceptable. We've actually taken steps, since the report, to ensure that this type of breach doesn't happen again, Mr. Speaker.

The reality here is we are dealing with an outdated system when it comes to composition

of records in the department. It's something that we're working on, Mr. Speaker, but the reality is we do recognize this and we're committed to not having it happen in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: the Privacy Commissioner had requested to contact the individuals but for some reason they were not contacted.

So why did your department refuse to follow the Privacy Commissioner's recommendation and notify those individuals impacted by this privacy breach? Because there was a lot of personal information there. In this day in age, that's not acceptable.

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

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I take some exception to the question, or the preamble about a lot of privacy information. The reality is any privacy information that is seen by the public is wrong and it's not acceptable.

We've taken measures to correct it. We will ensure in the future that doesn't happen. We've reached out to our depot in Central, and we've reached out to our depots throughout the province to ensure that records of a sensitive nature are treated in that way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Privacy Commissioner concluded that your department's response, after being alerted of this breach, was markedly deficient and fell short of complying with ATIPP Act's requirements.

What measures have you taken, Minister, to ensure that there will be more appropriate response in the future? Give me some examples.

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

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, there were 15 individuals, I think, that were affected by this privacy issue, and all people who were affected by this were contacted – if they were able to be contacted.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is these records dated back, in some cases, decades. That's not making an excuse for the fact that the records were left in an inappropriate place, but we've taken the necessary action – and I hear the hon. Member chirping.

We take this very serious. It is people's privacy, Mr. Speaker, and we respect that, and we will ensure that this type of incident doesn't happen in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not sure who he was listening to the chirping, but it wasn't me.

The Privacy Commissioner made a number of recommendations in his report, and I understand you responded yesterday, Minister.

Can you provide an update on what action your department will be taking?

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

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

One of the main actions we will be taking is probably something that should've been done many years ago. It's ensuring that our employees are properly trained when it comes to

sensitive documents, and providing space in our depots for storage of such documents. I guess one of the issues here, Mr. Speaker, would be document separation, because the majority of these documents in question were actually daily road reports, with some mixture of other personal documents into those.

Any privacy breach of any person in this province, I don't think is acceptable, Mr. Speaker, and we'll ensure that it doesn't happen again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week, the Privacy Commissioner released the most recent privacy breach notification statistics. From July 1 to September 30, 2018, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner received 59 privacy breach reports under ATIPPA from 19 public bodies. There were 59 reports from 20 public bodies received in the previous reporting period.

What action will your government take to ensure that there will be zero privacy breaches?

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

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

Certainly, what the Member puts out is a laudable goal, something that we'd all like to see. As someone who has actually had their privacy breached a number of years ago, it's not a pleasant experience and something we strive for.

The reality is that in the majority of these cases it is human error. Unfortunately, when you look at that report that the Member mentions, a lot of it was just the wrong click of a button as it relates to email, stuff like that. And again, I would say in the vast majority of cases it is certainly not with mal-intent.

So what I would suggest is we are taking measures to train more. We have a department

that reaches out across government, across municipalities to help everybody. Because privacy doesn't just relate to government, it relates to municipal governments and it relates to other entities. So it's something we'll continue to work on.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the minister of Women's Policy: What are your plans for the portfolio and what do you intend to do to advance women's issues in our province?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for her question. It's a great privilege to stand in this hon. House and answer my very first question as the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Women in leadership is a topic that has been – well, a hot topic that's been on the floor of this House for some time now, Mr. Speaker. The November 2017 mandate letter to the minister responsible at the time was to develop a women's leadership strategy. We are currently in the process of meeting with stakeholders and other partners, Mr. Speaker, and we will find a way to move forward.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: What is your position on bullying and

harassment in the workplace, and what do you intend to do to ensure there is never a repeat of the flawed process we just endured?

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

MS. HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government strives to create a work environment free of harassment of any sort, zero tolerance. Harassment is totally unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, everyone deserves to live and work in an environment, like I said, free of any harassment and bullying. Collectively, we must find a way and strive to promote a more respectful workplace. And government, Mr. Speaker, will do its part to influence that change.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Women in this province have traditionally been paid far less than men.

Will you be introducing pay equity legislation as the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, government strives within our own government to ensure that women and men are paid equally. We've got a number of executive positions in government, I believe the majority of them are held by women. Those positions are paid the same whether it's a man or a woman.

Mr. Speaker, it is an important topic. This government is focused on ensuring that there is equality in our workplace, and we'll continue to strive to do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: I thank the minister for his response and remind him that pay equity for women in all workplaces is, indeed, very important to all women in this province.

The 2015 Liberal red book promises a biennial conference on the status of women but this has not been delivered by the Liberal government.

I ask the minister: Can she provide an update on when a conference will be held?

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

MS. HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as anyone in this House knows, I am new to this role. But what I can say is that women in leadership is a topic, like I said, that has been in the House of Assembly quite frequently over the last number of months. Consultations with women leaders have been carried out throughout the province. That part concluded and we are in the final stages of developing a framework that is expected to be launched in the coming months.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

In exchange for more time to complete the Vale processing plant in Long Harbour, Vale pledged to contribute \$30 million to the community fund.

I ask the minister: How much of this fund has been received to date?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That was negotiated with the former administration, and I can say it was \$10 million a year over three years. I believe the first tranche was in – I'd have to check, but the first tranche in 2017, 2018, another 10 in 2019 – another \$10 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Placentia was supposed to get \$4.5 million to support a new wellness centre, which includes a swimming pool.

I ask the minister: Can you confirm how much has been given to the Town of Placentia?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment for a quick response, please.

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's going to happen very, very soon. All I can say to the hon. Member, stay tuned, but it's going to be a great Christmas present for the Town of Placentia.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier told the House the C-NLOPB chief safety officer and chief conservation officer are ultimately responsible for worker safety and environmental issues in our offshore oil industry. He said they are independent of the board and have full authority to make final decisions, even on the operational plans of our offshore. Considering their important roles, I am surprised we have not heard from them regarding Husky's oil spill last Friday.

I ask the Premier: Has he heard from, met with or spoken to the chief safety officer and/or the

chief conservation officer, and what did they report?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My department and I, personally, have been in constant contact with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board. I have, in the early hours, almost hourly discussions with them. And then as the days have gone by now it's easing a little bit because we are knowing and understanding more of what's happening offshore.

So I can report that the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board and its officials have been in constant contact.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I asked specifically about the chief safety officer and the chief conservation officer.

I ask the Premier: What does he expect the specific roles and responsibilities of the chief safety officer and the chief conservation officer regarding Friday's oil spill by Husky SeaRose, and what does he expect them to be doing going forward and when will we hear from them?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The chief safety officer and the chief conservation officer, their roles are enshrined in the Atlantic Accord. Their role, as has been indicated, is one of safety and environmental protection. They have been involved in this oil spill constantly. They were involved last week, of course, when adverse weather was happening in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would consider they will be heavily involved in the investigation and will be involved in ensuring, as they have been, the safety and environmental protection offshore.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: How independent are the chief safety officer and chief conservation officer in practice? How can the public perceive them as independent, given their proximity to the C-NLOPB?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, what I said yesterday, when speaking about the chief safety officer and the chief conservation officer, was that their decision could not be overturned or overruled by the C-NLOPB board or the CEO.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is the role of the chief safety officer. Essentially, when the chief safety officer makes a decision, that's it. His decision is the final one; no different than the chief conservation officer. Although, the chief safety officer actually can overrule – is, again, in terms of authority, more than that of a conservation officer. So that clearly defines what the roles would be and how independent they really are. That is the independence that I spoke about yesterday and that is the independence that stays intact.

Mr. Speaker, if the recommendations coming from an investigation clearly states that something should be done to strengthen that, we're more than prepared to look at that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I ask the Premier: When the C-NLOPB does get the Husky report on what happened, what investigation will they undertake, and will it involve independent experts in addition to the chief safety officer and the chief conservation officer?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board is a board jointly managed by the province and the federal government. They have a board of directors. They have the authority under the accord act to complete their investigations. I am confident that whatever expertise they require to ensure that they do a thorough investigation, they will connect with and contract with.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to their report, and also we're keeping a good eye on the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board as this proceeds to ensure that safety and environmental protection are paramount in our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi for a quick question, please.

MS. MICHAEL: I ask the Premier: Based on the experience in Norway with their independent safety authority, why will he not insist on the creation of an independent offshore safety and environmental protection agency which is the world standard in offshore oil industry?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources for a quick response, please.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Back in 2010, when the original decision – when Commissioner Wells came out and said either 29(a) or 29(b), either an independent or embed within the jurisdiction a chief safety officer that has paramountcy over the board of directors, there was a decision taken in 2010 to decide to

keep the board intact with this responsibility with safety and environmental protection.

As we continue to grow our offshore oil and gas installations – Norway has 93, we have four. As we continue to grow, we will continue to review how is it best for us to organize our offshore to ensure the safety and protection of our people and our environment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Time for Oral Questions has ended.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

MR. KING: A point of order on section 49.

Mr. Speaker, as sure as the clouds bring the snowfall, the clouds of misinformation continuously come from the Member for CBS related to the 24-hour snow clearing. He knows there are no changes in the 24-hour snow clearing. Anywhere that had snow clearing, Mr. Speaker, still gets that service. The only difference is the operators get to spend time with their families waiting to be called in.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

I don't see this as a point of order. It's a disagreement between hon. Members.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees

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

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, I'm pleased today to present our interim report on the development of a Legislature-specific harassment-free workplace policy.

The report includes a summary of some of the common themes the Committee has heard throughout our consultations and jurisdictional

analysis, along with a preview of directions we will be taking in our final recommendations to this House which will be tabled during the spring 2019 sitting.

The report also includes one recommendation for immediate adoption by the House respecting training of Members. This work was tasked to the Privileges and Elections Committee by a private Member's resolution unanimously passed by the House of Assembly on May 2 of this year.

As Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my fellow colleagues on the Privileges and Elections Committee: the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, the Vice-Chair of the Committee; the Member for Ferryland; the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave; and the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

I thank them for their dedication and commitment to this work over the last several months, and I look forward to continuing this important work with them as we develop and refine our final recommendations to this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Additional reports by Standing and Select Committees?

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Pursuant to section 8 and section 10 of the *Public Tender Act*, I hereby table the report of the *Public Tender Act* exceptions for the months of May 1, 2018 through to July 31, 2018, inclusive, as presented by the chief operating officer of the Government Purchasing Agency.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

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

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Provision Of Emergency Health and Paramedicine Services, Bill 43.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

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

MR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: that this House of Assembly concur in the interim report of the Privileges and Elections Committee respecting the development of a Legislature-specific harassment-free workplace policy.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland And Labrador Act, Bill 41.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Continuation Of The Oil And Gas Corporation Of Newfoundland And Labrador Act, Bill 42.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the wake-up call.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Management Of Greenhouse Gas Act And The Revenue Administration Act, Bill 44.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been given.

I'll take half a petition.

Petitions

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

MR. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The background to this petition is as follows:

WHEREAS the Bay d'Espoir Highway and its branch roads, Routes 360, 361, 362, 363, 364 and 365, have become overgrown with very dangerous roadside alder growth; and

WHEREAS the Coast of Bays region is a very busy area with a high volume of industrial traffic for aquaculture, the fishery and hydroelectricity; and

WHEREAS the region has a transient workforce that requires workers to travel the highway at early morning hours and late at night, often in foggy, dangerous weather conditions with no cell coverage; and

WHEREAS there have been weekly incidents of moose accidents in the region this year, some very serious, and daily we have near misses; and

WHEREAS all residents are very concerned and worried to drive the highway, due to a fear of a moose accident; and

WHEREAS every effort should and must be made to protect the safety of residents and reduce unnecessary road hazards for travellers;

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is from Belleoram and it is seven pages long. So, right now, we have about 30 pages of signatures of very concerned residents because of the lack of action by the Liberal government opposite in terms of brush clearing in the Coast of Bays region and across this province.

Today, of all days, I'm particularly upset, having sat through that beautiful remembrance ceremony a while ago in the lobby of the Confederation Building. We need government to be serious. It's not good enough to talk about it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: We need to see action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, I now call on the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune to introduce the resolution standing in her name, Motion 1.

Switch gears.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's been a busy day.

It's certainly an honour and a privilege once again, Mr. Speaker, for me to rise in this House. On Wednesdays, it's Private Members' Day, and it's an opportunity for those of us who are not sitting in the official government to bring forward issues of great concern to the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So today I move the following private Member's resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to bring forward legislation to require every privately-held numbered company operating in the province that does business with the provincial government to disclose the identities of the significant shareholders in that company.

This motion, Mr. Speaker, is seconded by Member for Mount Pearl North.

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: It's a little formality, but I need to do it.

Please proceed.

MS. PERRY: I'm going too fast trying to keep up.

Mr. Speaker, some Members opposite may be saying, well, why bring in such a resolution. This resolution we feel is very, very important because it promotes openness, transparency and honesty in government. And that has been a concern for many residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly in recent years.

The purpose of this private Member's bill – which I truly hope receives full support by each and every Member of this hon. House who truly does believe in honour and integrity – that such legislation would remove opportunities for any government, whether it's the government of the day or any future government, to engage in favouritism, patronage, nepotism, cronyism or corruption, the worst practices of government that have no place in a modern, open and democratic society where fairness and accountability reign.

I know I certainly speak for myself and all my colleagues here on this side of the House, that honesty and integrity, openness and transparency is very important to us as persons who are responsible for the public purse, Mr.

Speaker. And there are few things that irritate people in this province, or certainly, I would think, across this country, more than friends and family of parties in power lining up to get special privileged access to government largesse.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you have heard the term before, many people call it lining up at the trough. It's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. It's an unacceptable way for any government to govern in this day and age.

As I have said many times in this hon. House, I entered politics in 2007, right on the back of the financial scandal and the Green report that was produced by Justice Green. Mr. Speaker, I read that report from cover to cover, and I take it very seriously. I take my responsibility here very seriously. For purposes of any Members who may not have read the Green report, I'm actually going to quote some sections of his document here today and re-enter them into the record once again.

Judge Green, in his report on the spending scandal of 2007, was determined to stamp out the kind of behaviour, I just discussed, among politicians. People were sick of it, he was sick of it, and he was determined to put an end to it. He said it's time to make politics a responsible profession, governed by the same kinds of rules and expectations that are unposed on those who serve in other professions such as medicine, engineering and the administration of justice. We are, in fact, the makers of the law. Glad-handling and the handing out of public money for political gain ought to be things of the past.

This was wrote, Mr. Speaker, in 2007, 11 years ago.

Chapters 9 and 10 of the Green report are intended to raise the bar in politics and among politicians. In fact, here is what Judge Green wrote on page 9.23.

"During the course of this inquiry, I was told that the job of a politician continues to involve countless examples of dispensation of largesse in the local community. In the normal course of the year, he or she may be expected to provide hospitality, including rounds of drinks at community events; to contribute to sponsorship

of individuals or groups, especially cultural or sports groups who are traveling to compete away; to give donations; to buy raffle tickets; to buy and provide, often with constituency allowances" funded by the public purse "gifts or trinkets for constituents or visitors; to furnish items or services, including clothing and food, for constituents; and to buy local artwork, including paintings, prints, sculptures and crafts.

"In Chapter 10, I argue that the spending of public money in such ways is no longer appropriate and that the role of an MHA should not include, and should not be expected by the public to include, such matters. Such spending supports the unacceptable notion that the politician's success is tied to buying support with favours." Funded by the political purse, I add myself, Mr. Speaker. Returning back to his commentary: "This demeans the role of the elected representative and reinforces the inappropriate view that the standards of the politician are not based on ethical principle.

"Throughout this report, there has been an emphasis on institutional reform as well as on measures to encourage and support both individual and collective responsibility on the part of our elected representatives - in essence, a reform of environment, attitude and culture. Within this new milieu should operate a new kind of politician," - again, I'll say, Mr. Speaker, he wrote this 11 years ago - "one who is a professional and who sees his or her job as a vocation. Professions are occupations whose practitioners are highly specialized, are committed to ethical codes, and value serving the public over any other considerations. Vocations are callings."

Mr. Speaker, he also wrote on page 10-47 and 10-48: "A substantial number of MHAs argued that the nature of political life in Newfoundland and Labrador is such that it is necessary that such expenditures be condoned. In fact, some said that their lives as elected members would be intolerable if those expenditures were not permitted. They talked in terms of the tremendous pressure placed on politicians to make donations and give financial support within the community. They said it was expected of the politician and that if he or she did not 'play the game' there would be consequences at the polls. They also argued that

such expenditures, judiciously applied, made an important contribution to the community. How could an MHA, it was said, turn down a request for food or medicine for an impoverished constituent? They pointed out that government social programs were often inadequate and citizens sometimes ‘fell through the cracks.’ The MHA was in the best position to know who the deserving ones were and to take steps to fill the void. The point was also made by some opposition Members” – at the time when was doing his work in 2007 – “that the ability of an opposition MHA to provide ‘social service’ types of donations was especially important because there was a perception that government Members, especially if they were also Ministers, had an easier time accessing government programs for their constituents. The ability of opposition Members to make discretionary donations was one way in which this perceived imbalance could be righted.

“Notwithstanding these arguments, I believe these practices belong to another age. It is an age we should leave.”

In Chapter 9, I sketched out the concept of the professional politician as the basis of the role of the MHA for the future. The notion of the politician as a professional is inconsistent with these customs.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I will say that I believe every MHA in this House, present and future, should read what Justice Green wrote in terms of his concept of a professional politician and we should all emulate ourselves and practice what he has recommended.

So Judge Green was clear in wanting to end the practice of using public money to buy political favour. We’ve been warned not to behave like that. In fact, MHAs are not even permitted to announce funding now; only ministers, Mr. Speaker, as per the Green report. I believe some politicians do walk very close to the line Judge Green has drawn, and some may even cross over to the wrong side of that line from time to time, but this resolution today is about drawing another line. It’s about raising the bar and restoring honesty in government, and we will continue to advocate for that until such time as we see it happen.

Governments have leverage that individual politicians do not have. Governments hand out contracts and leases, and enter into business and development projects, and choose one way of spending money over another. In the 1970s and ’80s, Tory governments brought a measure of accountability and transparency to the delivery of government services that was lacking in prior years. I was proud to be a part of that new type of government in my first two terms that I’ve been here, but there have been days of late when I think Joey is walking in the halls in his glee.

It was the Tories who introduced the *Public Tender Act*. The purpose of the *Public Tender Act* was to ensure that contracts were awarded fairly and even-handedly, not just to give the public the best value for the procurement dollar, which was very important, Mr. Speaker, but it also levelled the playing field among bidders, because competition is good when it is fair. Competition is not good when the scale is tipped, and competition is destroyed when the tipping of the scale is hidden from public view. How do we know that a politician or a government led by a particular party, any party, is benefiting its supporters and friends if they are hiding from view behind a mask?

Under the current rules a privately held company can register with the Registry of Companies under a number rather than a name and hide from view the shareholders of the company. The person filling the registration may be a lawyer hired to complete that task. Those who own the company and benefit from its profits may be unknown. We have been discussing an example of such a company for the past several Question Periods but, apparently, no one in the government knows who owns the company and there is no requirement that the shareholders of this company be disclosed.

These shareholders, Mr. Speaker, are benefiting from their deal with another company that is receiving a significant benefit from the taxpayers of our province, the people’s money, a \$40-million-tax holiday. In my humble opinion, such a generous benefit should have required an RFP and all entrepreneurs across Newfoundland and Labrador should have been given fair and equal opportunity to bid for it.

Mr. Speaker, this particular resolution may or may not cover the company in question but legislation should certainly be drafted to capture a company that benefits directly from its dealings with government. If a privately held company is receiving a direct benefit from taxpayers then the owners of that company, the significant shareholders, ought to be disclosed. It would be open and transparent. Taxpayers should be able to judge for themselves whether or not the government is handing out special deals to friends and family. But, under the current rules, the veil of uncertainty remains in place.

Identities are hidden. Perhaps nothing untoward is happening, but the potential of favouritism and cronyism is there when transparency is lacking, and it's not good enough for a government to say trust us. This is a government that has promised to abide by a high standard in terms of transparency, accountability and fairness.

I'm running out of time for my introduction, so I truly hope that they will stand to be accounted and say yes, we do believe in transparency, accountability and fairness and we're going to prove that by releasing the identity of the numbered company because there is nothing to hide and we do believe that legislation should be introduced to ensure that nothing like this can happen in the future.

So I look forward to the commentary of my colleagues on this very important private Member's motion before the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, the Registry of Companies is the second-largest registry in Service NL's commercial registration division. There are presently close to 30,000 active, locally incorporated business and organizations in this province, and a further 6,900 businesses incorporated in other jurisdictions and extra-provincially registered with the registry here.

The *Corporations Act* requires that all limited liability companies operating in Newfoundland and Labrador be incorporated or registered to do business in the province. Once registered, the act places statutory requirements on the corporations to file documents notifying the registrar and the public of changes in a corporation. In keeping with the topic of today's private Member's resolution, I would like to speak to the difference between a numbered company and a named corporation.

When someone decides to set up a corporation in Newfoundland and Labrador, there are two options. Mr. Speaker, the first option is to incorporate a company with a name such as ABC Roofing Ltd. as a hypothetical example. The aim is to choose a name that will be easily remembered and recognizable. In order to ensure the company or business name will not create confusion for the public, it needs to be different from every other company or business name out there.

To reserve the corporate name, you have to pay a fee to have a search done of the registry corporate name database prior to incorporating your business. This can add time and it can add expense for a business or a company as the name may be taken and they may need to create a new one.

The other option is to set up a numbered Newfoundland and Labrador corporation. In this case, there is no need for a name. There is no need for a name search. The Registry of Companies will assign a number to you. There are advantages to choosing a numbered corporation. It ensures that the company's name is unique. Same or similar names are not permitted, so a number is truly a unique identifier.

In the case of a company that is not dealing directly with the public, it is not as important to have a recognizable brand, so a name is just not as important. Instead, choosing a numbered corporation is a faster way of completing the incorporation process and also saves the expense of ensuring the name is unique.

Whether the company has a name or a number, the rules are the same. Shareholder information is not collected; therefore, government can't

disclose information it does not have. Rather, the legislation places the onus on the corporation itself to maintain shareholder information for other shareholders and creditors.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that numbered corporations are commonplace in all jurisdictions throughout Canada. Back in 2017, federal, provincial and territorial ministers of Finance reached an Agreement to Strengthen Beneficial Ownership Transparency. Beneficial ownership is a term that typically refers to natural persons who directly or indirectly exercise effective ownership or controls over a corporation. Beneficial ownership can be defined based on ownership interests; for example, directly or indirectly owning more than a certain percentage of a company, such as 25 per cent.

The ministers agreed on the importance of having the appropriate safeguards in place to prevent the misuse of corporations for tax evasion and other criminal purposes, such as money laundering, corruption and the financing of terrorist activities. The agreement was to pursue legislative amendments to federal, provincial and territorial corporate statutes or legislation to ensure corporations hold accurate and up-to-date information on beneficial owners that would be available to law enforcement, as well as tax and other authorities.

The federal Bill C-86 was introduced to make the amendments for the federally regulated corporations. This bill is currently before Parliament.

Ministers also agreed to develop a joint outreach and consultation plan for engagement with the business community and other stakeholders. It was also agreed that a federal, provincial and territorial working group be established to combat aggressive tax planning strategies that erode the integrity of the Canadian tax base.

Mr. Speaker, in Newfoundland and Labrador, Service NL is the responsible department for this matter, given the *Corporations Act* falls within the department's mandate. As such, Service NL is a part of the working group established under this agreement. We are moving forward in a coordinated manner with the other jurisdictions.

It is our goal to address the first portion of the agreement by introducing legislation in a future session of the House to ensure corporations hold accurate and up-to-date information. We will continue to work with our federal, provincial and territorial colleagues on the other components of the agreement.

I want to conclude by reiterating certain requirements that currently exist in the *Corporations Act*. The corporation is required to maintain its own shareholder and registry, and there's also a requirement regarding who can access these records from the corporation, including other shareholders and creditors of the corporation. I also want to reiterate our government's commitment to consumer protection for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

In *The Way Forward*, we committed to implementing a series of new consumer protection measures to protect consumers against fraud or bad business practices. Our ongoing efforts as a member of the working group regarding corporate ownership is another step toward enhanced consumer protection for the people of our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me begin by reaffirming that our party and the government we will lead, is, and always will be, active in cultivating an environment that is conducive of business growth in Newfoundland and Labrador. Why is that? Why are we saying we're conducive of developing an environment? Because governments are not responsible for creating jobs – we've said this time and time again. Governments are responsible for creating an environment that is conducive of job growth and business establishment. Governments don't actually create wealth. They create the conditions for others to create wealth.

Basically, governments live on borrowed funds, and they borrow funds in the form of taxes.

They take money out of mine and your pockets, and the citizens of our province, and we entrust governments to spend that money in an open and transparent manner.

Our goal as a party is continual growth; continual expansion of opportunities. Growth happens when new businesses form and existing businesses expand, supplying both local markets and new markets abroad.

The enemy of growth is bad governance. Bad governance happens when leaders fail in their role as wise stewards of the economy. When an economy is spoiled through poor decision making, opportunities for growth are lost, business confidence waivers. When taxes are too high, consumers can't spend, employers can't hire and the province can't grow.

I often hear from one particular Member from the opposite side about money spending and investments that the previous administration has made. And my response to that individual is: Well, I'd like to refer to the Queen of France, how she overtaxed everybody, and what happened to her? Even the tax collector suffers on a regime like that.

While general economies can tolerate a small bit of increased taxation for a very short period of time, eventually people stop spending money. They stop spending money in the economy and there's less tax to collect.

Mr. Speaker, when governments interfere in the competitive marketplace in ways that tip the playing field unfairly in favour of one friend or another, the ground is poisoned; poisoning it for new businesses to come, poisoning it for outside investment which in this province we so desperately need.

It's no longer the competitiveness of a business that determines whether it succeeds or fails, it's one of who the owner knows or who the owner favours. There's something rotten in an economy where partisanship and patronage and nepotism rules the business environment.

It looks on in the face of – as a business that's using money to buy and curry favours with the holders of the public purse strings. Now that's something that is not only continuing to occur

but has occurred over the decades of our history. Ideally, there should be no political favouritism whatsoever in the marketplace. A company should succeed or fail on its own strengths or lack thereof; otherwise, when a government picks a winner they also determines the losers. It gives an unfair edge to companies that may not be able to succeed without that government largess.

When they do go out in the real world, the companies that try to compete in other jurisdictions where they're given no unfair advantage, they find they never, ever really had that edge. They never discover how to compete without the scales tipped in their favour. In the real world, the other companies from elsewhere will walk all over them. Meanwhile, companies that were unfairly excluded from the largess either fail because they were unfairly disadvantaged or they pack up and leave, or they choose not to invest in our province at all.

We have seen too many examples from across the decades – as I said, not just currently but across the decades where there are a favorite few rise to the top of strength and handouts only to fail while the handouts end and the realities of competition set in. Governments have a dismal record of picking winners and creating jobs. They are more likely to poison the well and dam their favorites with the curse of death. Governments ought to spend their time ensuring the field of competition is even, open and transparent and the conditions our companies face are not distorted in ways that will harm those companies or discourage investment.

The government talked about a fair and even process in determining which companies will get a piece of the lucrative marijuana pie – a brand new edible. But when the process was set into motion, it wasn't fair or even impartial. It was tarnished by politicians who insisted on tipping the scales. Some were in, some were out, and fairness was not the hallmark of the process.

This not only makes people question whether their tax dollars have been wisely invested, it also sends a clear message to investors here and around the world that we have an uneven, unbalanced economy with its government finger on top. It's opposite of sending a message we're open for business. It sends a very clear message

that we're open for business of those the government happens to like on a given day, and favours might be required to sustain that largesse.

Transparency International has published Corruption Perceptions Index since 1995. It's clear from this index that the world has a long, long way to go before things are fair. What's telling is that Canada, too, has problems. Canada, in 2016, was ninth on the list; down one from the year before. So we're not getting better in our country, we're actually getting worse. Others do much better.

We tell ourselves we're the model of fairness and accountability, but we still have a long ways to go. The solution to levelling the playing field and removing the loaded dice from the game is to develop rules that target the problem. Honesty in politics is about putting an end to the corrupt practice that poisoned our politics and hurt our economy in times past. Not only has it hurt our economy, but we can speak to a side note about how it has hurt the faith of our people. We as a government can adjust their fears appropriately.

Disclosure mechanisms are not meaningless. Red tape is something that impedes competitive business. There are protections for all players in the marketplace. Shadows are the enemies of fairness, competitiveness and sustainability. The spotlight of accountability makes it easier for all businesses to compete and all businesses to succeed.

When everyone knows the rules of the game are fair and the referees don't have the opportunity to pocket coins from one of the sides, businesses will lay down their investments and enter into the fray. Without transparency, no one sees the rules are fair. If there's nothing to hide, the spotlight shouldn't be a worry of the players. If the players insist on hiding, then let's forbid them from accessing public funds.

The launch of Canada's recreational marijuana industry has left a very, very bad taste in people's mouths, particularly in this province. Transparency is sadly lacking. A company whose shareholders we do not know is a major player in a segment of the economy where government has picked a winner without a fair competitive process. Farmers in my industry,

retailers and other interested business people have raised concerns about the fairness and impartiality of this process. There is none. People are concerned that persons associated with the governing party are reaping benefits from a handout and some of those benefits are being delivered in the shadows. If this is not the case, why can't the government provide us with the information we ask? People do not know for sure because government refuses to shine the spotlight on what's going on.

This has hurt not only business, this is hurting public confidence in this very House of Assembly to conduct its business open and honestly. It undermines the reputation of our economy. It's the kind of thing that holds Canada back, and Newfoundland back from the top place on that index. The responsibility for creating this poisoned climate rests on the shoulders of the government opposite and Members whose long-step vote support what it's doing.

Ministers are behaving in ways surely that not everyone in caucus or the Liberal Party can support. How does it look for the province when the headlines read like this: Cannabis lobbyists' ties to Liberals under fire? Who's behind the numbered company leasing St. John's land to Canopy Growth?

And guess what everybody? Those headlines weren't written by this Opposition or the Third Party or the independents. That was written by the people who I guess get to hold us to account first, that's the journalists. These are the headlines that the national and international business leaders are reading when they are considering whether to do business in Newfoundland and Labrador. Imagine what's going through their minds. It's a mature jurisdiction where fairness and transparency reign – not. Or, as one political analysis said, or is it the banana republic where palms are greased and the dices are loaded and there are no bananas.

Where do we fit on that scale? And why does it feel like we're sliding down a slippery slope toward the lower end of the index where nepotism and patronage reign? It's time for good Liberals, and there are lots of them over there, to

speak up against the practices of the few who make the decisions for the party.

Demand the Premier reread his red book –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Warr): Order, please!

MR. LESTER: – and raise the bar from where it's fallen. Take a stand against this poisoning –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. LESTER: – of our environment by voting in favour of this resolution and the improved transparency that it will bring.

In closing, I'd like to put a corporate analogy to this. Let's envision the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador as an incorporated company, it's run by the directors, being the government, its shareholders are the citizens, the citizens of our province. If the directors want to keep their positions, shareholders need to know that their money is being spent wisely.

Thank you.

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

MR. KING: Wow, Mr. Speaker, that was something.

I find it kind of funny that the PC Party that are devoid of ideas and falling apart at the seams at the moment would get up and discuss patronage, nepotism and cronyism when they were the experts at it for 12 years. They're resorting to attacks and looking for bogeymen around every corner nowadays. They have no ideas. They're devoid of ideas, like I said, Mr. Speaker. So this is what they have to come down to, a fair deal that was formed with Canopy Growth and Biome and other businesses here in the province to clean up the mess, I say, that they left us after 12 years of power.

So we are investing in this province. We're creating jobs. We're bringing money back into this province while they spent – I say it all the

time, they spent like drunken sailors. That's what they did. They didn't save anything for a rainy day – \$25 billion. I see it all the time, Mr. Speaker, because you wouldn't believe it, you'd think it was a Hollywood movie on some thriller about some wrongdoing, but that's what they did. They left us with a \$2.7 billion deficit. So we're out there looking for a good business. These are good business people. This is a publicly-traded company.

MR. LESTER: Yes, who are they are?

MR. KING: They are a publicly-traded company.

The Member for Mount Pearl North wants to heckle me. I was pretty silent when he was up speaking. I listened, I took notes. I have a pile of notes here. He talked about the cronyism and nepotism and patronage. So it's pretty funny.

You got Len Simms – his picture is actually on the wall over there – former PC Speaker, PC Member for years, Cabinet minister, who was put in charge of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. Paul Reynolds, former PC Party president, was a member of Elections NL. John Ottenheimer, a former PC Party leadership candidate, put into Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. They're upset about it. They're all right when they're throwing it back across this side, but when you bring up what they did in the past, they're right against it.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about Humber Valley Paving?

MR. KING: Oh, we'll get to that. Oh yeah, I almost forgot about Frank Coleman, the premier-elect at the time, \$19 million gone out the public door to Humber Valley Paving.

Days before their government fell in 2015, you had position after position after position being filled with Tory cronies and political pals. You saw in 2015 when the bagman of the PCs, Leo Power, saw his girlfriend get a senior Cabinet post as reward for helping them raise money.

They talk about political patronage and cronyism, this is exactly it. And by far the worst is Danny Williams. We have Galway out there

now worth an estimated \$5 billion which he got on a dime.

CBC *Investigates* did a story on former premier Williams, and it's quite interesting. "Danny Williams's blind trust acquired 550 acres of land from NLHC" – I wonder who was in charge of the Housing Corporation at the time; we'll find out in the story – "during his term as premier" Son-in-law acted as a trustee for the company and made the sole bid after public proposal call.

"The blind trust for Danny Williams made two significant additions to his Glencrest land holdings on the outskirts of St. John's ..." – you'd know it as Glendenning or the former Woods; a great golf course, by the way – "including a 225-hectare (550-acre) acquisition ... from the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation in 2007."

Now, wasn't Danny Williams premier of the province in 2007? Can someone answer that? Could the PCs answer that for me? I think he was. He was premier from 2003 to 2010. Let that sink in.

This is dated November 3, 2015, so three weeks before they were defeated in government. "Until now, the results of that NLHC land sale – in which" Danny "Williams's son-in-law acted as trustee for a numbered company in his blind trust" Imagine that, in a numbered company in blind trust.

So it was all right when they had the former premier, a PC premier who was doing it, but now there's a numbered company involved and a piece of land with a company that is publicly traded, now they're against it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Order, please!

MR. KING: I mean, come on. I think I touched a nerve again.

In this sale, the land wasn't registered until eight years later, in 2015.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. KING: Oh, wow.

"Williams is defending the acquisition, and how it was handled, saying ..." he followed all the rules. Of course he did.

He said: "A lot of people, whether they are media or others, kind of think that" Danny "Williams can't be that squeaky clean. He must have done something wrong. He must have been at it to fill his own pockets," the former premier said in an interview."

Well, he certainly took from the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on Muskrat Falls, the single biggest boondoggle we've ever seen in the history of this province, which is going to double power rates, the biggest taxation on any Newfoundlander and Labradorian. Thank God, we're going to have rate mitigation in place to make up for this boondoggle, but it shouldn't have happened in the first place.

He said: "Well, my pockets were pretty full before I got into politics and I didn't need to go into government in order to benefit from government." But he sure did a good job of it. There's something to be said about greed. Now, my opinion, he should have stuck to ownership of sports teams like the rest of the rich people do.

"Williams says he is disappointed this land acquisition is being raised as an issue now."

He goes on: "There have been questions raised about how Danny Williams acquired the land for the Glencrest development – some of which has since been rechristened Galway – since the former premier publicly revealed in late 2011 that he was behind the potential multi-billion dollar project." So he only came out with this information after he left government.

He actually bought mostly two-thirds of the land in the late 1990s – well, that's fine – before entering politics. But his blind trust added to those holdings while he was serving as premier.

So they wouldn't know a thing or two of how to work the government system there, I'm sure.

"A Dec. 14, 2011, story in the ... Telegram quoted Williams as saying his blind trust did

acquire some land while he was in office – from two private developers, as well as some other small parcels of land.”

The Telegram story also did not reference the 550 acres from the Housing Corporation in 2007 – a parcel that comprises nearly 25 per cent of the entire Galway development.

“Asked why he hasn’t spoken about that acquisition until being asked about it now, Williams said: ‘Well, there’s no need to. Basically a blind trust is exactly what it’s named. It’s a blind trust.’

“He says he followed the applicable legislation during his time in public office.”

I believe they were questioning some blind trust of Cabinet ministers on this side of the House not too long ago, within the last two or three years. So it’s okay if they do it but it’s not okay if anyone else does it. What they’re trying to portray is anyone who has a blind trust or a numbered corporation is a bogeyman. It’s unbelievable. They’re grasping at straws. They’re void of ideas, Mr. Speaker.

I can go on and on here. This is a pretty good story and I encourage people to get out and speak to it.

The trustee that was put in charge of the numbered company was his son-in-law, Trevor Morris. “He would have been approved by the commissioner for members’ interests, so there would be no conflict there.”

Mr. Speaker, if you want to go over here, I just made a note that: “While blind trust guidelines brought in during the Tobin era specifically prohibit family members from acting as trustee, the definition of family in that 1997 directive does not include son-in-law.” But, by definition it may be okay, but it smells awful fishy to me, Mr. Speaker.

Now, when this Galway deal went down there was only one bid, Mr. Speaker. One bid on a publicly announced bid on that land and it was a numbered company from Williams’s blind trust. Again, a numbered company. So it’s okay if they do it, but if someone else has any dealings

with government through a numbered company it’s not okay.

If you want to grow the economy, if you’re a Liberal and there’s another company that’s dealing with a blind numbered company, it’s not okay. It’s hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker, and they’re kings and queens of it. It is unbelievable.

Danny Williams was asked if connections helped him get his land. “Absolutely not. Absolutely, categorically not.” You can draw your own conclusions on that quote. I certainly don’t believe it.

It goes on: The person in charge of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: The person in charge of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation at the time was Len Simms.

AN HON. MEMBER: What?

MR. KING: Len Simms was in charge of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation when this deal went down. Let that sink in. The former PC Speaker, former PC Cabinet minister – former PC leader, actually, ran their campaign – quit as the Chair of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing – not once, but twice – to run a PC campaign and was put back in that position and was in charge of selling this land.

Something’s fishy to me there, Mr. Speaker. Although, I’d certainly like to take the man for his word but there’s something fishy.

All this land, which was bought well under value, Mr. Speaker – and the CBC did a great job with this report. Rob Antle did a great job. I would encourage anyone to get out and read it because, like I said, as long as they’re doing it, it’s okay. As long as they’re putting their friends and cronies and family members in the positions, which they can benefit, it’s okay. But if you got qualified people on this side of the House who we can fill positions with – and most things are done through the Independent

Appointments Commission at the moment, which I think is working marvellously.

We're getting good people come forward for positions across the province. People who wouldn't have gotten a look in otherwise under the former PC government. You got some great people on that Independent Appointments Commission: Shannie Duff, Zita Cobb, Clyde Wells. These people are making the recommendations, Mr. Speaker, and this is what they're getting on with. Those high-quality people, they're undermining, saying it doesn't work, that they're putting in their friends. I trust those five people on that board, and so should Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Don't believe the bogeyman stories that he's hiding under the bed or hiding around the corner.

That's what happens when you become void ideas, or you have no answers for the problems that are faced today, you make up stories. You go forward with innuendo and rumours, and this is what they're getting at. Nothing has changed since they've left government. It's the same tired politics that they're playing.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)
Glendenning.

MR. KING: Well, I'm not going to knock Glendenning, because it is a good golf course, I'm going to say that.

Mr. Speaker, there are negative effects of government intervention in private business. Governments are liable to make wrong decisions influenced by political pressure groups. They spend on inefficient projects which lead to inefficient outcomes. Now, that sounds awful familiar, Mr. Speaker. That sounds awful familiar, like the Muskrat Falls Project. So when you interfere with private business as a government you're not allowing business to grow properly.

The Member for Mount Pearl North said we shouldn't be creating jobs, we should be setting the conditions to grow jobs. And that is what we are doing with Canopy Growth, Biome, anyone else who wants to get into the cannabis industry.

Now, we have the Leader of the Official Opposition about an honest and transparent

government, and I know the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune talked about, we want to bring transparency back; we want to be open. I challenge him to put his donations for his leadership campaign. Our Premier did it when he ran for leader in 2013, that all hit. We haven't seen it from the current PC Opposition leader.

I want to be open and transparent. How's he going to lower taxes? In our current climate, the only way you lower taxes and have zero deficit –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: The only way you do that – yeah, the Member for CBS is already out there, exactly. You slash the public service, you cut health care, you cut education and you cut road spending. That's how they're going to do it, Mr. Speaker.

I'm getting down on my time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Leave.

MR. KING: Like I said the other day, I was just getting warmed up.

I thank you for your time. It was a pleasure to speak on this motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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 private Member's motion, which was moved by the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, and it reads: "BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to bring forward legislation to require every privately held numbered company operating in the Province that does business with the Provincial Government to disclose the identities of the significant shareholders in that company." This was seconded by the Member for Mount Pearl North.

So, what's important to keep in mind here is that it's not calling for every numbered company to reveal its shareholders; it's calling only for numbered companies who are doing business directly with the provincial government. Also, it's not calling for the name of every shareholder.

Some folks were saying this is going to be impossible, there are so many shareholders and so many companies. How is the government going to do this? Well, they're asking for significant shareholders. That might be a little bit broad and open to interpretation, Mr. Speaker. But also, those names would have to be provided by the company itself, so the shareholders – I'm not sure what would happen whether a numbered company can be a shareholder in a numbered company, so that's possible. So I'm not quite sure how that would be handled.

Basically, this comes at a time when there's an incredible level of mistrust around the dealings of government, around the whole issue of procurement as well. We have the opportunity – last year in this House, there was a new bill for a new Procurement Act, and it sure would've been great if we would've been able to make that Procurement Act even stronger than it was.

I certainly lobbied for it, as did my colleague from St. John's East - Quidi Vidi; lobbied for elements of social benefits in our Procurement Act; also lobbied for benefits for gender analysis. And none of that was included, which is a shame, Mr. Speaker, because it was the opportunity to do a really good, strong Procurement Act that was truly modernized, truly comprehensive.

I had presented information about the procurement act in Scotland, which is one that would've been a very – it's probably the gold standard in the world, and we could've done that. It wouldn't have cost government any money at all – not at all. As a matter of fact, it would increase the probability of government's money for procurement staying in the province and really benefiting the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

All that said and done, Mr. Speaker, so here we are again. This comes again at a time when the

public really has misgivings and is wondering about who does business with government; how do they do business with government; are we sure we're getting the best value for our money; are there any problems in some of the transactions.

The Opposition wants legislation passed to compel privately held numbered companies that do business with the provincial government to disclose the identities of the significant shareholders in that company. We know, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of reasons that people set up numbered companies that don't identify, (a), the owners, that don't identify the main shareholders or any of the shareholders publicly. So, from a legal and corporate point of view, this could prove problematic. We know that. But again, let's not forget that what we are looking at is companies that are doing business directly with government.

This may have come out of the Official Opposition's persistent questioning about who owns the numbered company that owns the land that is being leased to Canopy Growth. There's a lot of distrust around that, Mr. Speaker. But, in fact, that numbered company is not doing work directly with government. They are doing work with a private company in the name of Canopy Growth. We don't even know, Mr. Speaker, perhaps it's possible that Canopy Growth itself owns this numbered company, or that the main shareholders in Canopy Growth. Because when you look at the deal, the deal is very, very, very generous to the numbered company. So, it could be.

Now, there are rumours abound and the reasons there are rumour abound is because of the secrecy and the lack of transparency. Canopy Growth is actually giving \$10 million to this numbered company. So, Mr. Speaker, they may be just passing money from one hand to the other; but, we, as a province, are giving \$40 million to Canopy Growth for recreational marijuana. We must be rolling in money as a province that we can give the Walmart of cannabis \$40 million of taxpayers' hard-earned money. It's amazing – amazing – when this government has been preaching austerity, when they cut the Adult Dental Program, when they cut the over-the-counter drug program, when they are cutting home care hours, when they are

cutting bus passes for some of the most disadvantaged people in this province, which are creating and compounding further health problems.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, we don't know who owns that numbered company. And the concern is – I believe that there's a valid concern because, again, not only is Canopy Growth doing direct business with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, thereby making money from the people's money, plus getting, free, \$40 million. So this company who has all these benefits and getting all this money, public money, are doing business now that's very integral and intertwined with the operation that they are setting up, that has a contract, a solid contract with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the very foundation of what they're doing here, so to speak, because it's about the land on which their production facility is going to be built – and from our understanding, I could be wrong here, that this numbered company is going to build the facility and then lease it back to Canopy Growth. Canopy Growth's going to be using government money to be paying for that lease. Who owns that company?

That's what people want to know. Fair question, because what's happening is Canopy Growth is using taxpayers' money to pay that company a very, very generous amount of money for a lease, and then Canopy Growth is going to end up having the option of owning that facility and that land in five years.

So, Mr. Speaker, people have a right to know, I believe. It's a pretty tangled mess. And because this government handled the whole situation with cannabis with Canopy Growth so badly, it has a spillover effect where people are suspicious, uninformed, misinformed, not informed by this government. Why wouldn't they be suspicious? Why wouldn't this side of the House be suspicious? Why wouldn't we all be concerned? And I believe that at one point the Minister of Finance said that he was going to find out, or perhaps it was the minister of TC aye, aye, aye, aye, aye, who said that he might find out and let us know, but we don't know. They said they would; we haven't heard.

So there's a lot of money at stake here, a lot of the public's money. There's also the issue – there are lots of public money. The Minister of TCII keeps claiming there is no money being given to – but this is the same argument as how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. It is the people's money.

What's supposed to happen is they have the ability to hold back \$40 million of the people's money. They don't have to remit it. They don't have to remit that money. It's still the people's money. Instead of remitting it, government is saying: You know what? You can keep that. You're growing recreational marijuana, we've got a deal with you.

They already have a sweet, good deal. They already had a good business model. A good deal with them, a deal like in other provinces. Other provinces are getting recreational marijuana, they're buying it. But not only are we buying it, we're paying this extra premium – that makes no sense at all – to one of the largest cannabis producers in the world, who are able to fly here on a private jet and bring a band on a private jet.

When they opened up their first retail stores here in downtown St. John's, they hired a private jet. They hired a band, and they brought the band in on a private jet to celebrate. My God, Mr. Speaker, who wouldn't? With a deal like that, who wouldn't be dancing in the street? Let me tell you, who wouldn't be? I'd be dancing in the street. And I tell you, I might just hire a private jet and do that as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's why there is so much mistrust. That's why there is so much misinformation. That's why there are so many rumours. There are rumours about about who owns this land. And it could, in fact, be Canopy Growth itself, or it could be – some of the rumours that are about about this deal is that there are senior, influential people in the Liberal Party. That's a concern. You know what? Because the government handled this deal so badly, people are so suspicious. And they believe that, and we don't know.

I would think because there is so much public money at stake that government would want to clear it out. Government would want to clear up its name. Government would want to reinforce

its promise. I don't think anybody, in the history of this House, has ever promised so much so loudly so clearly about transparency and accountability and open government. I don't think anybody ever in the history of this province has promised that so much, but we sure aren't getting it. It's not happening, Mr. Speaker. It's not happening at all.

So I would like to just read something from Justice Clyde Wells in his report. Justice Clyde Wells said: "The public has an interest in understanding the interplay between government and the businesses that provide goods and services to public bodies. Hundreds of millions of tax dollars are spent each year to build and maintain roads," – we know that, we talk about that in the House – "to construct buildings such as hospitals and schools"

Although, this government's going to do the P3 model, which so many jurisdictions are already proving, and auditors general across the country and around the world are saying they're not good deals for governments, for people.

"Hundreds of millions of tax dollars are spent each year to build and maintain roads, to construct buildings such as hospitals and schools, and to buy supplies that include everything from paper clips to vehicles to MRI units." And I might add, and cannabis products as well, Mr. Speaker.

Justice Wells goes on to say: "People have a right to know tax dollars are being spent as the legislature intended, and that their government is getting the best value. It can only be certain of that if it has maximum access to information. Otherwise, openness and transparency are a political mirage."

So what we're dealing with here right now –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: – Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with a political mirage. There is no openness and transparency here. You would think in some ways that Canopy Growth might want to be able to clear this picture, clear up this issue as well. But, no, we will continue to live with a political

mirage made by the makings of which has happened by this government. This government who has been so lacking in transparency in its whole dealings with Canopy Growth and with the way they are dealing with cannabis in the province.

Again, we're talking about recreational marijuana and a company who's getting \$40 million of taxpayers' money – one of the fastest growing, publicly-traded companies in existence in the country right now. Mr. Speaker, it's shameful. It's absolutely embarrassing for this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member her time has expired.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say that it's very interesting to follow the Leader of the Third Party because she couldn't be more anti-business here in this province. She couldn't be making any further statements that are un-factual. There's no fact to the statements that were made about taxpayer money going into these operations. She continues to misrepresent the facts here in this House of Assembly.

The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, when she got up talking about and casting dispersions upon all Members of this House about cronyism and favouritism; as a government and as MHAs, we have codes of conduct to follow and we act in our authority to do so to make sure that as a government we are doing the people's business here in this House and doing it honestly, openly, transparently and with integrity.

That is why our leader and our Cabinet and our caucus team have had so much success in

attracting business to Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELMORE: I have to give accolades to the Minister of Natural Resources. She has time and time again been working with industry when it comes to the mining industry, when it comes to oil and gas.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs working with the federal government on capital investment, on infrastructure; Transportation and Works with a Five-Year Roads Plan and finding ways to do things that can attract business and get things done like build and replace the Waterford Hospital with a new mental health facility, with new long-term care facilities in Central and in Corner Brook. These are types of things that the other administration couldn't do that we are doing here on this side because we're open for business, we are working with them.

The minister of agriculture and aquaculture have been able to attract Grieg here to our province. Hundreds of millions of dollars in terms of investment that's going to be creating jobs on the Burin Peninsula. Does the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune oppose aquaculture? We know the Member for the Third Party has said many negative things about aquaculture here in this particular House.

When it comes to what we've been doing, Mr. Speaker, there has been \$49 billion, when the projects are completed, in economic activity, in investment that's happening here in our province due to the hard work. You would not be attracting this level of business if you were not open for business. We are open as a province and we welcome people to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELMORE: We welcome publicly-traded companies to invest here. They are highly credible. Publicly-traded companies have to follow security regulators. People who are there on the exchange, they are highly scrutinized, they have auditors in place, there are national and international standards to be followed and the Member opposite is slamming

publicly traded companies. It makes no sense, Mr. Speaker, makes no sense whatsoever.

I wanted to say that I'm very pleased, though, to get the opportunity to shine the light on the types of investments that we are making as a government, and also that we created, the Premier created. The first signature bill was the Independent Appointments Commission to make sure that the politics were taken out of the hiring of CEOs and of board members; that they would be done through an independent appointments process, because they're responsible for the bulk of government expenditures.

I want to take the time that I have to highlight our investment in the industry for cannabis here, and one that we made a decision as a government that we would lead to production here in this province. The Member opposite says that, you know, we're giving away something. We did not have anything here in this province to give away, because we did not have a licensed producer, unlike every other province in the country.

But now, we have two production facilities that are setting up, and we just got granted – BeeHigh Vital Elements in Corner Brook just got approved by Health Canada, a production licence. Now all they need is the sales licence and they can get into the retail of cannabis here in Newfoundland and Labrador. So, we're continuing to work and grow with small producers, craft producers as well, like the Member for Mount Pearl North alluded to, that we didn't give anybody an opportunity. We have ample opportunities here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

When it comes to job creation, supply chain development, research and development, that is what we are doing. If you recall last fall, when all Members were anticipating legalization of cannabis in July 2018, at the time our province was one without a production facility and a signed supply agreement. A shortage of cannabis was predicted across the country, and a supply agreement was necessary to ensure that our province had a safe and sufficient supply once legalization occurred.

Our government announced in December of last year an agreement with Canopy Growth

Corporation for the supply and production of cannabis in our province, and Canopy is a world-leading, diversified cannabis company operating a collection of diverse brands, supported by over 3 million square feet of indoor and greenhouse production capacity, in use or under construction. And as a result of the agreement, our province secured a supply of up to 8,000 kilograms of cannabis and cannabis-related product annually.

In addition, Canopy committed to build a production facility in our province, resulting in the creation of 145 new jobs. The agreement, with internationally recognized producers, not only guarantees a safe supply of cannabis for Newfoundland and Labrador, before the federally imposed implementation date, but also resulted in the creation of new jobs in our province, and associated economic spinoffs that will benefit local companies, who will be in a position to provide supplies and services to Canopy.

We have used this as a framework for other agreements related to cannabis supply and production. And while the agreement guaranteed the province a supply of cannabis, it did not preclude the province from purchasing cannabis from other licence holders, current or future. In fact, we recently reached a similar agreement with Biome Grow, which I'll talk about shortly. We encourage local companies to come forward and have discussions with our government, in anticipation of them receiving a licence. Again, we are attempting to build an industry here in this province.

As part of the agreement we reached in December, Canopy has agreed to commit to build and operate a production facility in our province. Canopy is committed to have a facility operational by 2019, and to operate it for a minimum of 20 years. In return, the provincial government will contribute to the capital cost to construct the facility through reduced sales remittances to the province until the company's investment is partially recouped, and this is for eligible expenses only, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to elaborate a little here, because I've been questioned a lot in the House on this. So, Mr. Speaker, because there is a lot of confusion in the public, part of this confusion

can certainly be attributed to the false allegations and myths put forward by the Opposition and the Third Party.

First of all, our government has reached an agreement in the best interest of the taxpayers, where the company, not the government, is taking all the upfront risk. Canopy Growth is assuming all the financial risk, and it's committed to be operational by 2019.

Unlike the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, would like the taxpayers of this province to be on the hook for all the risk, pay the federal tax, pay the provincial tax, have no municipal tax for the City of St. John's or other municipalities and to also allow for land to be purchased for \$1 under an EDGE program, Mr. Speaker. That's what I was asked about in this House.

There's no upfront grant, loan or upfront investment by the provincial government – none; zero. Reduced remittances will only be applied on eligible expenses. Eligible expenses are contained in section 3.3 of the contract with Canopy. Eligible expenses include direct construction costs, direct land acquisition cost, equipment cost and licensing fees by the company.

Eligible expenses do not include financing fees and costs, project management fees, administrative expenses and operational costs. Leasing cost is an operational cost and is, therefore, excluded. The contract references a reconciliation process, which is included in section 17 of the contract. All reduced remittances will be audited against eligible expenses on a monthly basis. Should the amount of reduced remittances exceed eligible expenses in a given year, government will recoup any amount over and above. Section 15 of the contract outlines remedies. In the event of default, section 14, government has a number of options, including suspending reduced remittances or rescinding retail licences, if necessary.

Mr. Speaker, there have been mistruths put forward by the Third Party, in particular, implying that the government has provided \$95 million to Biome and Canopy when they know that not one dollar of taxpayers' money has been

provided up front. The Third Party also knows that without attracting new business to the province, there is no new revenue, and no new money to spend on services and programs for our people of the province. So you can't take money you don't have and spend somewhere on a program and service. You have to attract the business here, let them create the jobs, make the business have the sales where we get revenue. And I'm going to talk about the revenue. So to suggest that this money could be redirected elsewhere is absolutely nonsense – it's nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

Another point seems to be lost here is that the NLC is the principal beneficiary of the commission received on products sold in the province. The NLC is getting the most out of this. So for every dollar received by Canopy at its retail stores, NLC receives a minimum of \$2 and more for online sales, on cannabis sales. Once reduced remittances end, NLC, and ultimately the government, will receive even more.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to speak about the agreement reached with Biome Grow earlier this month. Very pleased to visit the beautiful West Coast of our province to join my colleagues, as well as Dave Callahan, the president of Back Home Medical Cannabis Co., and Khurram Malik, CEO of Biome Grow, for an exciting announcement for the people of this area. There was a lot of excitement in that room when we announced a production and supply agreement with Biome Grow and its local entity, Back Home Medical Cannabis Corp.

The agreement will create 120 jobs – new jobs – with an average salary of \$54,000. I hear the Third Party talking about \$15 an hour; these jobs are far more than \$15 an hour in rural communities, created by the private sector.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELMORE: This company also expects to create an additional 80 jobs associated with its retail stores. The agreement will also bring economic spinoffs to the Bay St. George area and more than \$15 million in revenue to the province over five years. This will include a new production facility built in Barachois Brook in phases – an initial 18,000 square foot facility,

followed by an expansion of 150,000 square feet. Biome Grow is committed to produce local cannabis by the second half of 2019, and to operate its production facility for a minimum of 20 years. There's approximately \$6.5 million in annual salaries related to this project – quite significant.

A new supply agreement will guarantee supply of up to 24,000 kilograms of cannabis over a three-year period with the option to renew. This gives us additional access to supply with no obligation to purchase. As a result of this and the original cannabis production supply agreement with Canopy, the provincial government will now have a guaranteed cannabis supply for a minimum of 40,000 kilograms over the next three years.

Our government is working successfully to attract new business, new investment and new industries to our province. We welcome them in all sectors of the economy, Mr. Speaker, whether it be defence and aerospace, whether it be in the technology sector, whether it be in oil and gas, in mining, in the fishery. There are all sorts of opportunities here in our province.

We're doing this in the cannabis industry through performance-based agreements. We're putting the risk with the company, not with the taxpayer. Our partnership with Biome is a continuation of our plan to build a new industry, including rural Newfoundland and Labrador; 260 new production jobs and over 220 retail jobs associated with those two agreements alone.

Mr. Speaker, the Members opposite are not excited about all of the economic opportunities that this government has created, that I've mentioned when I started my speech. They're not interested in that or the associated jobs or the economic spinoff. They would rather spend their time making false accusations about a publicly-traded company.

Where our government believes in creating economic opportunity and working with businesses, Members opposite in the Opposition and in the Third Party would rather spend their time making disparaging comments about reputable companies, about our business community here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

They would rather drive business away, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what they would do.

Mr. Speaker, our government has ensured accountability in the process. We're doing our due diligence in the execution of our agreements with companies. We will ensure that due diligence is followed every step of the way. In fact, it's very insulting to our public sector, to the public servants who are working on these files, to suggest otherwise.

Our government will not be discouraged by the negativity of the Members opposite. The Opposition would have our province left importing product with jobs and benefits going elsewhere, just like they did with their ferry replacement strategy of sending the jobs to Romania. Mr. Speaker, that's what the former Member did. That's what the Member opposite for Conception Bay East - Bell Island did, went over and christened a boat over in Romania, rather than getting that work done here.

Under our plan, Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador will be exporting, will be the full beneficiary and we'll see growth in the industry. Those are the types of things we are doing, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to companies we are doing business with, Mr. Speaker, we will certainly – we have an obligation. We have an obligation to provide details to the public, but when it comes to private business matters of which we have no relation, we do not have the ability to provide such information.

I see my time is winding down, Mr. Speaker, and I'd love to go on and on and on and talk about publicly-traded companies, private companies, numbered companies or not.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the hon. Member his time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It's indeed a privilege to get up here again today and, I always say, to represent the District of Cape St. Francis and the people in the District of Cape St. Francis.

It's a very interesting debate we have here today. I have to listen to some Members across the way, and I just listened to the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation. Minister, I think you missed the point. You missed the whole point of what the reason for this is. Let me tell you something, this side of the House is not anti-business.

MR. CROCKER: (Inaudible.)

MR. K. PARSONS: No, it doesn't, Minister of Transportation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: I ask the Minister of Transportation to give me the courtesy to speak, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: This side of the House is definitely not against business. We're pro-business. We want to see business come into our province.

The minister also said that taxpayers are not paying any money. Well, let me tell you something, Minister, \$40 million that that company, Canopy Growth, doesn't have to pay us as a result of your deal means it's \$40 million less in our Treasury that we do –

AN HON. MEMBER: Whoopee!

MR. K. PARSONS: Whoopee, is that what you said?

A company we're giving \$40 million to, that's \$40 million we don't have to put into our dental program, that's \$40 million we don't have to put into Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, that's \$40 million we don't have to put into people – I'm trying to get a grant now for a young girl that needs a wheelchair and needs a van. That's \$40 million that we don't have.

We gave a company \$40 million. We gave them \$40 million because they don't have to pay the money back to us. That's \$40 million we're giving that company.

You said about the great job we're doing in Newfoundland and Labrador in business, we're promoting business. We're all about promoting business, too. We want to see business come to our province, but let me give you a little fact that you didn't say. We have more bankruptcies in our province today than we ever did in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador under your government.

We want to see existing business survive. Existing business, we want to see them survive in this province. We're about helping the local people, making sure they can survive, that the family business can survive in this province. And your government has put an awful amount of pressure on small business in our province with higher taxes and everything else. Now, Minister, I respect your opinion and I understand, but we gave Canopy Growth \$40 million worth of tax relief, we'll say.

When there was a shortage last week, when the shortage came in and everybody didn't realize there was a shortage, and it was in all provinces all over Canada, did we get extra treatment for our \$40 million? No. Did New Brunswick get treated just like we did? Yes. Their investment was something like \$1 million, but we invested \$40 million and we're treated the same way.

Mr. Speaker, when the minister gets up and talks about anti-business, I'm sure – whether it's the Third Party, whether it's the independents, we're all here in this House of Assembly to make sure that Newfoundland and Labrador is seen as a place to do business. What this whole resolution is about today is how people see us. This is what this resolution's about, because we have a hidden company who's receiving all kinds of benefits from our province, \$40 million in benefits from our province and we don't know who they are.

Now, the Minister of Service NL got up and spoke for a little while, and she also spoke about consumer confidence and consumer protection. Well, I'm asking for the protection of the

taxpayers in this province. Our \$40 million, where is it going to.

MR. KING: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: And listen, at the end of the day – now the Member for Bonaville, I'm going to get to you in a few minutes, but just stay calm over there for a second, please.

The minister mentioned about consumer confidence. Consumer confidence is about trust, and trust that we're doing the right thing. So if there is a company receiving taxpayers' money in this province, don't you think the residents of this province should know where their money is going to? Who are the investors?

I went to a function the other night down in Pouch Cove at the Lions Club, and great people down there. You wouldn't believe the number of people that came up: Who owns that company? Who owns that company? Everywhere I go, people want to know.

We had the Minister of Finance stand up in this House of Assembly when he was asked a question, who owns the numbered company. He said, I will get you that answer in a couple of days; I'll get you that answer. I've heard our leader ask the minister now at least, I'd say, five or six times maybe, and he refused to answer it anymore.

We talked last night about democratic reform and how we get people into politics, and we talked about trusting your politicians. How can the people of the province trust our politicians when we won't give them the answers? How can they trust politicians when we say: listen, that's okay, don't worry about it, they're okay.

Tell us the name. That's what this resolution is about. We want to know, and we're not saying that numbered companies in all businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador have to. But if you're dealing with the province and you're dealing with the funds, the taxpayers' dollars of this province, then they have a right to know and that's what this is all about.

I go back to the point that it's the people's money. It's the people of the province's money. If you look at the *Public Tender Act*, for example, what that's designed to do is to give us the best value for our dollar. If you're a municipal government or you're government itself, people have to put it out there so that you get the best value for your dollar. Now, we changed the *Public Tender Act* a little while ago to make sure the best value is there.

That's what people want to know about their public money; they want the best value for their dollar. They want it on a level playing field. They want opportunity for – listen, I heard when Canopy Growth came here – and listen if they're going to create 145 jobs, I would have liked to have seen other opportunities put out there so other companies may say I can produce it and I can make 200 jobs. Wouldn't that be the best thing for our society, the more jobs – we need jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador. We need investment in Newfoundland and Labrador, but we need to be open and transparent to let everybody know that, listen, I'm not giving this to my buddy. Everyone has an opportunity to go ahead and bid and put in proposals and do the right thing.

All this is about is the right thing. There's nothing wrong with competition – absolutely nothing wrong with competition. Competition makes sure that people get the best value for their dollars. We, as government officials, always say the word: trust us. Well, the people in the province and the people that I've been talking to lately don't trust us. Why don't they trust us? Because we're not giving out the information.

We go back to Question Period and listen to the answers that are given and the minister gets up every day and it's like he's scripted; every day it's the same answer. That's not good enough.

The very first piece of legislation that your government brought in, Bill 1, was supposed to take politics out of appointments. Well, how about taking politics out of tenders and funds that are going out to companies in this province? That's what people wanted to hear. I don't see your Bill 1 very effective actually when I look at all the amount of appointments that are done with former Liberals.

I commented on the two ministers that spoke. The Member for Bonavista, it was almost embarrassing what he had to say when he got up here because bringing up names of people that – and I'm not going to go there because I don't want to be down where he was. But it was very disheartening to hear some of the stuff that he had to say, and that's all I'm going to comment on it. I don't think it makes any comment.

We talk about a company, Canopy Growth. The Member of the Third Party brought this up. It was funny, I was watching the news and it was the opening – we were the first in Canada. A good celebration; there were people lined up on Water Street and Duckworth Street. I think the two places were open 12 o'clock for the sale. Here we are, the president of Canopy Growth flew in on his private jet to open the store; \$40 million that we gave to Canopy Growth.

We talk to the minister every day on education, and we talk about 1.6 and the safety of our children. It's always a dollar factor or something like that that stops us from doing it. Yet we can give \$40 million to a person that can fly in on a jet, but we can't give \$40 million to people that need to be safe in going to school, and our children. It's just not right.

Mr. Speaker, I always get up when I do my speech in the House of Assembly and I always try to stay at a level that's very, very high. I believe that this resolution that we brought in today and I'm hoping that Members over on that side – and I'm sure that Members on that side of the House agree with us that the right thing to do was to tell – and if there's nothing to hide about this numbered company, perfect. We'll say okay, that's great. But there were no bids that came in on this. This was done.

We had some questions in the House of Assembly last year. We were asking questions about it and it was there was nothing going to be done on this, there's no agreement with anything on cannabis or no production – the minister got up two or three times. The House closed on Thursday. Guess what happened Friday morning? Somehow, Thursday night, they got a deal with Canopy Growth on \$40 million. What a department, Minister; you did a fantastic job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: How you did that on Thursday night because you got up in the House on Thursday and didn't know anything was happening. You stated in the House that there was nothing happening, but actually on Thursday night you must have worked all through the night because the next morning – and the people from Canopy Growth were here the next morning so they flew in on their private jet again, and you made the announcement of \$40 million. You didn't know anything about it.

That's about honesty and trust that people are looking for from our political life. That's what people are looking for.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): A point of order, the hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Section 49, what the Member is pointing out about me and my reputation of honesty and trust, he's saying that I'm being dishonest. I have not been dishonest in this House. When I made the statements in December of 2017 about a deal happening that when we concluded, when we had a deal, we would make that known publicly, Mr. Speaker, as we've done with any particular deal when it comes to Canopy or Biome or any future deals, we would communicate that publicly.

I do not respect what the Member opposite is saying in his commentary and ask for him to withdraw his remarks.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

While I would agree that it's not a point of order, I would remind the Member that he is treading on thin ice. Just be careful with your comments, please.

MR. K. PARSONS: I will, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I wish you had to be here to listen to the Member from Bonavista when he spoke.

MR. SPEAKER: I have a television set.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, good, so you saw what happened.

MR. SPEAKER: I caught it.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, Mr. Speaker, what we're talking about here today is public money. This is not about investments in industry or it's not about investments in hockey teams or everything else, this is about taxpayers' dollars. This is about taxpayers' dollars being spent and no one knowing where the money is getting spent. No one knowing who owns it.

Once people –

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that government has no connection to this numbered company. They're not doing any business. The only business we are doing is with a publicly traded company, Canopy, and we're very proud of our deal.

MR. SPEAKER: I don't see this as a point of order. I ask the Member to please continue with your time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I'm obviously hitting a nerve with the minister and he's getting pretty upset over there. I guess he doesn't –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: He just doesn't like to hear the truth. It's \$40 million of taxpayers' dollar that are going –

MR. MITCHELMORE: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: What he is saying is not true; it is completely false. There is no \$40 million. He's calling me a liar indirectly in this

House and that should be a point of order which he should withdraw.

MR. SPEAKER: I would agree on this point. I would suggest that you should not suggest that the other Member is putting any falsehoods or lying, so I would ask you to withdraw that comment, please.

MR. K. PARSONS: I'll withdraw the comment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: All I'm saying is that Canopy Growth got some sweet deal from this government on \$40 million that could have been used for a lot of other things in this province, that could have been used for people in health care, the dental program –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: It could have been used for roads; could have been used in our schools; could have been used in municipal affairs; could have been used all over the place. I tell you that Canopy Growth got a great deal and this government gave them a fantastic deal. I don't like the deal that's happening right now with this numbered company because we don't know who they are. They won't directly receive government money but they will through Canopy Growth, through all the different – they'll receive tax-free loans and everything else of our money and we have a right to know who these people are.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member opposite thinks that Canopy got a sweet deal; I suggest that Damen Shipyards got a sweet deal, Mr. Speaker. When the ferries that could've been built in Marystown were shipped overseas and christened by the former minister, and his fleet of delegation that attended.

I would also suggest that at that time there were a number of tariffs imposed on the ferries that we had to go to the federal government and relieve. So we're not going to listen to –

AN HON. MEMBER: \$25 million.

MR. BROWNE: – \$25 million, and that's just scratching the surface of the PC legacy of mismanagement in the province for over a decade. So if we want to talk about sweet deals, Mr. Speaker, we'll go back to Damen Shipyards and what should've been done in Marystown, employing hundreds of people on the Burin Peninsula. There were jobs shipped overseas. That was their jobs plan, Mr. Speaker, and how did it work out for the people of the Burin Peninsula?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BROWNE: Where were they opposite, Mr. Speaker, when two fish plants were flattened on their watch on the Burin Peninsula? So we're not going to take lessons from the PC Party on job creation in rural Newfoundland and Labrador; I guarantee you of that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, there has been a hyper-partisan rhetoric in the air this afternoon here in the Legislature.

Let us be clear as it relates to the Canopy deal, Mr. Speaker. There is no upfront grant. There is no loan. There is no upfront investment by the provincial government. This bears repeating. There is no upfront grant, there is no loan and there is no upfront investment. The risk is solely on the business. That is called a performance-based contract that this government has negotiated to ensure that the risk is not on the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador, and that is very important.

Let's take a look at another issue, Mr. Speaker, the Grieg project, which I'm very happy that the Member for Burin - Grand Bank and I have announced and it's approved and it's in motion. But just take a look at the deal that was signed in the dying days of that administration: \$45 million out the door in year one, no security, no return and no guarantee on jobs. Is that not true?

AN HON. MEMBER: It's true.

MR. BROWNE: That is true.

Mr. Speaker, this government negotiated that down from \$45 million to \$30 million, spread not over one year, over a seven-year period and tied to milestones and job creations. If the company does not produce what they promise, they will not get the yield of the financial commitment that government has made. That's called performance-based. That's putting the risk on the company and not the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's certainly not shoving \$45 million out the door days before an election, I guarantee you that.

So the deal with Canopy, Mr. Speaker, it is tax remission. It is not a giveaway. The money, as the Member opposite indicated, would have been generated from that facility. Well, I would suggest, without the incentives that we are providing, they wouldn't have come to build. They would've shipped it in here, imported it in, and there'd be no creation of an industry. There would be no jobs created as a result. So I must ask, are Members opposite opposed to the creation of an industry where hundreds of jobs will be created in Newfoundland and Labrador as a result?

It is very important, Mr. Speaker, that we recognize the tremendous contribution that this government has made to job creation and economic development throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and we will not be putting money out the door with no guarantees like the former administration.

We hear the Third Party putting information forward, implying that government has provided \$95 million to Canopy and Biome when Members know that not one dollar of taxpayers' money is being provided upfront.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, I know the Member opposite is heckling me, and I'm fine with heckling, but you know we often hear the Members of the Third Party saying that we shouldn't be heckling in this House. But I'm fine, I can take it, because you know why? You know why? Because this government is going to protect the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador, and we're not going to shovel money out the door like Members opposite would.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: Not one upfront grant, not one loan, not one upfront investment has been provided. Not one. Yet, we hear from Members across the way that Joey Smallwood is going through the halls of Confederation Building, the ghost of Joey Smallwood, and bringing back the nefarious days of the Smallwood era. That's what we heard earlier, Mr. Speaker. But I can guarantee you, that we premise our decisions on accountability, on transparency and doing the right thing – doing the right thing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: That, Mr. Speaker, is honest government.

It is evidence-based decision making. Unlike, Mr. Speaker, when ferries that should have been built on the Burin Peninsula down in Marystown were shipped overseas. The largest primary processing fish plant in the province in Marystown. The crown jewel of the FPI crown – a heap of rubble today. The former secondary processing plant in Burin – gone. And let's not even touch Abitibi and Humber Valley Paving.

So we have today a resolution before us, Mr. Speaker, urging the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to bring forward legislation to require every privately held numbered company operating in the province to disclose the identities of the significant shareholders in that company.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, are there any Members of the Opposition shareholders of any numbered companies? Perhaps we should all have full disclosure and ensure that if we want

transparency, it applies to everyone. I am told we should research numbered company 10718, and I leave that for others to do.

What I can say with absolute certainty as I stand here in this House, absolute certainty, that the deals that have been negotiated with Canopy are done and premised on the talented work of public servants within our province and is a result of a commitment by this government to ensure that they are performance-based and the risk is on the business to perform what they promised to do, not on the government. And that is different than deals we've seen from across the way.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about transparency – and we heard Members opposite also reference democratic reform and we've been discussing that – political donations always come into mind. I am told that 24 numbered companies donated to their campaigns in 2011. So will they disclose the shareholders of those companies? What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: I can tell you, if we want full transparency then I encourage all Members of this House to bring the truth forward. I've got nothing to hide. Members opposite here, Members of this government have nothing to hide. Do Members of the Opposition have anything to hide?

It's very important, Mr. Speaker – as I close I will say this, that there is no upfront loan and no upfront grant. There's no money advanced to Canopy or anyone else.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, when I came into office I didn't ask for any special treatments or any type of arrangements, whether it be land or anything else. I can tell you that we always premised our decision making on what is right for the people that we represent and what is best for the taxpayer. It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that we inherited the large deficit that we did without being told by the Members opposite what it was.

Despite the mess that was left behind, we've seen record investment attracted to the province

in mining, in oil and gas, in aquaculture, in agriculture and in technology. These are the investments that we're making as a government. We heard aspersions casted upon the Marystown Shipyard. I am shocked that there is such a lack of an appetite by Members opposite for economic development outside of the overpass. Even within, Mr. Speaker, we hear criticisms from across the way on deals like S&P Data, hundreds of jobs right here in the city, 500 jobs. Yet, we hear a deal with the Marystown Shipyard and we hear Members opposite saying the Town of Marystown is not capable – not capable.

I can guarantee Members opposite and the people of this province that the aspersions being casted by the Members opposite are untrue. I am certain that the deals that we are making are in the best interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. And I will reiterate, once again, there is no upfront grant, nor upfront loan, or upfront investment of any kind by the provincial government relating to the cannabis industry.

Would the Members opposite, Mr. Speaker, prefer that they ship them in on container ships and create no jobs whatsoever here in Newfoundland and Labrador? That is the alternative. Is this what they're suggesting?

That's their job plan, Mr. Speaker, ship it in, no jobs created here, or ship the ferries to Romania to have them built. This government will always put the people of Newfoundland and Labrador first –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BROWNE: – and protect the taxpayer and shoulder them from the risk. That is exactly what we have done, Mr. Speaker, and I can guarantee you we will continue it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune to close the debate on the PMR.

Thank you.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The temperature is getting pretty heated in here this afternoon. We must be hitting a nerve. The conversation has been a bit baffling and it's really unfortunate that Members opposite do not understand that lost taxes are lost revenue to the public purse. It might not be an upfront expenditure of money out the door, but it's \$40 million that's not coming in to the public purse, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: And everyone else in Newfoundland and Labrador can understand that except the Members opposite. Baffling!

I would like to thank everybody, though, who did take the opportunity to rise and speak to this important bill. I truly hope that we will see everybody stand in support of this motion.

I do want to say, though, the Member for Bonavista, in his speech, talked about former political appointments. I would like to remind him that it was the current Liberal government who promised to do things differently and, boy, have they ever let us down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: The types of things that you hear slung across the way, mudslinging, gutter politics that we, on this side of the House, are trying to say goodbye to, Mr. Speaker –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: – but the Members opposite are trying desperately to maintain. Diversion and deflection will not fool the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: I'm also going to say, Mr. Speaker, there's a quote that sticks in my mind: You are what you do, not what you say you'll do. Actions speak louder than words.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: I also want to assure the Minister of TCII that we on this side of the House have far more confidence in the ability of Newfoundland and Labrador entrepreneurs than they do. We would have ensured fair and equal opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador investors. I would also like to say having a record of the highest number of bankruptcies ever in the history of the province is not a record to be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

They almost seem to imply that if they don't do this deal with Canopy, there would have been no jobs created. Well, let me tell you, we have more confidence and there would have been entrepreneurs in Newfoundland and Labrador that would gladly have bid on a \$1 million dollar tax break, let alone \$40 million, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: That is what I have to say in rebuttal to some of the stuff that came from across the way. I'm going to get focused back now on the key messages I wanted to talk about, Mr. Speaker.

That is this bill is about openness and accountability. It's about the people's money. It's about fair and equitable treatment for all. I'll say it again: Many, many, many Newfoundland and Labrador entrepreneurs would have loved the opportunity to bid. So, why wasn't there an RFP? No one knows. And if they would only be open about who is hiding behind the veil, maybe we'd have an answer to that, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to say –

MR. MITCHELMORE: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation on a point of order.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, in Newfoundland and Labrador, we're open for business. Anybody can apply; we have done multiple contracts –

MR. SPEAKER: There's no point of order. I'd remind the minister to please not waste the time of the House.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, because this matter is very, very important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve to know.

I also want to make the comment, the Member for Windsor Lake, I'm so thankful that he now sits in this hon. House. He personifies the meaning of honesty and integrity, and he's certainly given me a renewed fire in my belly that there is potential to restore honesty in government. He will lead the way.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: And we're not too far away from it, Mr. Speaker.

The Liberal government that promised to abide by a high standard in terms of transparency, accountability and fairness has let us down. The Premier opposite came into his role as leader saying his first priority would be a stronger access to information law; came into this role on the basis of a red book that had, as its very first promise, a commitment to restoring openness, transparency and accountability.

That was Chapter 1, and here's a direct quote: "Liberals strongly believe that government must be open, transparent, and accountable. The people of the province deserve to know how and why government decisions are made."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: "When government is not open, transparent and accountable, Newfoundlanders

and Labradorians are denied their right to the democracy they deserve."

Mr. Speaker, they have failed miserably on the commitment they have made in their red book. Every one of the commitments on that first page, in fact, of the red book, was broken. Section 1.1 talked about taking politics out of government appointments, and the Member for Bonavista got up and talked a lot about the past, and I remind him again that it was –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: – the Liberal government who promised to take politics out of government appointments. They set up an Independent Appointments Commission that serves as nothing but a smokescreen, since there's absolutely no requirement in the new law for the Cabinet to accept any of the Commission's recommendations, or to disclose when it has ignored those recommendations and engaged in patronage. No one will ever know, and that's why the legislation is not credible.

We know, from the flurry of patronage appointments, even to the head of the Public Service Commission, and to the chief non-partisan post of the public service, that this government is not living up to the promises they made in 2015. If they will engage in such patronage openly when everyone can see what they have done and who they have appointed, what might they be doing under the cloak of darkness, in the shadows where no one can really see what's going on? That's the reason for disclosure, Mr. Speaker, and that's the reason for the spotlight of accountability.

This kind of behaviour reflects poorly on the House and government, politics and democracy in our province in general. It is no wonder people fail to show up at the polling stations by the tens of thousands when they believe that the politicians they elect are only out for themselves and those who give them money.

Unethical behaviour, Mr. Speaker, particularly by those who promise to do better, is undermining confidence in the institutions at the

heart of our democracy. The only way to restore confidence is to tighten the rules –

MR. KING: A point of order.

MS. PERRY: – to remove the opportunities and to treat the public Treasury as a partisan (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Bonavista, on a point of order.

MR. KING: The Member opposite from Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, under 49, reference to the government as unethical, I request that she take those comments back.

MR. SPEAKER: No, I don't see a point of order.

I'd ask the Member to please conclude.

We have 7 minutes and 35 seconds to go, Members. Let's see if we can get through it.

MR. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The monies in the public Treasury belong to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, not the privileged few whose friends hold the keys. The public Treasury ought to be guarded from any possibility of corruption or whiff of scandal. And I'm not saying this about this government, I'm saying this about all governments. We should all want this government and future governments to behave in such a manner, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. DEMPSTER: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Section 49, but I did just hear the Member use a word that I actually was expelled from the House for using back in 2013. So I ask you to take that under advisement or ask her to withdraw the comment. It was unparliamentary language.

MR. SPEAKER: Unfortunately, I did not hear the word.

I ask the Member to continue, please.

MS. PERRY: They're really (inaudible) my time.

We need to post guards at the entrances of the Treasury, and the most –

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry.

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

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if I can say the word. Am I allowed to say the word in saying what I heard? But I'm not chewing up her time. We have rules in this House that we follow. It was unparliamentarily. I paid the price for it, and I believe that the same rules should apply to everyone. The word was corruption, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I tell you what I'll do, is I'll undertake to look at *Hansard* and report back to the House. In the meantime, six minutes to go.

I ask the Member to please continue.

Thank you.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And corruption is used in terms of the dictionary, not directed at any person, Mr. Speaker.

We need to post guards at the entrances of the Treasury, and the most effective guardian is the law requiring transparency. We need to require the people who conduct business with government to reveal themselves. That's the purpose of the lobbyist legislation that a Tory government introduced and it's the purpose of this resolution that we are bringing forward today. I trust and hope that all Members opposite will do the right thing and support it, Mr. Speaker.

In closing, we're soon finished, but I'll refer people who may be watching to a book called *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. In that book, Mr. Speaker, the animals liberate the farm from the enemy humans –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: – and then they set up a government of their own. But despite declaring that all animals were equal and painting the slogan in huge letters on the side of the barn, the pigs found a way of the animals on the farm to ensure that they were the ones who got a little bit extra in the community of the animals.

The moral of the story, Mr. Speaker, is that – and I guess I want to talk about it because that’s where the term pork-barrel politics comes from.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: It’s about the moral of the story, Mr. Speaker. They said they were going to take over to make things better, but at the end of the day they deemed they were better than the cows and they were better than the chickens.

Mr. Speaker, that’s what George Orwell’s book is about, and everyone should read it because it is terrible that we have a situation in this hon. House today where promises have been made but not kept. There’s an illusion of openness and transparency but a failure to deliver, and people in this province deserve better from their politicians.

I will close by saying once again, each and every Newfoundlander and Labradorian should have been given fair and equal opportunity to a \$40 million tax break, Mr. Speaker. That’s all we ask is for openness and accountability for better governance, and we truly trust that all Members will stand in support of this resolution because every Member here, if they truly believe in openness and transparency, should have no issue with this resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Is the House ready for the question?

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, Motion 1?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Division, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Division has been called.

I ask the Whips to please call in their Members.

Division

MR. SPEAKER: I’m looking to the Whips, are they ready?

Whips on the Opposition side ready, yes?

Check with my staff.

On the question of the motion, all those in favour of the motion, please rise.

CLERK (Barnes): Mr. Crosbie, Mr. Hutchings, Mr. Brazil, Ms. Perry, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Petten, Mr. Lester, Ms. Michael, Mr. Lane.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. Andrew Parsons, Ms. Coady, Mr. Haggie, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Mitchelmore, Ms. Gambin-Walsh, Mr. Warr, Mr. Davis, Mr. Edmunds, Ms. Haley, Mr. Letto, Mr. Browne, Mr. Bragg, Mr. Bennett, Mr. King, Ms. Pam Parsons, Ms. Parsley, Mr. Dean.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes, nine, and the nays, 20.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion has been defeated.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: (Inaudible) that the House now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have a seconder? Do you have a seconder, Sir?

MR. A. PARSONS: I'll second that motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, and in accordance with Standing Order 9, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock.