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*Speaker: Honourable Scott Reid, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will hear Members' statements from the hon. Members for the Districts of Harbour Main, Windsor Lake, St. John's Centre, Topsail - Paradise, Placentia West - Bellevue, and it's my understanding that the Member for Burin - Grand Bank is seeking leave to present a Member's statement as well.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is with great pleasure that I share with all hon. Members how a church group in the District of Harbour Main transformed the lonely times of the pandemic into something quite extraordinary for seniors.

The elderly, in particular, have been deeply impacted by COVID-19 and have felt the psychological toll of the quarantine and isolation. St. Peter's Anglican Church in Upper Gullies immediately recognized this vulnerability and were determined to find ways to get the seniors in their congregation connected despite social distancing measures.

They recognized the importance of educating their elderly on technology, so with the guidance of a 17-year-old tech wizard, designed and created a program to help and assist seniors on how to use all the modern-day applications. The church group was delighted when they received a grant from Advanced Education, Skills and Labour in support of this initiative.

It is heartwarming to hear some of the finer moments of the pandemic when an 82-year-old lady, like a pro, turns on her iPad at her kitchen table every Sunday morning and tunes in on Facebook Live to attend the local church service.

I ask all Members of this House to join me in paying tribute to St. Peter's Anglican Church in

Upper Gullies for their innovation and the loving concern they have shown for their elders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mother Teresa said: Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love. Sometimes, something as simple as picking up a piece of trash can be a tremendous act of respect for the environment and love for the world we all share.

For over 25 years, Walter Harding, his wife, Kimberly, and a dedicated core of volunteers have waged a quiet war against litter in St. John's. Members of this enthusiastic team are: Jill Bruce, Shirley Parsons, Anna Penney, Donna Imhoff, Ernie Walsh and Rod Pomeroy.

Walter has been organizing neighbourhood cleanups – often at his own expense – throughout the metro region. So far this year, Walter and his team have collected 300 of their annual 1,000-bag goal. In pre-COVID times, Walter normally organized 20 to 40 volunteers for weekend cleanups throughout the spring. For now, it's just him and his wife. A pointless exercise? After all, it's not their litter. But to Walter and his team it's their world and their problem to solve. It's a labour of love.

I ask hon. Members of this House to join me in recognizing the great work of Walter Harding and his team. I challenge us to go one step further: commit to picking up one piece of trash a day. Let's all be a little more like Walter.

Thank you.

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

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

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

From May 2 to 9, Louise and Bernie Mercer of the beautiful District of Topsail - Paradise held a food drive to honour their late children's birthday. Alex and Riley Mercer both shared the same birthdate. Though years apart, both were lost to a rare form of brain cancer: Alex, when she was in elementary school and Riley as a teenager. Both parents wanted to do something special for their birthdays and also wanted it to be a community event. Thus, seven years ago SOAR was born – the Spirit of Alex and Riley.

The food drive, headquartered every year at the Salvation Army Church in Long Pond, has been embraced by residents as a way to honour the Mercer family's courage and grace, and give back to the community by supporting the efforts of the food bank. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mercers held a virtual birthday where they accepted monetary donations, raising \$27,905 that went directly to the CBS/Paradise Community Food Bank. The Mercers said that as long as there is a need in the community, they will continue this as a way of thanking the community and as a way for those who helped them in their time of need.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Mercers for what they do for their community and to say what a wonderful and beautiful tribute to Alex and Riley.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Windsor Lake.

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

I pay tribute to the MacMorran Community Centre who stayed operational during this difficult time and continued to operate its food bank to provide the essentials for those in their community.

In coordination with local restaurants, they ensured hot meals were provided throughout the neighbourhood on a weekly basis. Staff connected with those in need on an ongoing basis to ensure their food and supplies were met during the pandemic. Staff put together comfort and activity kits for seniors and school children,

which were delivered on an ongoing basis. Finally, staff worked with the schools to ensure that educational work was distributed to the children in the community.

The MacMorran Community Centre stands out not only as a beacon of hope and compassion, but is a prime example of the tireless work of the dedicated staff and volunteers in my district and in our province to the most vulnerable in our society.

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

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

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

Today, I speak of a remarkable young man from my District of Placentia West - Bellevue: Blake Colbran, a youth who beautifully represents the Town of Marystown. Blake has strived through more personal hardship than should be allocated to any person, and has done so with a soaring attitude.

Blake has most recently received the Horatio Alger Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to full-time students in their final year of high school with financial challenges and who have demonstrated integrity and perseverance in overcoming adversity, a commitment to pursue a post-secondary education, a desire to contribute to society and a good academic record. Blake has most deservedly received \$5,000 to assist with his academic studies.

Mr. Speaker, this is not all that Blake has received. Blake is also the recipient of the Joyce Family Foundation bursary, a bursary which is endowed upon students enrolled in full-time studies of a recognized college or university in Canada, which are based on financial need and to increase the participation of disadvantaged or at-risk youth who face obstacles and barriers to a post-secondary education. Blake has received a \$20,000 bursary to assist in his studies.

I would like this hon. house to show their appreciation and give praise to such an outstanding accomplishment of Mr. Blake Colbran. He is a man that definitely has a bright future ahead of him.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burin - Grand Bank with leave.

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

It is with a heavy heart I speak today of a devastating loss, not only to the Town of St. Lawrence but the province as a whole.

On May 25, the fishing vessel the *Sarah Anne*, with crew members Eddie Joe, Scott and Jody Norman and Isaac Kettle, left port for the fishing grounds. Tragically, it would be their last trip and four of St. Lawrence's fine citizens taken by the sea.

While the bodies of Eddie Joe, Scott and Jody were soon recovered, and despite long days of searching and heartache, it wasn't until June 6 that Isaac's body was recovered and brought back home. We are so thankful to those who searched and offered closure.

Mr. Speaker, another chapter written in St. Lawrence's long history of tragedy as generations of native sons and daughters have taken to the sea or gone underground to earn a living, too often with tragic results.

St. Lawrence is grieving, and the grieving of one is the grieving of all. As is their custom, the good people of St. Lawrence have come together to comfort and support the families.

I ask all hon. Members to keep the Norman and Kettle families in their thoughts and prayers, and pray also for those who "go to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

Saturday, June 20, officially marks the first day of summer. Throughout the season, thousands of motorists will travel over our provincial roadways to enjoy all that our province has to offer.

As the province continues to learn and live with COVID-19 and as residents travel and vacation at home this summer, I strongly encourage all motorists to keep the following simple rules top of mind so we can avoid senseless tragedies on our highways.

Don't drink and drive. Don't use your cellphone while driving and don't text and drive. Adhere to posted speed limits, slow down in construction zones and make sure you reduce your speed when roads are wet or during foggy conditions. Wear your seat belt. Stay alert and do not drive fatigued or distracted. It almost seems too silly to mention, Mr. Speaker, but I think it's important to remind people.

Mr. Speaker, this is also an important time to remind all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that it is illegal to operate any type of motorized vehicle if your ability to drive is impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Last year, motor vehicle collisions claimed approximately 2,000 lives in Canada, between five and six people a day. In addition, almost 10,000 more were seriously injured. Most of these collisions were preventable.

Public safety is a top priority for government and we will continue to make improvements in the *Highway Traffic Act* to help make our roads and highways safer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, to hear that 2,000 people lost their lives and 10,000 others were injured in

collisions in our country last year is distressing. To know that most of these collisions were preventable makes it more sad and senseless.

It is often said that road safety is a shared responsibility. Mr. Speaker, as people start getting back on the roads in our province, we must be mindful of our safe driving practices, of others using the roadways and, of course, weather and road conditions.

Mr. Speaker, safety should be everyone's priority. I encourage all those using our roads – motorists, construction crews, cyclists, runners and pedestrians – to stay safe.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**MR. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

I join with the minister in recommending and reminding people to stay safe on the provincial highways this summer. I would also advise people to make sure they stay aware of our road conditions, watch out for moose and other wildlife on the highways and avoid, if possible, driving at night.

In the summer of the COVID pandemic, government is advising people to take a staycation. An excellent idea, but when rediscovering our beautiful province, stay safe and keep your eyes on the road.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

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

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

I rise in this hon. House to encourage all residents to vacation in our beautiful province this summer as we continue to learn to live with COVID-19.

As restrictions have eased, the call to action is simple, to get out and explore the place we love and call home.

In the very near future, we will be launching our new marketing campaign, one that is about our unparalleled pride of this place. Our heart swells when we talk about home, which is more than just a house and family – it's a place, it's a state of mind. And for us, it's the entire province.

To discover more about the unique story of our home, I urge travellers to consider experiencing our many hiking and walking trails, parks and museums. Discover one of our 11 provincial historic sites opening in July, or learn more about those local registered attractions and experiences at one of our six Visitor Information Centres opening this month.

Mr. Speaker, by vacationing in our province, we are supporting hard hit, registered tourism businesses such as attractions, craft shops, restaurants and licensed accommodators. These businesses and their employees are our friends, our neighbours and our families. They connect us to this place, our roots and to our culture. And this summer they need our help. To learn more about these businesses that are registered and licensed in our province, please visit: [newfoundlandlabrador.com](http://newfoundlandlabrador.com).

I encourage everyone to start making their vacation at home plans, because like so many in this province, there's no place I would rather be than here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**MR. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, this summer I will be vacationing in our province, and I look forward to exploring

many coves and communities to which I've never visited before.

I'm happy to hear that the department will be launching a new staycation marketing plan; however, I suggest to the minister that this campaign should have been launched weeks ago. As people plan their vacations in advance, I worry that this announcement may be a little too late for the industry.

Mr. Speaker, our tourism industry is in trouble because of this public health pandemic. The industry's activities for the season have been severely and negatively impacted and it is unknown how the tourism market will respond next year. For these reasons, I believe the Premier needs to make an announcement regarding the Atlantic tourism bubble sooner rather than later.

If our province is to be a part of it, our tourism operators need to market their establishments in other Atlantic provinces now to prompt people to come visit us this summer and to bring revenue into our province.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

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

A marketing plan will be a great boost for many businesses that rely on tourism. Hopefully, the plan will encourage more people from the Island to travel to Labrador.

All Labradorians have been to Newfoundland, but most Newfoundland residents have never been to Labrador. This is a good time to come see the historic communities and breathtaking scenery of the Big Land.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to inform this hon. House of recent actions taken by the department to make highways safer for children, parents and teachers walking on provincial roads in school zones.

Earlier this week, digital speed signs that display the speed of motorists travelling over the speed limit and warns them to slow down began being installed in school zones on provincial roads. As of today, 10 signs have been installed and by the end of August we anticipate that 165 signs will be installed in 81 schools zones. Mr. Speaker, in addition to showing speed and issuing a warning, the digital signs also display a second flashing message to motorists travelling in excess of 10 kilometers above the speed limit.

These signs are similar to those you may have seen in school zones on municipal roads. We have also been using them on some highways in our province and we know they are quite effective in promoting highway safety and reminding motorists to slow down.

Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the province's school districts for their work on this initiative. This initiative will now lead to a safer environment for everyone walking in school zones. However, we will also take this opportunity to remind motorists that it is important to drive responsibly and cautiously, and encourage all motorists to pay attention to all signs and slow down on all of our highways.

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, I have said many times before, we welcome and support all initiatives

that increase road safety for all individuals using our roadways. Children and others walking to and from school can be some of the most vulnerable.

Digital display speed signs can be very useful tools, and we are certainly glad to see the government finally taking advantage of this technology in installing these signs in the school zones throughout our province. Mr. Speaker, while we are pleased to see these measures to help ensure the safety of our children, we would also encourage government to look at some other initiatives, such as the 1.6 busing policy and speed limit reduction signs in all school zones across the province.

I would like to make this point on our last day before the summer. I've lobbied for this for several years and the minister can attest to it. I believe we should have reduced speed limits on all provincial roads that run in school zones. We don't. It's not a policy and I call on government to change that.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**MR. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for an advance copy of the statement.

I welcome the installation of more digital signs in school zones. It's a great first step forward.

When schools are located on our highways every effort should be made to ensure that our students are safe going and coming from schools, whether they are walking on the shoulder or trying to cross the highway. I advise all motorists to heed these signs to ensure they slow down in school zones. Safety of our children is the highest priority and initiatives like this increase safety, so let's do more like this.

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, in a statement yesterday, Dominion Bond Rating said that in the absence of a fiscal and economic update and uncertainty about federal support, a negative trend on long-term bond ratings is warranted.

Has this helped the government to beat a retreat on the increase in judges' pay?

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

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

As the Member should know, that would have absolutely nothing to do with the resolution that has been tabled and reported to this House. What has been done here is not only constitutionally required, it's statutorily required, so that's what we've done here. As the Member should know, that would have no consideration in the decisions that have been made, especially by the tribunal, which again had this evidence some time ago.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Mr. Speaker, thank you.

An emergency physician told me the department doesn't know what happened to all the heart attacks over the last three months.

Does the Minister of Health have an estimate of excess heart- and stroke-related deaths during the lockdown?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, a very important question around care not related to COVID-19.

I'm pleased to be able to report to the House that over the period up to the middle of May through COVID there were no deaths on the cardiac wait-list at all, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** I thank the minister for that partial glimpse into the question because it refers to the wait-list.

I was in the Health Sciences as a designated visitor last weekend and a surgeon told me a patient died that morning before they could complete the COVID protocol and give crash therapy. The surgeon also thought there's no evidence of virus in the province and the continued lockdown contributed to the death.

What does the minister have to say to the family of a deceased person such as this?

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

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

The issue of managing acute health care during a pandemic like this has challenged us in ways that we have not been used to. Quite frankly, the protocols that are in place are based on public health and infection and prevention control advice. As the situation has improved across the province in terms of prevalence of the disease, those changes, those restrictions, those requirements for PPE and changes in the way business is done are slowly being relaxed. As of next week, we will be back to pretty well routine activities in the health care system, the only caveat being to preserve some beds in case of a surge.

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.

Trades NL have said that a staggering 90 per cent of their 18,000 members are without work, while outside workers continue to work on the Core Science building at MUN, Corner Brook hospital and long-term care facilities in Central Newfoundland.

Why is the government continuing to sit on their hands while much-needed jobs are going to outside workers?

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the question.

We're not sitting on our hands. We have done more, I would say, in actually monitoring work job sites in this province over the last number of years than any other jurisdictions or any other government in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Currently, there are 95 per cent of the employees on these projects in this province from the province. There are 371 people right now working on TW projects in this province; 353 of them are actually from the province. I've talked to Mr. King at Trades NL as recently as yesterday. We're seeing some new language since COVID coming in from other jurisdictions when it comes trade-related issues around workers and we're exploring that information along with Trades NL and Mr. King. We look forward to continuing that conversation, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

That's not new news. We spoke about this in the House last month. Your actions need to match your words, Mr. Speaker, and in this case his inaction is deafening.



The minister continues to make excuses for government's inactions in the past.

Will the minister stand with our caucus and Trades NL and commit here and now to a local hiring policy on all future government infrastructure projects?

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and again I thank the hon. Member for the question.

You can see the actions that this government has taken. Just recently my colleague the Minister of Service NL brought in the procurement regulations with a 10 per cent buffer for Newfoundland and Labrador companies, Mr. Speaker. The reality is here – and I've had this conversation with my colleague the Minister of Service NL and others – if we're going to be giving buffers or additional room for companies in this province, we expect them to be hiring Newfoundland and Labrador workers, 100 per cent. That is something we're looking at. We're reviewing legislation right now.

Mr. Speaker, when you think about mobility in a workforce, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians we've benefited, I guess, for generation after generation of mobility. We don't want to be putting up walls that eliminate mobility, but I can tell you one thing, as we see challenges around mobility in other provinces, we will certainly follow suit with as strong or stronger rules.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

**MR. TIBBS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let's bring this back to the ground roots. This government prides itself on having 95 per cent of their work done locally. The 5 per cent work done by outside workers in Grand

Falls-Windsor long-term health care centre are plumbers and sheet-metal workers.

I ask the minister: Do we not have enough out-of-work plumbers and sheet-metal workers in this province, and what is your message to them?

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

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

Any time we see these numbers we actually go back to the companies and inquire why we see that. There is a variety of reasons. We don't appreciate or we don't want people coming in from other provinces. Again, Mr. Speaker, I think the Member behind me would actually be somebody who, from what I know, has been a worker that's benefited from worker mobility within our country. It's something we've long had in this country. It runs with our trade agreements in this country and lots of times there are provinces out there, and jurisdictions, that want to talk about increasing worker mobility.

We want to be able to have a mobile workforce, but we will take the actions necessary to make sure that Newfoundlander and Labradorians are the ones – of all the policies I've reviewed in this country, Mr. Speaker, I have not seen one yet that would get us close to a 95 per cent Newfoundland and Labrador component in the work sites.

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

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

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

I continue to hear from constituents who are substitute teachers who feel forgotten by this government. Since Snowmageddon and COVID-19 many have not worked since Christmas and many are now looking outside the province for employment opportunities.

The minister has spoken to school starting in the fall with split classes and staggered learning.

I ask the responsible minister: Does he see us as having enough staff to do so?

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

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

I'd certainly like to address the Member's concerns with regard to substitute teachers. As I've said in this House several times, it's not lost on me the importance of substitute teachers. They play a huge part in the educational system here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Just this morning I had the opportunity, again, to address the issue with my MP, in my particular part of the district, Mr. Speaker, the issue of substitute teachers which I review with him each and every week.

Mr. Speaker, this is not only a Newfoundland and Labrador issue, this is an issue right across the country and I will continue to do what I can, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that the word is out on substitute teachers. We'll continue to work with our federal partners on developing a program to help them.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm getting many calls from harvesters in my district who are still without any details on critical programs announced by the federal government to provide assistance. There's been no response from the federal MPs.

Minister, will you intervene to get these answers, these critical details, so the harvesters can access these programs?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This is a really important question and it's one of the reasons why I continue to meet with the federal minister on a weekly basis to discuss not only the issues of harvesters but plant workers and plant owners. There have been a number of federal programs that have been initiated, which will be of great assistance to our industry and to the national industry, but what I am most focused on is making sure that our provincial harvesters, plant workers and plant owners have access to these programs.

I was one of the first to highlight the fact that in the federal government's program for harvesters, plant workers were totally exempt. There was no direction or no strategy in place for plant workers. I'm assured that when it comes to plant workers, there will be a program, but, Mr. Speaker, I'm keeping the federal government's feet to the fire on this. We need a program for our industry, it is too important for each and every one of us.

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

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

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Mr. Speaker, last fall the Minister of AESL was found guilty of gross mismanagement with taxpayers' dollars, yet he was allowed to remain in Cabinet. On the other hand, the Minister of Service NL's position in Cabinet was vacated, based on an allegation.

I ask the Premier: Why the double standard?

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

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

No double standard, the report was issued to the House of Assembly to be dealt with, in the first instance that the Member speaks about, and that issue was dealt with in the House of Assembly through the normal processes, and the apology and the recommendations of what led to the address to this House. That was all carried out by the minister that she speaks about. I'm surprised that she would bring that up since she was part of those discussions.

The second instance that we talk about, it was a much different situation, Mr. Speaker. As you know, I'm not going to get into the details of this. It's all on public record.

Right now, once the issue and the investigation has been dealt with and the decision, Mr. Speaker, will be made by me. I made it quite clear if this investigation that we're talking about clears the individual then she would go back into Cabinet.

It's unfortunate that needs to be raised (inaudible).

**MR. SPEAKER:** The time is expired for an answer.

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

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

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we're very well aware of the report, but I don't think the Premier understood the question.

The evidence was unequivocal of an ethical misconduct by one minister, yet he was kept in Cabinet. The Premier had a choice, but he readily accepted the resignation of a female Cabinet minister who had an accusation – no finding of guilt against her.

Again, I ask the question: Why the double standard?

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

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

Once again I think in all actual fact what we're seeing here – and the Member is quite clear, given her background and knowledge of what would happen in these investigations. I'm not here to get into the details of this. I'm sure this is probably something that the Member opposite would like to see happen, but that would be breaking a number of privacy rules and a number of questions around transparency.

I can't imagine that someone who sits on the other side of the House in Opposition today,

especially a woman, would want me to actually be publicly disclosing what's happening.

As I said quite clearly, there is no double standard here. In one case, the report was given to this House, it was given to this House to be dealt with. It was dealt with.

Secondly, on the other investigation, once that's dealt with, as Premier of this province, I will make that decision and I will make it then quite clear.

I've already said if the investigation is cleared, the Member would be back in Cabinet.

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

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

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Mr. Speaker, as critic for the Status of Women I have rights to ask these important questions. There is a real perception of gender bias in this government, and the Premier needs to address those concerns by the public.

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

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

Well, I would be very clear in my position as Premier, since I'm the only Premier in this country, the only jurisdiction in this country that has set aside a department clearly and exclusively dedicated to issues around the status of women.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** So if there is a bias that the Member opposite is referring to, it's bias to make sure that we get more women in leadership roles. I would say, Mr. Speaker, we need more of that and I would expect all Members of the House to actually support this initiative. In a year or so, whenever that is, we're going to see more people step up for leadership. I hope there's a lot more women in the next Assembly in this House of Assembly.

There will be one seat that will be vacant in my own district that I hope some woman steps up to run for.

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

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

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Again, Mr. Speaker, as critic for the Status of Women, I asked the question why there are not more women running for politics and for public office.

I wonder if that will increase when we have the Premier not answering the direct questions about perceived bias in the government with respect to gender.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Well, the questions early on with this ongoing question and answer period was directed to me, so it's only fair that when the questions are directed to me, that I would answer them. I think the Member clearly understands that because it was her words.

For me right now, Mr. Speaker, I'll do whatever I can, while my time in politics, and even after in an elected role, to promote more women in leadership. I would ask you, just go look at my own business experience and you will find out that the majority of the people that were working in any of the businesses that I've operated in the past or any of the organizations that I work with, far outweighs the number of women in leadership roles.

I would suggest to the Member opposite to go look at the key leaders that we have in government right now and you will see we have put an emphasis on making sure that we have more women in leadership roles in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Our records speak for themselves. I would suggest, look around your own caucus and you can ask yourself the very same question.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Mr. Speaker, earlier in his answer to one of my colleagues, the Minister of Health alluded to the potential for the health care system to get back to normal with the new Alert Level, but this time of year is normally a time of year when regional health authorities actually close beds to allow for staff to take much-needed vacations.

I ask the minister: Are the regional health authorities planning on bed closures this summer, and will the dedicated health care workers get their vacation they so desperately need?

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

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

I would use this opportunity just to, once again, thank the health care workers of this province for what they have done above and beyond over the last little while.

The Member with his background raises a very important point. We have a balance here between the needs of a backlog and wait-lists and the usual expectation of family vacation time as schools finish and we enter the summer. That has been a topic of discussion with the regional health authorities and will continue to be so. It will be informed, I think, by my discussions next week with the Medical Association and the CEOs.

Somewhere in the middle is a balance to make sure that we have healthy, well-rested staff and yet deal with the issues the people of this province face with health care.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

**MR. WAKEHAM:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have been told here that the actual return to normality for people on those wait-lists that have been cancelled could take up to 18 months.

I ask the minister: Is that true, that it could be up to 18 months before we actually take care of the backlog? If so, what will you do to speed that up?

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

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

I have not been given a figure by the regional health authorities. We, indeed, are still in discussions as the bulk of the wait-lists material is actually held in certain areas in private physicians' offices. The next key, sort of education piece from my point of view, would be to get hold of that through the NLMA in my meeting next week. Thereafter, we would be in a better position to assess the magnitude of the backlog.

At the moment, we cannot put a time frame on when it's going to be cleared up, and 18 months is a figure that seems to have just appeared out of the ether. I haven't heard that.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

My district and all of Labrador has suffered the effects of systemic racism; systemic harming all aspects of quality of life including our health care. COVID has exposed the impacts of this systemic racism, denying access to essential services. Our people often have to wait years to see the right specialist and then receive the proper treatment. Now, they are waiting with no word when their surgeries will be rescheduled; life-saving surgeries in a lot of the times.

I'm asking: Mr. Minister, do you support this lack of communication?

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

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

We have, over my mandate, made really concerted efforts, which I think quite frankly have been appreciated by the Indigenous groups with whom I've met, to incorporate traditional knowledge, traditional healing into, particularly, our mental health and addictions work. I think that's an example of how we can and should do business going forward.

Urgent cases have been dealt with as they arose. Elective cases are going to be contacted as part of Level 2, which I have now been told will be next week.

If the Member has any specific challenges with one of her constituents, I'd be only too happy to look into it for her, but this should start to ease up over the next little while, Mr. Speaker, with Level 2.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

**MR. PARROTT:** Mr. Speaker, I've been bombarded by calls from seniors in my district and families who can't get home support assessments for personal care homes or home support.

I ask the minister: What is the plan to speed up this backlog?

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

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

With the move to Level 3, the backlog is being addressed. Urgent placements continued throughout the pandemic and were not interrupted. And as Level 2 comes, these assessments will become more and more frequent. A lot of the preliminary work can

actually now, because of some changes, take place virtually or by phone if we can organize that, bearing in mind the challenges of the individuals concerned.

This is work that will come with the transition from Level 3 to Level 2 and is anticipated to start fully next week, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

On May 7, I communicated to Health and Community Services about a constituent who was diagnosed with breast cancer a year ago. She had surgery and her one-year post mammogram was scheduled for April past but was postponed due to COVID. In addition, a consult with a specialist regarding nodules found on her thyroid was also postponed.

Can the minister provide more exact information as to when these backlog assessments will be addressed?

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

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

Obviously, I can only speak in generalities with that level of detail. Urgent mammograms, for example, continued throughout COVID. This would have been an issue of communication between the primary care provider and the radiologist.

Again, consults continue to be received. These were looked at by the specialist and prioritized. If they were urgent they could go ahead. If not, they were deferred, and the deferred ones were being checked, I am told, on a regular basis to make sure that anything of priority did not slip; as what may not have been urgent in May, would become urgent in June.

Those kind of situations, I am informed, were being examined regularly, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Minister, I know of a middle-aged, single dad that has been waiting for the removal of a lump since February. There are concerns that the lump could be cancerous.

What assurances can you give that person and his young family as to when he can expect this surgery in a timely manner?

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

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

These are concerns of a general kind that have been brought to the department. Essentially, this is a matter for discussion between the primary care provider, the patient and the specialist. If this was deemed urgent, it would go ahead; if it is deemed of a more routine nature, these will start in Level 3 and increase in volume in Level 2.

If there are any concerns about a particular individual, this should be conveyed to the primary care provider and thence to the specialist and it will be dealt with on the basis of clinical need, not administrative expediency.

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.

Minister, prior to COVID, we had a health care system in crisis; now it's in tatters. Many residents in my district have contacted me to

raise concerns about wait times for needed prescriptions for rheumatoid arthritis, blood tests and many other progressive medical concerns. These are health requirements that cannot be delayed.

What confidence can you give the residents that these time-sensitive services will be fast tracked?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** The Member opposite raises two really important issues and I'm going to deal with the first.

I reject utterly the concept that the health care system is in tatters. That is an insult – it really is – to the people who have worked long and hard to keep this system amongst the best in Canada. Look around you and see what's happened out there. We have had the lowest hospitalization rates for COVID, we have had the lowest ICU rates for COVID and we have had the lowest death rates for COVID of a lot of jurisdictions, and it is not in tatters.

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

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

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

For the benefit of ministers today, all our questions can be answered with a simple –

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

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

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

For the benefit of ministers today, all our questions can be answered with a simple yes or no.

I ask the Minister of Labour: Will he work with the Federation of Labour to make the changes to labour standards and workers' compensation legislation stipulated by the federal government

as a condition of their budgetary contribution to our province?

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member opposite for the question.

We work very closely with the Federation of Labour. I actually have a meeting with the president again tomorrow as part of a routine discussion that we have on important matters of labour here in this province. The federal government has identified paid sick leave as something that they would like to pursue and that's of provincial jurisdiction.

We will continue to have dialogue with the stakeholders on this particular matter and look forward to all of the dialogue. Whenever we talk about labour matters, it's very important that we always balance the employee and employer relationship.

Thank you for the question today.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

I ask the Minister of Labour: Will he protect our workers from multinational companies' union-busting tactics to bring forward anti-replacement worker legislation?

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

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

I thank the Member opposite for the question when it comes to labour legislation that we would have here in this particular province.

We understand that as responsible for the Labour Relations Agency, whenever there are matters and whenever there are disputes when it comes to labour, we would be able to provide

support when it comes to mediation and conciliation services here in this province. And we continue to offer those services to the people today as they would need it.

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

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, substitute teachers are a vital part of our education system. They are also a vulnerable group of professionals who depend on schools being open to earn a living. The suspension of in-class instruction has placed them at financial risk and may cause some of them to consider leaving the profession.

I ask the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development: Will he put in supports to keep substitute teachers in the profession so that our education system will continue to function efficiently?

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

**MR. WARR:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for his questions and his concerns with substitute teachers.

As I've previously said, Mr. Speaker, that is not lost me. It's not lost on the education system here within Newfoundland and Labrador. It's not lost on the district as well. And certainly, as I said earlier, we've had discussions with our federal colleagues. I've had additional discussions with members of CMEC. This is not only a provincial issue, this is a national issue, and it's one that I hope we can get cleared up really soon.

Mr. Speaker, it's our intention to have students back with full class instruction in September and substitute teachers will be a big part of that going forward.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, the Inuit Bachelor of Education is an exemplar of a true partnership between the Nunatsiavut Government and the MUN Faculty of Education.

I ask the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour: Will his department encourage the development of programs similar to the IBED program for other Indigenous groups to promote reconciliation and empowerment?

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

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

I think it's appropriate – this will probably be my last answer as Premier of the province – to speak to the importance of Indigenous education, Mr. Speaker, in all aspects in our education process, either the K-12 system, where the *Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes* and then the action plan subsequent to that made it a priority to make sure that in our K-to-12 system that we would include Indigenous education, also as multiculturalism – so a big focus on that within the department.

Also in post-secondary, Mr. Speaker, I know in the past days speaking with the previous president as well as speaking with the incoming president, the importance in post-secondary education, making sure that we include Indigenous issues.

It's critical to reconciliation. It's an action that I can tell you as this Premier and incoming premiers and this government will take very seriously and make sure and commit that it will be included in all aspects of our education.

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

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

**MS. COFFIN:** These are yes or no. I have three; let's see how quickly we can go.

Mr. Speaker, form is as important as function, so I ask the Ministers of Transportation and Works



and Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation will they work with our many talented local artists on the design of public buildings, spaces and infrastructure.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Thank you – this might be my last one.

As part of making sure that we include parts of our history and our culture, I think we have a responsibility to make sure that we include that in all aspects of buildings that we will actually construct in Newfoundland and Labrador. You would actually see that if you go into the new long-term care centre in Corner Brook, it speaks to this very issue.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that makes sure that we include all the things that are important in our past and present into new building designs.

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

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

The reason for this petition and the background of the petition is as follows: On July 19, 2018, Eastern Health announced that the services offered at the Portugal Cove-St. Philip's Community Health Clinic would be relocated to

Major's Path Clinic, with the transition expected to be completed September 30, 2018.

The Portugal Cove Community Health Clinic has provided public health services for decades and is the only clinic in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, a town of nearly 10,000 residents.

The clinic provides direct health care programs and services to the town on a daily basis and addresses the vital and growing needs for community health services, particularly for the increasing youth and aged population of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's.

Therefore we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to take immediate action to ensure that the services currently offered at Portugal Cove-St. Philip's and that those services that were to be put to Major's Path would stay in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's.

Mr. Speaker, we lobbied consistently – and this petition has over 3,000 names to it – to have the services not depleted within the community because of the need for the population and because our understanding from Eastern Health and all the regional health authorities would be about providing services in the communities. It would be a better return on the investment. It would be better accessibility and it would be a better opportunity for the health professionals to get a gauge on the needs of the community.

Mr. Speaker, after lobbying and protesting – and I met personally with the CEO and the chair of the regional health board – we did get an understanding that there would be a scaled-back clinic, and I mean an extremely scaled-back clinic, that would be temporary until we got to a point where we could then bring back the other services with some enhanced services. We went to the regional health authorities' AGM and had the CEO on record, in an interview with NTV, acknowledged that Portugal Cove-St. Philip's would be one of the integral parts of how they expand community health services.

Mr. Speaker, 18 months later we were hoodwinked. It's not very often that you will find the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell

Island or, I would say, the mayor of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's get hoodwinked. But we have come to an agreement; both of us got hoodwinked and so did the residents of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, because not only do we not even have the small, one-room clinic that did very minor interventions, because of the nature of that – the health professionals would have to leave Major's Path, come down. It was more of a holdover closet, as we called it.

The fact of the matter is, during the COVID even those services are now not being offered. We are now lobbying. We're adamant and we were very open to having dialogue. There's a committee set up where Eastern Health comes down, but while I compliment the health professionals, the individuals who are facilitating this process, we know it's a stall tactic. We have no idea why this process was taken away.

We were first told it was a savings of \$100,000. When I sought it with some financial people and we did the cost analysis, we realized it's going to cost \$10,000 more because we were led to believe that they owned the building that they were in. Since then we found out they lease.

They could've leased a building in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, where they were, much less than what the original cost was. The cost of a health professional's transportation to and from Major's Path to Portugal Cove-St. Philip's adds up. Not counting the 40 minutes that's lost in that transportation time. It's costly.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is not acceptable. We're asking that somebody step in, either through the Minister of Health, to Eastern Health to say you have a better way to offer health services in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's and you can still save the taxpayers' money.

We will bring this adamantly to the House of Assembly until we get restitution of those programs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

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

I'm going to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Route 450 in Humber - Bay of Islands. I was a bit late in getting the petition in. I want to thank the Clerk for allowing me to present the petition a bit later.

Mr. Speaker, as people know, we had the major flood back in 2018, January 2018, and there was a lot of work that needed to be done. There was one bridge that was done. There is a second one, Cammies Brook Bridge, now being completed.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to recognize the Minister of Transportation and Works who, yesterday, as I asked a question, received notification from the federal government that the rural and northern fund has been approved and there will be major improvements to Route 450. There'll be work around Mount Moriah, 1.2 km; Halfway Point, 1.1; John's Beach and Bennett's Cove, 2.9; Frenchman's Cove, there's 0.2; Blow Me Down Brook; Copper Mine Brook; and Route 450 from O'Connell Drive to Allen's Road and in Lewin Parkway.

I know it's been a struggle for myself and the minister working with the federal government. I have to recognize that the minister sometimes got frustrated with me, but he kept at it and there will be major improvements in the Route 450 since the flood. There is major work that needs to be done, but this work will take care of the major safety concerns in the district. I know the minister is looking at if there is any way something for Lark Harbour – no guarantees, but looking at what the cost comes in as.

I just have to recognize that, and to the residents, I know you're a bit frustrated with some of the work, but it takes time when you're doing your bridges and there's extensive work done on the bridges.

Mr. Speaker, I just have to recognize the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island who did the major bridge around Cook's Brook about three years ago. That was a major improvement for the area for safety concerns also. I just have to recognize that.

I'll just say to the minister: thanks for working with me. I know sometimes I frustrated you.

Sometimes I'm noted to keep on an issue until I get good answers, but the roads in the Humber - Bay of Islands this summer will be much safer. I just have to recognize the minister for the work that he did on it.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works with a reply to that petition.

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

I thank the hon. Member for the petition. That's a good petition.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few moments, just because of my ability to respond here actually, to send a thank you to the Department of Transportation and Works. Our engineering staff in the challenges – and all of our staff in the challenges – that we've seen in the past few months have done an outstanding job, from our security guards to our people working around the building, people working on our ferries and in our depots. I'm going to miss somebody in the department because there are 1,800 different people.

TW employees really stepped up during COVID and stayed on the job when a lot of people weren't able to come to work. I want to thank them for the work that they've done.

We have a tremendous Roads Plan this year for the circumstances that we find ourselves under. We have work on Route 60, work on Route 10, 450, 430, 75, 210, 220 and 90. Mr. Speaker, for the type of year we're going through – and our road building industry for the work that they're out starting to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Three times is the charm.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these are the reasons for the petition:

WHEREAS the individual residents and municipal leaders, including the Joint Council of Conception Bay North, have spoken to deplorable road conditions in the District of Harbour Main; and

WHEREAS the district is made up of smaller communities like the towns of Holyrood, Upper Gullies, Seal Cove, Cupids, Colliers, South River, North River, Roaches Line and Makinsons who have roads in desperate need of repair or paving; and

WHEREAS these roads see a high volume of traffic flow almost every day and drivers can expect potholes, severe rutting, limited shoulders and many washed-out areas along the way;

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly to take immediate steps to repair and repave these important roadways and ensure the safety of the driving public who use them on a regular basis.

This petition is not directly regarding my district itself, but it is part of CBS included in these roads I listed. Most of my residents drive these roads. I drive these roads. The Member for Harbour Main drives these roads. People from CBS contact me about these roads. The Minister of Transportation drives these roads. The Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave drives these roads. We all drive these roads, Mr. Speaker.

Part of the reason – and it kind of spurred me to want to present this petition – the Member for Harbour Main sat in her place the other day and read a petition similar to this. The minister took it upon himself to stay back on and never answered it. They're people in your district, your colleague from Harbour Grace - Port de Grave's District, Harbour Main District, CBS District. Give an answer. People deserve an answer. It's not about politics all the time, Minister. Do what's right.

People drive these roads. I drive these roads. You can laugh but you drive these roads and a

lot of people in your own district drive these roads. We know you're after spending about \$30 million in your own district in the last few years. Maybe you should start spreading a bit of it around to your neighbouring communities.

The CBC took it upon themselves to spend a couple of days down there taping the paved roads. We all know the truth. There are more roads there we haven't got to. This year, I believe, it's \$12 million on this one. Only for COVID it would probably would have been higher.

So get up and answer the lady's question. Tell the people of her district, and yours and mine, why these roads are the way they are. I drove those roads myself, Minister. I couldn't drink a coffee. I was in the backseat of a car, I almost needed a helmet on to go up the road; it's that bad. I trust you, it's that bad.

Get up and answer the people. Tell the people the state of the road. Give an answer to the people, b'y. Stand up and do what you're supposed to do.

Thank you.

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

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

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the Member's banter.

He's quick to move on now, Mr. Speaker, because he has seen the efforts and he has seen the way the five-year Roads Plan works. I just have to refer to Foxtrap Access Road. Foxtrap Access Road was a road that was listed for completion, I think in an out year from the Roads Plan, and we were able to elevate that road.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to do one thing before I stop. I want to take an opportunity right here. He referenced Holyrood. I want to thank Mayor Goobie and the senior staff in the Town of Holyrood for the amazing job that they did and how they worked with us during the excavation

work on the highway, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm just going to take this opportunity to thank Mayor Goobie and the senior staff in Holyrood.

I say to all Members in this House – and I've spoken to Members on all sides of the House – so far this year we have had a successful year in our tendering in this province, Mr. Speaker. That will enable us –

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to get my words out. I know my time is running out, but I can't hear myself.

We have had a successful year in –

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

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

**MR. CROCKER:** We've had a successful year to date, Mr. Speaker, in tendering in this province, as we've done in the past. If there are ways to move projects forward, we will certainly be doing that as the construction season moves forward.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

I think the biggest joke is I'd like to have roads to complain about potholes. I'd like to be able to drive in a car from the North Coast to Goose Bay and complain about spilling my coffee because I'm sitting in the back seat of a car actually driving on a highway. That would be great and I would really appreciate it.

My petition actually is for – because we have no roads and we don't have a reliable ferry service, Mr. Speaker, I'm presenting this petition: We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador who urge our leaders to return affordable air travel to the region of Northern Labrador through subsidization of the cost of airfare between Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the Northern Labrador communities of Rigolet, Makkovik, Postville, Hopedale, Natuashish and Nain.

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

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

I'd like to hear the petition the Member is presenting.

**MS. EVANS:** Our Northern Labrador communities are totally isolated, with no road access to complain about and marine transportation is limited only to the summer months. With the provincial government's cancellation of the Lewisporte freight ferry to our communities, families are now struggling with increasing basic costs, including food security.

Our only means of transportation is marine or air. Our marine transportation service is a once-a-week ferry running July to October. Our air transportation service is provided by a single monopoly airline, Air Borealis. The cost of air travel for residents living in Northern Labrador is grossly disproportionate to their available income, thereby restricting travel and increasing cost of living and contributing to isolation.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to provide an air transportation subsidy to reduce the cost of airfare between Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the Northern Labrador communities.

Now, it's hard to come here and actually ask for a subsidy because I'm starting to understand how government works; it's difficult. This petition was actually signed last year; I just didn't get a chance to present this particular one. That was while people still had hope.

We've heard in this House me stand and talk about the failure of the ferry service. Every time I do, when I talk about the ferry service I talk about how important it is, Mr. Speaker, to the people. A lot of people in this House were shocked when I said for one person to fly from our most northern community to Happy Valley-Goose Bay, return, is a thousand dollars. So imagine trying to take your family on vacation if you have three or four kids. You can't.

I was talking to my sister the other night who is actually a teacher. She said: Lela, there are people in communities that have not been able to travel. I phoned and I was talking to a mother a couple of weeks ago. She said we can't afford to travel and her and her husband work.

This petition is about an airline subsidy but it's also about showing the failure of essential service to six Indigenous communities, failure of service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works, with a response.

**MR. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the petition.

Mr. Speaker, I understand exactly what the hon. Member is talking about because she and I had a lengthy discussion a couple, or three weeks back, about even the allocation right now as we go through COVID. The Member arranged a meeting with myself and one of our officials with the AngajukKâks to talk about how people – I guess, lower income people or even middle-income people – are disadvantaged now even more so this year than they would have been last year, because at this point in time we've had to place passenger restrictions on the ferries.

Unfortunately, at this point we've had to allocate, I guess, passage to two communities. We're going to work with that as we come through the different stages of our alert levels and hopefully be able to increase that, while ensuring the security of those communities. I've heard loud and clear from the NG, as well at the AngajukKâks and the Member, the concerns around being remote communities and something like COVID.

Mr. Speaker, we will certainly look at ways to alleviate the travel strains on the North Coast this coming season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the background to this petition is many residents of the District of Harbour Main, especially those of Seal Cove, have spoken to the state of disrepair to the channel, or the gut, as it's locally known.

Conception Bay South itself consists of coastal communities and it's a popular destination for boaters from all over the province. The Seal Cove Channel has been an access point for recreational and commercial fishers and boaters since the area was first settled. The iron retaining wall that protects the trestle is now failing and it's causing the natural rock and debris to enter the channel making it very unsafe for boaters.

We petition the hon. House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately take the necessary steps to repair and restore the train trestle in the Seal Cove Channel, to ensure boater safety and the safety of the general public who use this channel for their recreational pleasure.

Mr. Speaker, just by way of background, this is amazing future development potential in this area. I've been there. It's absolutely beautiful but it's undeveloped. Not only is it undeveloped, more importantly, it's left to deteriorate. The pond itself offers a beautiful sheltered waterfront with easy access to Conception Bay, the bay itself. It is a popular destination for boaters from all over the area, including Mount Pearl and St. John's.

As well, another benefit is that each year during the food fishery, Seal Cove Pond is the access point to Conception Bay for many boaters. It's a huge economic driver for businesses during the summer months and there's a lot of spinoff for local businesses with respect to fuel purposes.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, there's a risk of losing Seal Cove Pond as an access point for Conception Bay. The channel itself is in serious disrepair. Over the past several years – at least for five years – numerous discussions, correspondence and lobbying has taken place on behalf of residents and neighbouring communities regarding the condition of the trestle over Seal

Cove Pond, and now it's an issue of safety throughout the channel underneath.

Many residents of my District of Harbour Main, especially those of Seal Cove, have raised these concerns, their disappointments. They've raised their frustrations regarding these problems that have occurred in the channel and they continue to be ignored. Mr. Speaker, we're asking and imploring the government to look at this.

The Minister of Tourism mentioned the importance of staying in Newfoundland and enjoying our province. We have a gem here in our midst, a treasure in our midst. It would be a big disappointment to the many boaters not only in the area, but Mount Pearl and St. John's, who go there. However, the retaining wall which was there to protect the train trestle is now falling and we have to have some action, remedial action.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the government to take an interest, not only for the people, but there is a vested interest in acting to preserve this important area in the Conception Bay South area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation with a response.

**MR. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for the petition.

I couldn't agree more that the gem we have that's our trail networks within our province – the one in particular that she's talking about is, I think, 900 km running right across the Island – it's very impressive in and of itself. The one issue that we struggle with, with that trail system, like any investment, is the amount of money to put into it to try to maintain it.

We do some preventative maintenance on that. We're working on some of the washouts that have happened over the last little bit, but one of the opportunities that is challenging is the budget that would be required to maintain a 900-kilometre trail system. I get exactly what the hon. Member is saying. I support the idea of that and I'll be looking, as a department, to try to do

anything we can to expand our trail networks and work with areas to try to support that appropriation of money.

One good thing about the trail networks that we do have, there have been a lot of advancements in those. I remember in my previous position with Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, there was a lot of JCP money that went to the trail development in our province. I do hear what the hon. Member is saying and I do appreciate the concern she brought forward.

Thank you.

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

**MR. J. DINN:** My legs are getting tired, Mr. Speaker. I think I've improved my quad strength for sure, but anyway.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** That's all that hair.

**MR. J. DINN:** Another hair joke.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition here for updating the anti-racist education in Newfoundland and Labrador's secondary schools. The reasons for this petition: racism, recognizing that racism is a systemic issue that remains incredibly prevalent in North America, Canada and here in Newfoundland, as we can see by the global protests and here in our province.

The only way to effectively dismantle these systems is by tackling them from within our own institutions, and this includes our education system. The Newfoundland and Labrador high school curriculum, as it currently stands, has inadequate anti-racist education. Books and stories about BIPOC – or black, Indigenous, people of colour – should come from BIPOC authors rather than through a white lens.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to update the English- and French-language arts books list to include more BIPOC – or black, Indigenous, people of colour – authors and specific resources regarding anti-racism; update

the social studies curriculum to include more anti-racist resources as well as more comprehensive histories of BIPOC communities; recognize and teach the significance of Black History Month every February; and consult with local BIPOC leaders within the community when implementing these changes to ensure that updated curriculum properly represents these communities, and properly compensate these leaders for their time and efforts.

Mr. Speaker, when I was a teacher and I taught at junior high, up on the Southern Shore when I had to be a master of everything – well, no, attempt to be a master of everything – I had the opportunity to teach in a lot of courses across the curriculum. That included bringing people in; believe or not, survivors of Auschwitz and survivors of apartheid in South Africa at the time.

We had a number of speakers who would come in, and I had an opportunity to teach this across the curriculum not only within –

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

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

I ask Members to keep the noise level down; I'm having trouble hearing the speaker.

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

Not only within my area of English language, but also in social studies, religion and so on and so forth. It was a great opportunity to bring these social justice issues to the forefront.

However, there was very little in the way of curriculum that would deal with people of colour. We like to believe that Newfoundland has that Irish, Catholic, English, Protestant background, but we know we've become more diverse, Mr. Speaker, as the years go on, so we need to reflect that. For that reason, we encourage the minister to improve and to have a more diverse curriculum to reflect that.

Thank you.

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

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

The hon. Member for St. John's Centre brings up a very important issue and those discussions are occurring. Currently, race and racism are common themes in both the language arts and social studies curriculum. The issue of present-day racism is not explicitly taught as part of the curriculum; however, discussions encouraging critical thinking about world events, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, are often part of the class work.

Such discussions are encouraged and opportunities and input on how to strengthen the curriculum or to do things better are always welcomed. We also welcome and encourage the celebration of Black History Month in schools. Mr. Speaker, through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, we are taking several steps to improve multicultural education within Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'll also end on the fact that issues related to racism is the focus and attention of our Safe and Caring Schools initiatives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

I'd like to present this petition on behalf of the residents of Labrador West.

Since 2010, the province has seen significant work stoppages, including a 16-month strike at Vale in Voisey's Bay in 2010 to 2011 and a two-year lockout at D-J Composites in 2016 to 2018. These work stoppages involve multinational corporations that have practices that have altered the balancing of collective bargaining.

The industrial inquiry into the Voisey's Bay strike recommended changes to the *Labour Relations Act* to include the imposition of

binding arbitration as an effective means to achieve a fair collective agreements when all else fails. The only way to uphold the workers' right to a strike is to ensure companies are not permitted to replace their workers during a labour dispute.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to bring forward amendments to the *Labour Relations Act* to impose binding arbitration – when only one of the two parties make application – in cases where strikes or lockouts are prolonged, where collective bargaining has failed or it's in the best interest; and bring forward amendments to the *Labour Relations Act* to ban replacement workers.

Mr. Speaker, I have this petition here. I presented a similar one earlier the year. The residents of Labrador West, during their striking things, had found that there were some issues with workers brought in during the strike. It seems to bring an unfair balance to the collective bargaining issues. This, on top of what happened at D-J Composites and then what happened again at Vale at Voisey's Bay, creates an environment where collective bargaining is just muddled. It becomes so unachievable. We need the mechanisms in place to make sure that both sides are operating fairly.

We understand that there's mediation and things like that, but sometimes the companies, especially these larger multinational corporations who don't see the lens of the province and the value of the workers of this province fairly – so this is why we need to continue to have these kinds of discussions to make sure we do bring up this kind of legislation and change the *Labour Relations Act* so that it's fair and balanced for everybody involved. Fairness and balance is good for the province, it's good for the workplace so we don't have people who are out on the picket line or locked out from a strike for months and months, and in some cases years on end, because talks and the bargaining has completely collapsed and failed.

I ask the minister to take this into serious consideration. This is something that has been recommended time and time again. We've even



had an inquiry into it and these recommendations and things have been brought up again. I really ask the minister to take this into serious consideration and address the needs and the desire for these individuals who have been victims of the collapse in fair collective bargaining.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

**MR. TIBBS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Buchans Highway is in desperate need of repairs in several areas. The 10-kilometre stretch before Millertown has been decimated from heavy logging trucks and years of negligence.

Just before the Buchans highway, Mr. Speaker –

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

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

I'd like to hear the Member's petition.

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

**MR. TIBBS:** This beautiful stretch of highway, the Buchans highway, Mr. Speaker, a lot of money went into it but it will soon be destroyed due to washouts which are now at the highway's edge. This presents a possibility of destruction to millions of dollars of roadwork to a lack of maintenance. More importantly, the safety concern is unforgiving, as we've seen fatalities on this highway before.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure maintenance is given to the washouts on the Buchans Highway permanently or regularly so they are not faced with spending millions to fix a new highway again, as well preventing any accidents in the future.

Mr. Speaker, when you drive up the Buchans Highway now there's about 25 pylons where washouts are. It is an absolutely beautiful piece of highway, no complaints whatsoever with that piece of highway. But as we go into the future, I know that the purse strings are going to get tightened here because of COVID-19 and where the province sits, financially. So I want to make sure that the good work that we have done so far remains intact.

Like I say, the highway is absolutely pristine right now, but these washouts are literally about to go underneath this Buchans Highway, Mr. Speaker, and millions upon millions of dollars that went into this are going to have to go back into it again one day. I just want to get a handle on it now before it gets out of hand or before somebody gets hurt.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works with a response.

**MR. CROCKER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the petition.

As he was reading I did make some jot notes and I'll send them to the Operations Division.

I am going to take a moment just to thank the Operations Division, because, Mr. Speaker, COVID has really hampered our abilities in maintenance this year. We're getting back in stride now. Our workers are adjusting. There are many challenges we're facing, but I can assure the hon. Member, I'll make sure that the Operations Division gets that.

Actually, I thank the hon. Member, because one of the challenges we saw some years back, our depots were reduced to – cut in half, actually, from winter to summer maintenance. One of the challenges we've seen ever since those drastic cuts were made back 2004-2005, we really struggle when it comes to summer maintenance, Mr. Speaker. We've been looking at ways to adjust that, and we're certainly continue to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I have to say, this reminds me of growing up around the kitchen table and there's only one piece of pie left – trying to get a petition in today. And as you realize, the Member for St. John's Centre got ahead of me again, right.

WHEREAS affordable, reliable and safe child care is a necessary component of a functioning society, especially one that expects to reduce poverty, create employment, decrease outmigration, increase in-migration, increase population and the workforce, which are essential to a growing economy;

THEREFORE, we petition the House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to develop a child care strategy that will provide affordable, accessible and quality child care for Newfoundland and Labrador parents of different economic and social backgrounds.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's no news to anyone, but we are in a critical stage here – our province, with the economy and that – but we also need to build our population. One of the key areas to build that is with our most valuable resource. We pump money into our mining, into our oil and gas, into our forestry, into our fishery. These are all extremely important, but our child care, our children, they are our most valuable resource. If we're going to attract people back to the province, if we're going to keep people in the province, if we're going to have more people working, if we are going to increase our population, we have to have affordable child care.

We cannot ignore investment or further investment into child care. We found this out. Many studies, many surveys we have done, people want to come back, first, where they have meaningful employment and, secondly, where they can raise a family. We need to build our population.

Our natural population growth is outpaced by our mortality rate about 12 years ago. Our

fertility rate we really have to work on. Individuals out there, young parents, young families – much like the substitute teachers I spoke about earlier – they need to have resources here that are affordable and allows them to have children, or have additional children and have them stay here in the province.

I do implore the government to seriously look into this. I know there have been steps taken; I know we are trying to do what we can there, but building our base population, creating a province for young families to stay, live, work and play is crucial.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. WARR:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for Topsail - Paradise for his petition.

We understand the importance of the sector, of supporting young families and we've made significant improvements to the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care services in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The last report on child care fees from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives stated that child care fees, Mr. Speaker, in St. John's have plummeted 24 per cent since 2017. This is the largest decrease for preschool-age fees of any city in the country in the category.

Through the Operating Grant Program, we are increasing the number of affordable child care spaces and we have been investing \$17 million, annually, Mr. Speaker, in the Childcare Services Subsidy Program to ensure families with low-to-middle incomes will have access to crucial supports for reducing child care costs.

I will add to that, Mr. Speaker, that we've also put in \$14.7 million in the Essential Worker Child Care Program during COVID-19. I think this government has shown the young families in

Newfoundland and Labrador that we understand the importance of child care and we are prepared to put the investment there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Sticking to the theme. There are many families in Newfoundland and Labrador struggling with issues associated to child care as available child care facilities are unable to meet the demand due to impacts of COVID-19's social distancing requirements.

This has caused problems for child care operators who are unable to take in enough children to make their business viable, problems for families who require spaces and can't obtain them and also problems for families being asked to pay for spaces they can't use as a means of keeping child care facilities open and ensuring their spaces are held for these families when they become available.

Therefore, we petition the House of Assembly as follows: To urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with daycare operators in our province to seek solutions to this massive problem, including giving consideration to the continuation of daycare subsidy program utilizing a sliding scale as they have recently announced in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, again, I'll give full credit in terms of there was a great response by our government as it relates to COVID-19 in terms of continuing with the child care subsidies and the grants and so on to the child care facilities, so that they could basically ensure the viability of their businesses once the Alert Levels change and they got back.

As has been indicated here by the petition though, we are still running into some problems, because what has happened, of course, is that due to the COVID restrictions, I know we're moving up an Alert Level and I'm hoping that that's going to take care of a lot of this, but with the current restrictions on social distancing and

so on, you have a facility that maybe it had 60 kids, now they can only have 30 kids or 40 kids.

I know the minister talked about 70 per cent capacity, but the child care operators tell me that the reality is they are not able to accommodate 70 per cent of the children; by the time you look at the space they actually have in their facilities and then the other resources, the staff and everything else. The reality of it is they are probably at about 40 – or at least they were – at about 40 to 50 per cent capacity.

That becomes a challenge when you do the math, because 50 per cent of revenue does not equal anything necessarily to your bottom line because depending on what margins you're at, of course, you may need to have 70 or 80 per cent capacity just to break even. You don't actually start making a profit until you reach a certain point, so that's a challenge.

What's happening, of course, is in order to make a lot of these businesses viable now they're going to parents and saying: in order to stay viable, we need you to pay for spaces that you're not even getting, just so that we can hold your space. This is creating problems.

In the Province of Nova Scotia, they're using a sliding scale whereby if they're only at 50 per cent capacity, then the government is continuing with the subsidy for the other 50 per cent. Once they get to 80 per cent capacity, the government gives them 20 per cent. So it's like a sliding scale until they get back up to full capacity. That's what was announced in Nova Scotia and that's what's being suggested could be done here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I thank the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands for his petition. I also thank him because I think he's a Member, probably, in this Legislature that I heard from the most during COVID. He's taken every opportunity to pass along all the concerns of his constituents, in both

daycare issues and certainly with the substitute teachers. I've certainly appreciated how well he's treated his constituents.

With regard to daycare, again, we understand the concerns. It is anticipated that as of Monday we will go to Alert Level 2 and that means that our regulated child care centres will be back to 100 per cent capacity.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we provided \$14.7 million in compensation to regulated child care services to pay for all spaces during COVID. Approximately, 280 of the 300 centres availed of that particular grant, Mr. Speaker.

I see my time is up.

Thank you.

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

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Public Utilities Board has approved a licence for an ambulance owner to operate in the area from Bay Bulls to Bauline. This area is one of the fastest growing areas of the province. There have been many concerns from residents, municipalities, councils and emergency responders regarding response times.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to support the position to this service provider and ensure the residents of Bays Bulls to Bauline meet national standards for response times.

Regarding this petition, the area is very fast –

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

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

I'm having trouble hearing the Member. I'd like to just hear from the Member who has been recognized.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

**MR. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The area is a fast growing area; one of the fastest in the province. When you're dealing with ambulances, obviously, the closest one to St. John's would be in Cape Broyle. So the residents from Bay Bulls to Bauline are at a disadvantage for sure when it comes to that. They have a half hour to 40 minute response time.

If you live in Bauline, Burnt Cove, St. Michael's area you have a 45 minute response time from St. John's, if there's one available. If not, it would be 25 to 30 minutes from Cape Broyle to get down, if there's an ambulance available up there. It's a growing concern in our area.

We have our great volunteer fire departments from Witless Bay and the Ferryland area as well that respond to take care of this until an ambulance arrives, but we would certainly love to have this looked at in our area.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Mr. Speaker, I stand on a point of order.

Normally, point of orders are confrontational or looking for clarification but I stand on this one, on behalf of our caucus here, to thank the Government House Leader for the privilege of allowing people – because we've had a shortened session, to no fault of anybody in this House of Assembly – to express the concerns and echo the recommendations of the people in their district through the petition process.

I ask and thank the Government House Leader for her indulgence here and her allowing us to do that, and, Mr. Speaker, yourself for allowing us to take us through this process, particularly where it's our last day to serve the people during this sitting.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Government House Leader, speaking to this point of order or –?

**MS. COADY:** No, Orders of the Day.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

While there's no point of order, I appreciate the Member's comments, given the spirit.

### Orders of the Day

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

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

Now, I'll thank the Member opposite, all Members of this House, for their co-operation over this very challenging time that we've come through. It has been a privilege and an honour to work with everyone in this House to do the business of the people. I thank you for that co-operation.

I will call from the Order Paper, Order 5, second reading of Bill 39.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I think the Member for Lake Melville has some time left on the clock.

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

**MR. TRIMPER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just having a little glance at the clock to see how much time I might have. Whether there's time for a story. Maybe I'll start with –

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. TRIMPER:** I could tell a lot of stories there.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure to return to this very important bill. I wanted to start with something – this is very much an environmental issue and it's one that touches our economy, it touches the agricultural sector, it touches every bit of food that we eat on our plate.

I want to start by way of an example as to the nuances of the environment. I was just looking at a very interesting photo that was sent to me

for some inspiration of two bumblebees asleep in a flower. If you didn't stop and pause and have a look at that you would miss it. And so much that goes on in the environment is like that.

I was reflecting back, and just a little story before I get into the seriousness of what we're talking about. In the mid-80s, I worked for the Canadian Wildlife Service. At the time, the big issue of the day was acid rain. Prime Minister Mulrooney, President Reagan at the time, signed an international agreement and, lo and behold, through international co-operation we made huge progress on that.

At the time, I was looking at the effects of acidification on lakes on loons. On common loons and how they breed. Because the problem was is that as the pH dropped in these lakes, there was no longer any fish being produced. And the loons, the adults, would fly off to another lake to feed, but they would never bring the fish back to the nest and the youngsters were in the nest dying. It was amazing. It just was so obvious, the solution was so apparent; yet, we lost many, many lakes with loons. We've recovered.

The point that I wanted to talk about is – and this applies to so much of this province – when we go out into the environment we really need to think about what we're doing. I recall one day, I was on a place called Red Rock Lake, and we were approaching a loon's nest and it had been raining. As I came up on the loon's nest, there are two guys in a canoe, in a boat, and they had been fishing for several hours. There were two adult loons all around their boat displaying diving, calling.

The two guys, we came up on them and they said, wow, what a show these adult loons have been putting on for us. I said, how long have you been there? He said, oh, about three hours. It was pouring rain. Well, guess what? Those two adults were the parents of the eggs in the nest. The rain's falling down on them. They were so agitated and upset, they were trying to do what they can to drive away this intrusion. Those fishermen didn't realize it, but they killed those eggs just by sitting in a canoe and casually taking pictures of these adult loons. That is so

much of the nuance of the harm that we cause in this environment. I just leave that thought.

What I want to carry on with is about this varroa mite. It, again, is incredibly small and if you didn't look you wouldn't know. For those who don't raise bees, the good Minister of Health and Community Services was just telling me that in Manchester when we was a young lad – not all that long ago, I'm sure – he was raising bees. If you spend the time to work around agriculture or raising beehives and so on, you will truly appreciate just how important bees are for our society.

What I wanted to go to is related, of course, to COVID-19. The bill is all about seeing what we can do to take advantage of an amazing situation we have. Right now we are essentially virus-free and we are also essentially varroa destructor – this amazing mite that destroys bees – free as well. This is both an opportunity, an advantage and a challenge. As I said the other day, 30 per cent of the foods that we eat are all pollinated by bees, so it's really important that we appreciate the role these small insects are doing so that we can have a sustainable food supply.

If you have worked around bees, you'll know that what farmers do is they can actually take bees in the hives, go to a field, set up for a few days; when the crop is there, and the blossoms are out and the opportunity for pollination is so important, they actually rent the bees out. Over a course of a few days, the farmer can have results in the yield of the crop – very dramatic over what they would have had just by other situations, allowing wind or perhaps other insects. It's incredibly lucrative for the farmer and for those who are holding these beehives to get involved in this.

As I was doing a little bit of research, it's interesting that across Canada, each spring as we go to prepare for the agriculture sector and bring in these beehives, we actually have a serious problem in the country right now. Because of COVID-19 and the shutdown of international flights, farmers are not able to get in the replenishment queens and other members of the colonies to stock up their hives.

I just checked some numbers, and Ontario alone needs 3,500 shipments of bees that they're

waiting on right now. Across the country it's probably close to 100,000 beehives. I would anticipate that unless we can get this resolved very quickly, we are going to see a much lower production of food across the country and that's going to affect so many other aspects of –

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

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

I'm having trouble hearing the Member make his comments on this bill and I'd ask Members to lower the level of noise so we can all hear the Member for Lake Melville.

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

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

With this pressure to import, there is also great pressure in our own province to import because those that are working with bees, they need to bring in bees, but the key thing here is that we need to make sure those bees are pest-free.

There are four problems affecting bees around the world, particularly in Canada: pesticides. There are a whole group of pesticides which are wiping out bees. They affect their behaviours and lead to increased mortality.

Habitat loss: Maintenance of wild habitats is extremely important. Climate change: I spoke a week or so ago about getting to net zero and the importance of what we anticipate, whether it be Nain at 7.6 degrees or St. John's at 3.4 degrees Celsius increase in temperature, you can imagine what that's going to do to the reliability.

I look to my colleague across the way, the good farmer from Mount Pearl North, who correctly stated that it's the unpredictability of the climate situation, getting weather that you don't anticipate. You can imagine what a warm spell would do in the wintertime to bees that are trying to ride out some cold temperatures and then they're suddenly stimulated to become active, only to see there are still a couple months of winter left. You can imagine what that does to them.

Finally, the key reason why we're here, there is a serious mite, called varroa destructor is its

Latin name, the varroa mite. It is challenging bee production and food production around the world. The amazing thing is that Newfoundland and Labrador, as the good minister said the other day, we are pest-free of this mite. This is a tremendous advantage and it's one that we need to take advantage of. We need to maintain that status.

As the minister said the other day – and I wanted to use sort of an analogy when we talk about – one of the questions today in Question Period was whether or not we are, as a jurisdiction, as a subnational government, ready to partner up maybe with other Atlantic provinces and would we consider doing this.

I would like to say that if you're thinking about a dance card, we're a pretty attractive partner right now. We've essentially eliminated this virus. We've done very well. The residents of this province, the health care system, we've all collectively contributed to be a very attractive dance partner.

I can think of some states that we may not be so much interested in partnering up with, but from our perspective people are wanting to see us. Similarly, when you have bees that are pest-free, we also have a very exciting dance card and we can be very circumspect about who we are providing them to.

There was a very interesting article this morning – the Member for Topsail - Paradise, I wonder if he noticed this because the gentleman's name is Paul Dinn. He was speaking about this issue and this bill and he was concerned that he felt that we shouldn't be importing bees at all. I saw that the minister was referenced in his comments in responding because he said, while that's certainly a lofty, aspirational goal to get to a point where we don't need to import bees, we currently do.

I would hope that with the injection of the resources, the appointment of an apiarist and other initiatives that are going on in the department, through the legislation that will pass, we can really give a boost to an amazingly attractive dance partner, amazingly attractive bee industry that we have here.

The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, they recently produced a report in 2015 outlining a whole host of challenges and suggested resolution that governments, organizations and even individuals can all do to help address the decline of bees and effects on food production in the country.

I would refer you to it; I'm not going to go through it in detail but as I reach out to my colleagues in this House of Assembly and across the province, those who are watching and listening, there are some individual things that we can all do. Certainly, you can avoid foods that are grown using these harmful group of pesticides; they are called neonicotinoids. This particular group of pesticides are causing this problem and if you look on the label, you can often find out what source of pest control was used to grow these crops. Organic-free vegetables and anything you'd buy of an organic-free nature would not have that problem.

You can go out in your backyard and plant a garden. You can let a section of your property go wild. These are all the kinds of things that you can do to encourage bee habitat. As I said a week ago, in the PMR, you can also reduce your carbon footprint and slow down the effects of climate change.

Of course, the final thing and to address the varroa mite, the key thing is to support Bill 39. It does several things; there are amendments under the act. As I said, we can get a provincial apiarist appointed and, of course, we can get the regulations in place that will both protect and help grow this very important industry and provide this opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador.

With that, I will conclude my remarks. I thank you for the opportunity to again appear today and I'll turn it over to further speakers and the minister to wrap it up.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll start with a little poetry:

“I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and  
wattles made;  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the  
honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.”

That's from William Butler Yeats.

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

**MR. J. DINN:** No doubt about it, bees are a source, if nothing else, of quietude and relaxation. Or from Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, “Most people don't have any idea about all the complicated life going on inside a hive. Bees have a secret life we don't know anything about.”

I guess that's the key point here. We're only starting to realize just how integral bees are to our very existence on this planet. They're not just a subject of poetry, but they are necessary for our survival. If anything, we've seen in the past number of years are plagues, I guess, that seem to be affecting wildlife – bats with white-nose syndrome, bees with the varroa mite. Some might say it's part of climate change; others might say it's part of the changes that we've brought about on the environment ourselves. But there's no doubt it, if we're going to in any way attain food security, it's important then to protect honeybees. This is what this act is about, or this amendment.

This amendment basically adds the definition of a honeybee. It requires an employee of the department to be designated as the provincial apiarist – definitely to have that person designated would indicate how important bees are to our food production – require that an applicant for a licence must provide information outlined in the regulations and give authority to the provincial apiarist to conduct duties outlined in the act, such as inspections and enforce registration.

Our caucus will be supporting this bill. We understand the Beekeeping Association of Newfoundland and Labrador has been consulted throughout the process, Mr. Speaker, and they

are satisfied and supportive of the amendments enabling this bill.

We know, of course, that there are many other insects within Newfoundland, such as the bumblebee, that offer pollination to our plants, not only to wild plants but also to our agricultural industry and farmers as well. We know that honeybees themselves are domesticated insects and are regulated under the Animal Health Act. They're different species from wild bumblebees. We have one honeybee species in Newfoundland called *Apis mellifera*. This legislation is implementing protection for this species, as bumblebees are already protected.

Interestingly enough, the genetic composition of our honeybees in Newfoundland and Labrador is largely the creation of Wally Skinner, Andrea Skinner and Paige Marchant with the Newfoundland Bee Company, who have been supplying nucleus colonies and queens to beekeepers from the Island for many years. So in many ways we've got a made in Newfoundland solution here.

The key thing, and it's been brought up by previous speakers, is the pest-free status of our honeybees. The common pest found on these bees has been found elsewhere in the world the varroa mite.

Given that we are one of the places in the world without this pest, it's extremely important that we implement this policy to protect the honeybees in Newfoundland. We know the demand for honeybees in Newfoundland is very high, which risks illegal importation.

We have more people in our province wanting honeybees than we can successfully supply. We understand that honeybees cannot be imported into Newfoundland and Labrador without a permit from a varroa-free origin such as the Isle of Man and Western Australia. However, I too read the same article and listened on CBC with Paul Dinn and listened to it yesterday. Now, that is a different branch of the Dinn family. No connection to us, but I figure anytime a Dinn speaks he or she is worth listening to – just saying.



So he made note – and here’s an interesting – when we look at a precautionary principle. He’s saying mandatory registration, Mr. Speaker, doesn’t go far enough. That really we need to ban importation, and that maybe there is a – I understand at this time maybe the capacity to do so is limited, but maybe we can start to look at again if we have a honeybee that the genetic composition is largely the creation of local – is a local home-grown solution, then maybe we need to find a local home-grown solution to encouraging the growth of the bee industry here. Something similar to the vegetable transplant or the starts program, so that we create it here. If there’s any way of guaranteeing, as Mr. Dinn noted, it’s about keeping other bees from outside the province outside.

He did note in his interview with Mr. Blades yesterday on *The Go* that the main reason probably for bringing bees in, some people are looking at it seeing dollar signs and they’re wishing to import large colonies so they can rent them out, lease them out to farmers for pollination purposes. Now, if that’s the case, that’s a different thing than we need to build up our population. In other words, we have to look at the reasons why there is this pressure to do so.

I think also, I’ll speak here in term of – we know we’ve supported other industries, salmon aquaculture and so on and so forth, and we know the consequences sometimes of bringing species in from outside the province can have a detrimental effect on species that are currently here.

We also know, you can look at the importation of many non-native species. Well, the moose is one, but I’m thinking on the West Coast now you do have snakes, a colony of garter snakes. Newfoundland was snake-free. We do have deer mice. So we do have other diseases that go along with it.

It’s an interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, we can’t get off this Island portion without having to go through the washing station in Port aux Basques because we don’t want to transport, I think it’s the potato blight outside, but it seems that there’s nothing really stopping people from bringing stuff in, whether that’s the purple loosestrife, you name it. So here we are, the bees are indeed sort of a non-native population, but

we’ve managed to create something that’s special here, that’s disease-free. I think, if nothing else, it’s important to protect it.

The other thing I didn’t realize is that St. John’s is probably one of the most bee-friendly cities in the country. What we’re looking at here – I don’t know if any of you – we take a number of actions to protect our bees such as leaving dandelions on the lawn. We know also that bees are dying in larger than average numbers in North America, Europe and parts of Asia and Africa. We know in the US there’s been a honeybee decline from about 6 million hives in 1947 to only 2.4 million hives in 2008. That’s a 60 per cent reduction.

Last year, the US honeybees had the worst winter die-off in more than a decade, losing about 40 per cent of the population. So, if anything, I think – not that I want to see Newfoundland become the sole-source supplier of the world, but I think it’s incumbent on us, not only to protect our own supply of bee population, maybe increase our own agricultural production, but also protect a species that is valuable, not only for itself, but to our very existence and the existence of many other creatures on this planet.

I refer to my Member’s statement this morning about doing those small things sometimes to protect, to show that connection, our love, for the world and the environment around us.

So with this, we will support this bill, but we do believe, Mr. Speaker, that we do need to go further. I think we do need to very clearly look at supporting our own beekeepers here and making sure that they have everything that they need to increase their bee population.

I’ll end with, of course, the words – you can’t end anything, if we’re going to talk poetry, without some words from Shakespeare himself: “... for so work the honeybees, / Creatures that by a rule in nature teach / The act of order to a peopled kingdom.” That’s from *Henry V*. If anything they can teach us, it’s how important an interconnected environment and how important a role each organism plays in the survival of this planet and, indeed, ourselves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources speaks now, he will close the debate.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you very, very much, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say my thanks and appreciation to the speakers that did rise and give their points of view on this particular legislation. I'm delighted that it is proceeding without amendment and with the unanimous support, or appears to be the unanimous support, of the House. This is reassuring. It shows that the government is on a good path, good track, and we are listening to farmers.

Mr. Speaker, eloquent Members have started their words, their discourse, the debate with eloquent recitations. I depend on ABBA for all of my quotations, and all I can think, Mr. Speaker, how appropriate it would be to say: "Honey honey, how you thrill me, a-ha, honey honey / Honey honey, nearly kill me ...."

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would caution the Member that the health order we're under prevents us from singing, so I'd ask that he cut the song short for that and other reasons, maybe.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, it would even more memorable if I tried to sing. If I'd tried to sing ABBA, you would never, ever forget that.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a true and genuine – in the spirit of levity and as we gracefully leave this place, I want to say thank you, not only to the speakers to this particular debate, but all the speakers during our somewhat shortened, somewhat predicated session here in the House. It's been very productive, and to end off on an excellent opportunity to provide further protection to honeybees in this province is going to be, I think, one of the crowning jewels of this particular session.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for St. John's Centre eloquently spoke of the contributions of the Skinner family, which would be very, very

true and appropriate to elevate, but there were a number of West Coast innovators and pioneers as apiarists. They include John Gullage and Stu Weldon both of whom were pioneers of this particular field.

While it was mentioned that a genic stock had been achieved from within the work of the Skinners, we would never, ever diminish the work of Wally and his family, in this regard. The truth is that they imported most of their colonies, their nucs from Nova Scotia and Ontario. In fact, the honeybee is not native to Newfoundland and Labrador, it is an imported species and, arguably, would be an invasive species, but I think it would be a friendly invasion if that were to be the case.

It was John Gullage and Stu Weldon and the Skinner family, which really provided the lift to the industry. I cannot forsake or leave out, Gerard Smith, a true, true gentleman and a pioneer in this regard who, I think, is the father and grandfather or modern-day apiculture in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that, indeed, the honeybee is an introduced species. It's been introduced for many, many years, many decades, but the genetic stock is not peculiar to Newfoundland and Labrador nor has it been refined. It's essential, though, that we protect that which we have been able to benefit from, whether it be through (inaudible) or good, good husbandry, we are finding ourselves today in a disease-free status.

It is not certified as such, and that's something the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador with the Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeeping Association, is currently working on. There is only one of three places in this planet which are disease-free: Australia and in particular South West Australia, the Isle of Man and the Island of Newfoundland and Mainland Labrador.

This is an important point because, not only does it give our current apiarists, a leading edge because we do not have the insecurity of disease infestation which could knock down colonies, but it also provides an incredible market opportunity for future growth. The world needs honeybees, and in fact, the United Nations has

certified the South West Australia coast region as being disease free. It is certified by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization as being disease free, a point which will be relevant as I expand on the debate. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has certified that all honeybees that would originate from South West Australia would be disease free.

Now, Mr. Speaker, by creating a mandatory registry, this is something that the beekeepers and individual apiarists have sought for many, many years. The value and function of this would be to regulate and require registration by all apiculturists, all colonies within the province. If there were ever an issue today, the reality is, if I had the responsibility to act on a potential or a suspect case of disease, whether it be varroa destructor or some other infestation, some other parasite or infectious agent, I could not tell this House where all of the bees are. I could not tell them and that would impact inspection. That would impact eradication or treatment.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, mandatory registration is a worthwhile objective. It's met with full support of the industry. It's a sensible approach. Creating the position of the chief apiarist of Newfoundland and Labrador is a universally supported notion. So when we support a chief apiarist, when we say the chief apiarist of Newfoundland and Labrador holds a position of respect and trust, well, we have to appreciate and respect what they say.

Now, Mr. Speaker, everyone appreciates and respects the position of Karen Kennedy, who is our chief apiarist and will be designated under this particular act to go beyond a namesake position into a formalized position. This is important because it comes with it certain powers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there was a question that has been raised and it took many people somewhat off guard because the beekeeping industry, the apiarists in this province, have been very collegial. They've been very cooperative with each other. I've had the benefit and pleasure to meet with them on numerous occasions, both as an executive and at their AGMs, and I've learned first-hand how well they interact with each other and how they seek out solutions to real problems. They're not those who have a

solution and then find a problem which fits their solution – it's the other way around.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we engaged in our conversations to get to this point where we're putting forward this historic legislation, it met with full support of everyone in the industry because it was the right thing to do for the right reasons.

Now, some have suggested the legislation should go farther. I can appreciate that's always been part of the discussion and was part of the discussion during the consultations, but there was definitely no consensus to this point. I can sometimes appreciate that people would say: Forget the point of view of the association and its elected body or forget the position or the consensus; go with the position of a minority or a few and let that be the direction or the driver of public policy. I don't think that's necessarily a great way to proceed because, of course, if you can't get consensus, then you sometimes fail in your public policy.

Mr. Speaker, what was suggested was that there should be a total ban on the importation of any honeybees into Newfoundland and Labrador. I can't help but sometimes think that this may be an overstatement; this may be a solution in search of a problem. I say that very deliberately because under no circumstances would there ever be an importation of any bee from any location into Newfoundland and Labrador unless it was an absolutely unusual and rare circumstance. Importation of any bee into this province must be done through permit. It is regulated, and it is highly scrutinized and it is rare and will only be issued in a very, very unique circumstance that meets the test of public good, public interest.

Mr. Speaker, when we have this discussion, sometimes it's floated out there that this is done, or at least the perception may be created that this is a routine occurrence and can happen under any situation and can happen without any real scrutiny. Such is not the case. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I'll run through the procedures that would be required.

Consideration of any importation of any bee will only ever be considered once a public interest test is met, a unique and exceptional

circumstance arises for this to occur, but equally importantly, if someone were seeking a permit to import a bee or a colony or a nuc from Nova Scotia, from Ontario, from Arizona, from Great Britain, from Asia, from Africa, from Antarctica, it would be forbidden. It would never be allowed because the only importation that would ever be considered under those unique circumstances would be from South West Australia. We wouldn't even accept them from the Isle of Man because it is not certified as disease free. It is not certified as disease free and the region is not certified as disease free.

The United Nations, the food and agricultural organization, has certified South West Australia as disease free and growers within South West Australia are certified as disease free. That would be the only source that we would ever consider importing a honeybee from, and only under exceptional circumstances.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it goes beyond that, because should a permit ever be issued, the bees would be basically flown into Canada under a bonded package. It would be met by Canada Border Services Agency and Canada Food Inspection Agency staff inspectors. It would be inspected. It would be quarantined. Then it would be subject to inspection again by provincial inspectors once it hit the province. Once it hit the province, it then has to be quarantined for a year before it can ever be introduced as a colony.

These, Mr. Speaker, are the realities that we face. Sometimes when we speak of generalities, we are sometimes left with a lack of information which drives public discourse, but not by facts, but more by emotion. So that is why the chief apiarist of Newfoundland and Labrador issued a statement today, as a respected and learned person in this field, saying that the position of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is the right position to take and she endorses it. So as we say to each and everyone of us, as we engage in this discussion, we all support the chief apiarist, then what we have to do is support what she says and her evidence-based opinions, which she gives to us.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I see there are even more important things for the House to engage in today. I want to say thank you to all the speakers and I anticipate the support of the

House in this historic legislation. But most importantly, I want to thank the apiarist, the executive of the Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeeping Association, and all those work collegially in common cause for a better beekeeping industry and for the health of our honeybees throughout all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The motion is that Bill 39, An Act To Amend The Animal Health And Protection Act, be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Animal Health And Protection Act. (Bill 39)

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

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

**MS. COADY:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Animal Health And Protection Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 39)

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources, that the House resolve itself into 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 Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

#### Committee of the Whole

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

We're now considering Bill 39, An Act To Amend The Animal Health And Protection Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Animal Health And Protection Act." (Bill 39)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

Oh, sorry, do you have a question?

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

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

Has the department considered putting in the clause prohibiting the importation of used beekeeping equipment, which may also carry the varroa mite and other disease?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The relevant issue at hand is not whether the equipment is used; it's whether or not the equipment may be infected. That, I think, is the more important point to discover and that's why any prohibition should not be against used equipment. It should be against equipment that would potentially be contaminated.

So yes, Mr. Speaker, the importation – anything within the context of honeybee or apiarists that could impact animal health and protection is subject to these regulations.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** I do not see that specified within the proposed legislation or the existing legislation. I do believe that's a loophole.

Given that the rest of the world, with the exception of Western Australia, is not certified disease-free, I think it would be a fair measure to prohibit any importation of used material. Could the minister elaborate on that, please?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Such is the nature of regulation, Mr. Chair, that it does not appear in legislation, but it appears as a consequential component of a piece of legislation. The *Animal Health and Protection Act* provides very broad powers to the chief apiarist and to the chief veterinarian officer to be able to enforce proper standards of animal health and protection.

The hon. Member is quite right, that there is a potential possibility of infection using used apiary, beekeeping equipment or colonies and so this is a matter that can be handled within regulation.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** The budgetary sum of commitment of over \$300,000, for which program will you be reducing in order to accommodate this additional expenditure?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, for that question.

It highlights the incredible priority that this government takes towards improving food security. The question is based on a certain cynicism, which I do appreciate, but it's unnecessary. There will be no program which is diminished. This is new spending that is being put forward to assist our agricultural industry, our farmers and our apiculturists to be able to provide for their needs.

This money will be put forward to the Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeeping Association. It does not come from PAAP; it comes from funding that has been supplied to the Department of Agriculture which was not assigned, so there will be no diminishment of any existing program. I'm sure the hon. Member will be very, very happy to hear that.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** From where did these funds originate?

**CHAIR:** The Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** These funds originated within the budgetary cycle of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through the business of supply.

**CHAIR:** The hon. Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** How will the minister conduct function of certifying that all beehives are actually disease-free?

**CHAIR:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Chair, I want to thank the hon. Member for the question.

We have been engaged for quite some time in audits and inspection. The legislation, that hopefully will be passed today and be brought through Royal Assent into law, allows for a mandatory registration process which makes those inspections even easier.

We have been conducting inspections on colonies but having done so somewhat blindly, because while there have been beekeepers which have been very open and straightforward as to their locations providing us with full information, there may or may not have been others that have not been.

Those who do not register and do not supply prerequisite information to the chief apiarist, to the department, will now be found in contempt of the legislation and will be subject to fines, penalties and other measures as deemed fit. We have always been conducting inspections but now we'll be able to do so even more thoroughly and efficiently.

**CHAIR:** The hon. Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Of the importation of hives in 2017 from known to be infected areas of Canada, has there been continual provincial monitoring of these sites to ensure that they did not import the dreaded varroa mite?

**CHAIR:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Again, Mr. Chair, the inspections are done both at the federal and provincial level: federal from the point of view of international transit, provincial at the level of inter-border or intra-provincial transit. We continue to do this but we will do even more effectively through the good graces of this House by passing this particular piece of legislation.

**CHAIR:** The hon. Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** I know of at least three sites where these beehives were actually placed. Being that inspection is still voluntary up until

we pass this and it is proclaimed, have those three sites been voluntarily inspected?

**CHAIR:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** I'm confident the hon. Member can sense and appreciate that he catches me at a disadvantage by not saying what those sites are. I can't really say if they've been inspected if I don't know exactly the sites that he's referring to.

I'd encourage the hon. Member to come forward with any location for those sites and I'd be able to update him in due course with a proper answer.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** While I do stand to be corrected, I believe it was the minister himself who signed the permit to allow this importation to happen. I would trust that the minister would keep a closer eye on this considering it could be so destructive to the initiatives that we're trying to carry out today through this legislation.

**CHAIR:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

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

I've tried to be generous and to be open, but I do appreciate the fact – so the hon. Member questions or would like information about the 2016 importation. I believe there were two imports permits that were issued: one was to Tuck's Farm and the other to Lester's Farm Market. I believe that's in close proximity to his own interests as well.

Lester's Farm Market was issued an importation permit. What I can tell you is that the proprietors of Lester's Farm Market I've met on numerous occasions. They seem like incredibly smart, responsible farmers.

Since 2016, there has been absolutely no indication whatsoever that the Lester family there has been anything but solid in their performance and duties and there has been absolutely no evidence in the last five years that

varroa mite exists. If varroa mite would have existed at Lester's Farm Market, we would know about it because their colonies would probably be in a very, very serious state right now.

With that said, Mr. Chair, discretion would suggest I'll hold it there and say a special thank you not only to Tuck's and to Lester's Farm Market, but to all the apiarists throughout Newfoundland and Labrador who hold themselves in the highest, highest of standards.

**CHAIR:** The hon. Member for Mount Pearl North.

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

I find it particularly offensive that in the previous question the minister denied knowing where this was, yet he had the information right underneath his nose.

If any beehives are to be found to be infected with the varroa mite or any other non-native parasites or diseases, what will happen?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** If there is a suspect infestation, the site is immediately quarantined, Mr. Chair. It's held and if there is any evidence whatsoever that the suspect has merit there is eradication immediately. The operations go beyond that; then there's a traceability exercise.

**CHAIR:** The hon. Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** What fees are being considered for registration and licensing?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Under the *Animal Health and Protection Act* the Apis, which is the honeybee, is under the direct regulation of the health act and the Bombus is under the *Wild Life Act* – which is the bumblebee, which is not a honeybee.

**CHAIR:** The hon. Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** What sorts of penalties are being considered for failure to register and report?

**CHAIR:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Chair, that would be established under regulation. I can tell you that I think the penalty should be significant enough to act as a deterrence.

In South West Australia, for example, they offer a penalty of upwards of \$5,000 Australian pound for any illegal importation. To put that in a Canadian dollar sense I think might be an appropriate basis but we'd have to seek counsel from Justice officials because, of course, here in Canada we do have a jurisprudence which says that penalties have to be commensurate with the nature of the offence, so there are limitations. There are some practical realities about establishing penalties within the context of constitutional law.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Does the minister foresee any conflict between this legislation and the legislation which outlines the guidance in reference to our own native bumblebee?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** No, none whatsoever, Mr. Chair. Apis is, of course, food producing and it has utility within the agricultural industry as a pollinator and I see no conflict between the *Animal Health and Protection Act* and protections toward Apis versus the *Wild Life Act* and protections towards Bombus.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Given the fact that the parasite can transfer back and forth between our native Bombus and the imported honeybee, is there any similar legislation and restrictions being

considered for the importation of the bumblebee?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Chair, wildlife introductions are already regulated.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** It is my understanding that the bumblebee can still be imported from areas throughout North America. If I'm incorrect, could the minister correct me please?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Chair, I'm having a little bit of trouble picking up the questions here. Is there -?

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

Would you like to repeat the question, please?

**MR. LESTER:** Most certainly, Mr. Chair.

I have the understanding that we are still, in this province, allowed to import bumblebees under permit from the rest of North America, which has been documented to be infected with the varroa destructor mite.

Can the minister correct me if I am incorrect?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Chair, the introduction of all wildlife species is a regulated process.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible.)

**CHAIR:** Did you hear the answer, sorry?

**MR. BYRNE:** (Inaudible) of any wildlife is a regulated process.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.



**MR. LESTER:** I find it difficult to understand that we are restricting the importation of the honeybee to one geographic area known to be free of the varroa destructor mite, yet we are still allowing importation of other potential carriers from known to be infected areas. This has to be done under permit, I do realize that, but I do feel that this legislation will be ineffective unless we make it consistent throughout all importation policies.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Chair, the hon. Member is carrying forward with a train of logic which I'm not particular – he seems very convinced on a particular line of logic. I think the best answer for me to give, rather than to be offensive, would be if there's information contrary to what I've given to the House, I will certainly come forward and correct.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Chair, I'm not trying to be controversial or I'm not trying to be confrontational. I'm asking a question: Why should we be allowed to bring a known carrier of the varroa mite from areas known to be infected of one species that can transfer over to our honeybees, when we are not for honeybees?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** The answer simply, Mr. Chair, any vector for varroa mite would be regulated and we would never consider that under regulatory powers to come from anywhere other than from a certified disease-free place.

I apologize, Mr. Chair. There's no attempt here to engage in a confrontational exercise, but there's a statement of fact being given which I do have to contradict and I'm trying to contradict it. I can't be any more clear than that. It is a very regulated process. There's no free hand to be able to do this.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

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

I thank the minister for his because answer.

Unless it has changed within the past two months, there is an avenue to import the Bombus and other pollinators which are essential to our agricultural industry. If we do pass this legislation such that there will be no importation of any honeybees, there are producers within our province, like the cranberry producers, the blueberry producers, and many other producers which require pollination that may be prohibited and denied access to pollinators.

Has there been any thought put into, prior to this legislation, as to what these people are going to do now that they may also be prohibited from importing the Bombus?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Chair, I guess we're seeing the two sides of the debate, is that on one side we're seeing that there should be a total and absolute prohibition, and the hon. Member is making a case that there should not be an absolute prohibition and we're seeing the value to that.

Again, there should never be an importation that's done lightly. It should be under rare and exceptional circumstances. It should be proven that the risk is either non-existent or exceptionally low. The best way to do that, to prove out that the risk would be non-existent, would be to take it from a United Nations-certified source.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. BYRNE:** But I recognize the hon. Member's point of view. Someone would say that, well, if we were to ban any potential of the door ever opening to any imports whatsoever, should we ever have a catastrophic of our own domestic pollinator stock, we may find ourselves in a very serious food crisis. We would not have pollinators, and as we know, based on scholarly evidence and research, without pollinators we have serious food insecurity.

To those who would advocate a total ban on any imports under any circumstances just on ideological grounds, regardless of what the facts may promote and say, regardless of the fact of the protections that are in place, to put in place such an absolute prohibition would be to hold the potential food security of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in jeopardy.

Now, this is an extreme example and I'm not going to suggest that this should be ever considered to be even the 20-year storm, or the 50-year storm or even the 100-year storm, but it is a reality that as apiculture, as Apis, becomes more and more grounded in our local ecosystem, then, of course, it does have a certain competitive impact on other pollinators. Should we ever have a catastrophic failure of Apis, then we would find ourselves in a very serious situation of a lack of pollination that could cause very serious consequence.

We know that in the cranberry industry, for example, how important pollinators are for our cranberries. All flowering vegetables and fruits require pollination. To have ourselves in such a situation because of ideology would be very, very unwise.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Given that we are no longer allowed to import honeybees from any area, with the exception of South West Australia, I would expect the demand to be fairly high from South West Australia from other jurisdictions.

Is the minister willing to put in a regulation of export permit from our own province?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Chair, I'm sorry, I am having trouble just hearing the question, and that's my own fault because I don't have an aid; but, with that said, I think I picked up enough to be able to say that that's exactly what the objective is.

That's exactly what the objective is, is to establish Newfoundland and Labrador as an export ready source of Apis. It's one of the

reasons why if we were to turn around, and I'll just give this – I'm going to ask the Government House Leader, we have some important business to do, don't we? Yeah. I think we do.

If we were to basically establish an export capacity, we should do so on the premise that it is of value to respecting and appreciating those areas which are certified disease-free. That's why we should appreciate and respect the fact that South West Australia is certified by the United Nations as disease-free.

To simply turn around and say, regardless of whether or not the United Nations and the Canada Food Inspection Agency feels as though and has evidence that South West Australia is certifiably disease-free, we should ignore that and not trust it. We should not trust the United Nations. We should not trust the Canada Food Inspection Agency.

When we go to the marketplace as a potential exporter of bees and say to the world: we are disease-free, you can trust us and the bees that we provide you will be disease-free; well, the world would come back to us and say, why would we trust you? You don't even trust the United Nations. You are potentially selling us a bill of goods about your disease-free status.

So that's why, Mr. Chair, it is really, really important not only to keep the door open for the reasons I've articulated but also to say that while we would only anticipate an importation of Apis on very rare and exceptional circumstances, we should be open to the concept. Because it makes for good husbandry, good agricultural practice, good food security but also it's showing respect to the fact that there is value to having the United Nations articulate and certify that disease-free status is important, it is valuable and should be trusted.

Then when we get our disease-free status that we say the exact same thing to the world. It would be contradictory and hypocritical if we were to turn around and say, yes, but we don't trust the United Nations, we don't trust the Canada Food Inspection Agency, we don't trust Australia. We don't care about their certification. We feel that we are in danger, at risk by importing these from them because

they're not trustworthy. That would be a very, very poor and unwise move.

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

**MR. LESTER:** I appreciate the minister's passion for the pride in our potential industry, but the reason for me asking for the requirement of an export permit would largely be to make sure that local demand for beehives and the expansion of our industry within our own province would be met first prior to an export.

Will the minister now consider the requirement of an export permit?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** It would be a privilege to do so, and it would be a badge of courage and a badge of success. So absolutely, Mr. Chair, that would be the way we'd want to go. I think the value of our exports would really come first from the fact that if we can get that certified status; but, yes, this is where we are going. We are already in that place.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay.

One more question regarding the export permit. Part of the idea of an export permit would be, we would actually be able to track where the bees were going throughout the world so that if, indeed, there was an outbreak of the mite in that jurisdiction, we would be able to certify that that beehive left our province healthy and safe and that there would not be a cause for a source location in our own province.

Will the minister consider that as part of the necessity for an export permit?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** I'm prepared to consider anything that is good and worthwhile.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Can I ask the minister, will he consider bringing me in on this discussion and letting me help or contribute to the development of the regulations?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Chair, why wouldn't I?

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

**CHAIR:** Any other questions?

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We know that bees are declining in parts of the world, largely due to intensive farming practices and excessive use –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. J. DINN:** – of agricultural pesticides. As we understand it, our government is currently experimenting with the production of canola oil and there are large agricultural fields where sprays are occurring to prevent the cabbage moth on these canola plants. There's been certainly evidence to suggest that pesticides weaken bees, and openly killing them.

I'm just wondering, will the provincial apiarist give notice to nearby bee colonies when such sprays occur so that these beekeepers can temporarily close their hives to protect their own honeybee populations?

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, for that question.

We have a test tube of that very experience. We have grown canola on the West Coast of the Island, and in terms of assisting with pollination of the canola, we were able to partner with

Tuck's bee farm who brought in the bees and successfully pollinated the canola.

Now, Mr. Chair, interesting enough, the catinoids – my Latin is never all that great – but certain pesticides of certain chemical properties that have been suspect or have been at least perceived to be of concern were used on those particular fields. What I can report to the hon. Member, to this Committee, is that Tuck's found their bee production, their honey production, the survivorship of their bees was never greater.

While that may be anecdotal, and I wouldn't want to carry it too, too far from a controlled experiment point of view, what I can say to you is that we have to use evidence, science-based approach, to determining what the impacts of pesticides are. We are not interested in closing the door on any theory, any hypothesis, but at the same time we will always bend to the findings of science on hard evidence, based on scientific methodologies. What we can say is we rely on the Pest Management Regulatory Agency of Health Canada to guide us in terms of pesticide use and we are doing a pretty darn good job in that regard, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Further follow-up: What types of duties will the apiarist do besides inspections and enforcing regulations? Will there be an education component? I guess even further details with regard to what enforcement would look like.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** As the Minister of Transportation and Works did articulate so well, it will be a busy job. It has a lot of duties attached to it, beyond inspection, beyond audit, beyond the formation of the role or the register. It does indeed contain a significant educational component because, of course, one of the most – perhaps if there was a risk to our honeybee, it's not on legal importation of bees; it's on illegal importation of bees.

Thinking about the whole notion of mandatory registration, I couldn't help but think of another

public policy, which, of course, is not met with a whole lot of satisfaction and support in terms of mandatory registration, and all I can think of – and I should probably keep it in the back of mind instead of voicing it out loud, but you have legal honeybees and legal apiculturists being imposed mandatory registration while the murder hornets are out there unregistered and those bandits don't face the penalties of law.

What kind of a Liberal policy is that, Mr. Chair, where you have law-abiding honeybees facing mandatory registration and illegal bees with no registration requirements to them? That exactly, Mr. Chair, is what it's all about.

With that said –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm not sure even how to respond to that one.

I noticed, in a previous answer, the minister talked about quarantine for up to a year, if I heard it correctly. I'm thinking about if a hive is discovered that may have the mite illegally imported, however, I'm wondering if it's going to be in quarantine for up to a year – which will make COVID-19 restrictions, I guess, on bees look significantly less – where would this quarantine take place? Obviously, it would have to be inside. How do you keep the bees alive? Short of sugar water and things like that.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** One of the most beautiful things about the honeybee, of course, is they're colonizers. It's really not difficult to keep them attracted to their homes, so quarantine is not a difficult endeavour.

One of the things that we're looking at for Pynn's Brook is a potential quarantine facility, to establish a quarantine facility there so that that quarantine period can be monitored. With that said, as I was approached with that by staff

and by others I said, well, I have to tell you that would be an awful lot of effort because the incidences of importation will be very few and far between. It will be a rare and unique circumstance, as I said before, so the actual requirement for a quarantine facility will be very, very low.

That, I think, helps me emphasize that we really need to be solutions not in search of problems. We don't need to invent or make mountains out of mole hills – and the hon. Member is not doing that. I'm saying that he's allowing me an opportunity to re-emphasize that quarantine is an important aspect but quarantine will only come into play when there's a suspected positive for Varroa in a hive, and that is a very rare circumstance.

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

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No, I'm not looking for a solution in search of a problem. But I'm reminded by what my father used to say, that in certain volunteer fire departments they used to keep the old fire engine in case of false alarms.

I appreciate the fact that there will be the stringent conditions on importation; I'm still asking is there going to be some contingency plan just in case? It doesn't have to be elaborate. I'm just trying to get my head around the quarantine. Will it be an enclosed facility, whether netting, mesh? I'm just trying to get an idea of how – I understand that honeybees stick to their hive, but they do swarm every now and again. I'm just trying to get an idea of how do you quarantine bees, creatures that can take off.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BYRNE:** And it is an excellent question, Mr. Chair.

One of the things, I think, rather than speaking from me as a neophyte in this in terms of the science and technology and husbandry of bees, take up the conversation with the chief apiarist – I would welcome that.

With the knowledge that I do have is that as a colonizer, as a herding animal, quarantine is not very difficult. But I want to rest assure the Member that if there was ever any legal importation, there would be eradication. We take samples so that we can make sure that we had full awareness of what was brought in. We do traceability, but there would be eradication. So the necessity of quarantine in that case would be limited.

If a suspect case came forward within an existing legal colony, then we'd rely on the methods that have been age-old methods of quarantine and rely on the natural instinctual behaviours of honeybees as a colonizer to keep those – it's not done within an enclosed facility. You utilize the nature of the animal itself to be able to create the quarantine. But I'm sure that experts with far more knowledge than I would be far more convincing – and justifiably so, more convincing – would be able to provide the hon. Member with a good analysis of why that works.

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

**MR. J. DINN:** No, done. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Any other questions?

Seeing none, we'll let her be, I guess.

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

**CHAIR:** All those in favour of clause 1.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those in favour, 'aye.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK (Murphy):** Clause 2.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 2 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 3 to 5 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 3 to 5 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 3 through 5 carried.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Animal Health And Protection Act.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report Bill 39 without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

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

I move the Committee rise and report Bill 39.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 39.

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 (Reid):** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

**MR. BENNETT:** 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 directed him to report Bill 39 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**MS. COADY:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

**MS. COADY:** Now, by leave.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Leave.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

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

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

Order 2, third reading of Bill 21.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Third reading of Bill 21, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act.

**MS. COADY:** I move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, Bill 21, be now read the third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded the Bill 21 be now read a third time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act. (Bill 21)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 21)

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

**MS. COADY:** Order 3, third reading of Bill 25.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that An Act To Amend The Social Workers Act, Bill 25, be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a third time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Social Workers Act. (Bill 25)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Social Workers Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 25)

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

**MS. COADY:** Order 4, third reading of Bill 27.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury, that Bill 27, An Act To Amend The Personal Property Security Act, be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a third time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Personal Property Security Act. (Bill 27)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Personal Property Security Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 27)

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

**MS. COADY:** Order 5, third reading of Bill 39, by leave.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources, that Bill 39, An Act To Amend The Animal Health and Protection Act, be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a third time.

We didn't do the vote on that, so I'm going to revert and we'll do that.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Animal Health And Protection Act. (Bill 39)

**MR. SPEAKER:** We've read the bill.

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Animal Health And Protection Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 39)

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

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

I want to thank my colleagues in the House for a very productive and constructive session, Mr. Speaker. I wish them all well over the next couple of months; continued strength and good health in this COVID pandemic. Thankfully, Newfoundland and Labrador is continuing to do well. Hopefully, during the next number of months, we shall continue in that vein.

Mr. Speaker, tradition would mean that the leaders have a few moments to wish everyone well, but I do want to recognize the Table Officers; I want to recognize you, Mr. Speaker; the many people behind the scenes that make this House of Assembly function as well as it does. I thank each and every person in this House of Assembly for their co-operation, their hard work, their efforts on behalf of their constituents and, of course, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I turn it to you, Mr. Speaker, to bring forward the Leaders to say their words.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It's my understanding the Lieutenant-Governor is ready to enter, so we'll do that before we do some concluding comments.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has arrived.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All rise.



(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor takes the Chair.)

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** It is the wish of Her Honour the Lieutenant-Government that all present be seated.

**MR. SPEAKER:** May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the province has at its present session passed certain bills, to which, in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, "An Act To Amend The Cannabis Control Act." (Bill 19)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Medical Care And Hospital Insurance Act." (Bill 20)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act." (Bill 21)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Social Workers Act." (Bill 25)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Personal Property Security Act." (Bill 27)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Forestry Act." (Bill 28)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Animal Health And Protection Act." (Bill 39)

**HER HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR (Judy May Foote, PC, ONL):** In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

I'm hoping you're going to give me a little time to wish you all well and to thank you for all of your hard work. These are different times. As I look around the House of Assembly, it reminds me that I don't think I've ever been in a situation where we've had to physical distance, particularly in Parliament.

I commend each and every one of you for all that you have done through this ordeal; unprecedented times, as we've heard said many times. I compliment each and every one of you, as you have been called upon to do your job in a different manner. You've risen to the occasion,

obviously, with very little choice if you wanted to stay safe. Your job is one where you're required to gather in large gatherings, you're required to be in close contact with people and often, and you've had to find new ways of doing that. I commend you for doing that.

I think that's part of why we've done so well in Newfoundland and Labrador during this pandemic. I will single out the all-party COVID Committee and congratulate you on the work that you've done. It's been very important work. I also single out, of course, Dr. Fitzgerald, Dr. Haggie and Premier Ball for the leadership you have provided in our province, where we have come through this in a way that we can all be proud, the way that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have come together, recognizing that if we want to be safe, we really must follow the guidelines. It's better to be safe than sorry.

I thank all of you who have been involved, particularly the teams that have worked on making sure that the guidelines were what they should be and that we all know what is expected of us. Even at Government House, we've had to do things differently. In cancelling all of the events, we have had to find ways to reach out to the community and we've done that.

I also want to acknowledge our essential workers, those who have gone above and beyond. Sometimes we wonder, and we forget as well, that those on the front lines go to work while the rest of us stay home in safety. So thank you to all of our essential workers for being there for all of us, for – as we say with firefighters – going into the fire when the rest of us are running away. I thank them from the bottom of my heart for being there, for never questioning, but for doing the right thing because that is who they are.

They are our front-line workers and they do keep us safe, not just during a pandemic but all the time. I think it is important that we acknowledge that, and all of you have done that, which is also important because you're leaders. You are the ones they look up to. They know that you have their back and I thank you for having their back through this pandemic.

I also think that this is my last opportunity, at least in the House of Assembly, to thank Premier

Ball. I want to do this because when we enter politics, we do so for all the right reasons; we want to make a difference. We go at it full of life wanting to do everything we can, but that doesn't mean that along the way we don't encounter those who don't agree with us, and that's okay too. Constructive criticism is always welcome; it makes a difference to what we do in our jobs and what we do in our province.

Sometimes there are personal attacks that aren't very kind and for all of you who get into public life, I know these can be difficult times. Premier Ball, you've led us through some very difficult times. You've done your very best and for that, on behalf of Her Majesty and on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I sincerely thank you.

We all give a lot of our time. We're all away from our families when we're asked to do these jobs, or when we want to do these jobs and when the people elect us to do these jobs. I thank you for all that you've done, for being there for all of us, being away from your family for expended periods of time. That is never easy, particularly when you have a new granddaughter. Thank you for being the man that you are, for stepping up when the province needed you and fulfilling your responsibilities in the best way you thought possible.

We always want to be seen to be doing our best and, yes, constructive criticism is always welcome because that enables us to do a better job, but I know when it gets personal it can be difficult. You grow a thick skin sometimes and you get through it, but always knowing that the job you've done is the best one you could possibly have done. Thank you and I welcome this opportunity to say that in the House of Assembly today to all of your colleagues.

Thank you to the Leaders of the Opposition for your leadership during this difficult time. It's really important that we work together, and you have done that. You've done that during COVID-19. I said to the Clerk when I walked in today, I watch the House of Assembly when I can, like I watch the House of Commons when I can. I think it's important in this job to stay on top of what's happening in our province and in our country. I have followed and appreciate everything that you have done to make sure that,

to this point, we've gotten through the pandemic in as good a manner as we possibly could have, and I hope that will continue.

I wish all of you safety, good health and always bear in mind that as long as you're doing the very best you can, no one can ask more of you.

Thank you so much for continuing to do your best, to working as hard as you are, as you have been and as I am sure you will continue to do on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

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

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

(Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor leaves the Chamber.)

(The Speaker returns to the Chair.)

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

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

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

I ask for leave of the House for a statement.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Leave.

**MR. OSBORNE:** I thank my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the day we recess I've always looked at as a very positive day, people are very pleasant and we kind of lay down our swords as we prepare for the summer. This is a bit of a different day. We have an individual in the House who is laying down his sword for the last time as Premier of the province. So I'd like to acknowledge him and some of the things that – he may have a different list of what he sees as his accomplishments, but some of the things that I see as his accomplishments. It's certainly not a full list, Mr. Speaker, but I just wanted to touch on some of the things that I've seen, and I've seen that bit of a twinkle in his eye because of him being proud of those particular things.

The Autism Action Plan, I think, was one of the corner stones, something that the Premier was proud of and I think something that served our province very well. I know that he had a passion for mental health. I remember him saying at one point that it's one of the things he wanted to be remembered for was improving services for mental health, the replacement of the Waterford Hospital and changing the focus on mental health so that people see it no differently than diabetes or cardiac issues; it's a health issue. Also, the Premier's task force on education and the improvements to the education system as a result of that task force.

We put forward a private Member's resolution yesterday, and I commend the Member who brought it forward, and the Legislature, because it asks that we bring forward a budget before an election. One of the things I remember the Premier did as one of his first pieces of legislation – we didn't really need the private Member's resolution, but that's not to downplay it because it is important, and it was a good private Member's resolution, but the Premier brought forward a piece of legislation to ensure that there was a financial update within three months of a provincial election, and without one being provided at least 15 days before the call of an election.

I see the Premier as someone who led the province through a fiscal crisis; guided us through one of the worst fiscal situations our province has ever seen. The only time that I could see that even compared during my lifetime was the collapse of the ground fishery. I know that during the ground fishery we lost some 30,000 jobs; within just a few years of the collapse of the ground fishery, we lost 60,000 people from this province. We've never truly recovered from that. At our peak we had 590,000 people here. Just after the collapse of the ground fishery, we went down to about 530,000.

Leading us through that fiscal crisis – and it was different than the collapse of the ground fishery but it was the perfect storm because we had spiralling oil prices which, in and of itself, would be difficult for the province to deal with. We had the three megaprojects coming to a close, which had roughly 17,000 very high-paying jobs attached to those. The fourth

megaproject that many people don't always consider, but at the peak of employment in Fort McMurray, we had 10,000 people travelling from this province to Fort McMurray bringing home large paycheques. Literally thousands of those people, because of the spiralling of oil prices and because of the fire in Fort McMurray, their jobs were displaced.

We didn't have 30,000 employees like we did in the collapse of the ground fishery, but it was certainly two-thirds of that. We didn't see two-thirds of 60,000 people leaving. I believe it was in part because of the economic diversification, which we didn't always see because it made up for the jobs that were lost in the megaprojects and through Fort McMurray.

We saw him lead us through some very tough decisions. Like passing out tough medicine, it is not always easy to take. People sometimes remember him for the tough medicine, Mr. Speaker, but I referred at one point to it being like Buckley's; it didn't taste very good, but it was necessary at the time.

I remember a quote during the collapse of the ground fishery by the father of the Leader of the Opposition. That was a very difficult time I would say for your father and a very difficult time for the province but he said: I didn't take the fish out of the water.

Well, I can say, of our Premier, he didn't put the deficit to where it was when we took office – and not looking across the hall because it was a perfect storm. It was conditions that were beyond the control of anybody really in this Legislature, but the Premier dealt with those issues.

Mr. Speaker, he led us through Muskrat Falls, a megaproject, which had wildly gone off the rails in terms of cost and timelines, and he accomplished for us the Atlantic Accord, which reduced our debt by over \$2 billion. He did that without reducing the intent of the Atlantic Accord or taking money out of what we were already receiving, but essentially got for us the equivalent of the Hibernia shares. That was what the Atlantic Accord accomplished for us. At the time, he was criticized for getting a set amount, but with spiralling oil prices now, we see the benefit and the wisdom of that decision.

He guided us through Snowmageddon, along with the ministers that were involved, and most recently, guided us through COVID-19, the pandemic. I would say of all provinces in Canada, we certainly shone in terms of how that was dealt with.

Those are just to name a few, but I think the Premier has dealt with some very turbulent times. In the five years that he's been Premier, probably more turbulence and more challenges – as I said the perfect storm – than any other premier in a five-year period, I would say.

I certainly hope that history will remember him fondly and for guiding us through those most turbulent times. He's done so with a great deal of dignity, with honour and I can say that I am proud of the way that he has done that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Mr. Speaker, I'll assume I have leave of the House to make some brief remarks.

Mr. Speaker, with summer vacation pending, it's customary to thank all those whose service makes the House possible: the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Clerk, the Table Officers, the security staff, indeed the cleaning staff that keep the place neat and tidy and, particularly today, the works and services personal who've worked diligently on the layout and outfitting of the House so that we can come together in person and avoid the trials and tribulations of a virtual sitting. I'm sure they will have more work to do outfitting the place further over the summer. So thank you to all those folks who have worked so diligently to serve the people and the Members who represent the people in these very challenging times.

Today marks the occasion of the Premier's retirement as Premier in this House. I listened carefully to the remarks by the Minister of Finance, and with so many plaudits involved, a note of caution may be in order because an individual with the bounce, resilience and

longevity of the current Premier is capable of defeating all predictions of retirement.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** And has already done so more than once.

To continue with the laying down the sword metaphor, I'm told that in ancient days they had a different concept of social distancing. It was measured by sword length between the head of government of the day and the Leader of the Opposition. Indeed, I'm also told that Speakers in the early days of parliament who were sent to inform the king that he had suffered grievous losses in the wars against France often lost their heads for their pains.

Now, if the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources can begin a speech on the protection of bees by quoting Shakespeare, I think it's in order for me to do so in marking the occasion of the retirement of a head of government, our Premier. I would do so by quoting from Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar* where Antony was speaking at Caesar's funeral. He said the following: "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears. / I have come to bury Caesar, not to praise him." But I would flip that around and say, Members of the Legislature, lend me your ears. I have come to praise the Premier, not to bury him.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Shakespeare goes on further in that passage to have Antony say: "He hath brought many" – this is of Caesar now – "captives home to Rome, / Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill." Perhaps the Hibernia dividend deal is a modern equivalent to captive ransom, although it may not quite the general coffers fill.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the Minister of Finance mentioned my father, the hon. John Crosbie. I remember the occasion of his investiture with the Order of Canada in 1997, and I happened to be seated at a table with the Right Honourable Joe Clark who made the remark that the most important quality of a practicing politician was resilience and, in fact, it was one of the most important qualities for

living a good life and a life of contribution in general. I think that the Right Honourable Joe Clark was right about that, and we see that quality in abundance in the Premier – resilience.

If I have been critical in the past it's because it was my job, and the Premier better than anyone – given his record of service – would know that and hopefully excuses that.

It is said that hero is the world's shortest lived profession, but I have to believe the head of government is not far behind.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** It seems to have a 10-year maximum longevity. If the head of government lasts that long, then it could be said that he or she and their government have gone deeply into frailty and dementia. Five-and-a-half years is retirement well before the normal ravages of governmental old age and a record of longevity in itself and it represents a retirement well deserved in the prime of governmental life, and the Premier is to be congratulated on that achievement.

On a personal note, the Premier was solicitous and kind in the arrangements and events surrounding the state funeral, which he and the government accorded to my late father. Kind and solicitous and the occasion, with the help of government and many public servants, came together in a fitting tribute to the contribution my father made in his many years of public service, that was proportional to the solemnity of the event.

I'd like to also mention that I've gotten to know the Premier better through many virtual meetings, perhaps close to 100 in the course of the work of the Public Health Response Committee, mentioned by Her Honour, and one of the qualities that came across to me is the Premier's sense of humour. Indeed, this morning we began the call with the usual pleasantries about the weather, and I spoke up and I said: this may be your last chance as Premier to actually do something about the weather. To which he applied with alacrity: that was a federal jurisdiction.

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

**MR. CROSBIE:** Politically deft to the very end.

It's fitting to reflect a little bit on history and the transitory nature of events. I'd like to quote from Churchill, from his remarks on his predecessor as wartime Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. They were steadfast adversaries on matters of policy, but honourable comrades in pursuit of the greater good.

Churchill said: "It is not given to human beings ... to foresee or to predict to any large extent the unfolding course of events. In one phase men seem to have been right, in another they seem to have been wrong. Then again, a few years later, when the perspective of time has lengthened, all stands in a different setting. There is a new proportion. There is another scale of values.... What is the worth of all this? The only guide to a man is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions. It is very imprudent to walk through life without this shield, because we are so often mocked by the failure of our hopes and the upsetting of our calculations; but with this shield, however the fates may play, we march always in the ranks of honour."

Thus it is, Mr. Speaker, with the hon. Premier.

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

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

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

I move that (inaudible).

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Excuse me (inaudible).

**MS. COADY:** No, I have to move a motion. I just didn't notice the time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We still have half an hour.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, pursuant to Standing Order 11(1) that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 18. That's seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Works.

That's just precautionary, Mr. Speaker. I don't want us to have to rush.

Thank you.

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

**MS. COFFIN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I promise not to take us to 5:30.

I doubt very much if I will wax nearly as eloquently as the Leader of the Official Opposition. Very well said, Sir, and thank you very much.

I would like to take this time to thank everyone for all of the hard work that we have collectively done in this House. This has been a remarkable year. When I signed up for this, it wasn't on my wish list but, wow, this has been absolutely incredible.

Reflecting on last year this time, the mood has changed substantially. I feel as if we have been renewed. Earlier in the day I was thinking it feels like the last day of school, which is just a wonderful thing. We are all excited for the great job we've done. We're looking forward to Level 2 coming and seeing our friends again. I couldn't think of a higher note to retire on to be able to say we are now COVID-free here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MS. COFFIN:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot say enough for the staff here at the Legislature. I don't know when they go home. I don't know when they sleep or eat. The work that has been done is remarkable. We leave, we come back and everything that we could possibly think of has been taken care of. Thank you so much for making all of these things happen in the background, and the Hansard recording staff who have played a fun game of find everybody in their new places – a new game of hide-and-go-seek at our House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have a quote. The best I can pull from right now is, given the delay with COVID-19 I would like to thank Gord Downie perhaps for – your retirement has perhaps been a long time running. Mr. Downie certainly has

provided lots of inspiration for us all and his love for Newfoundland and Labrador, I think, makes him a very appropriate person to quote from.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting time, of course, because as the Premier has been retiring I am just starting my career. I feel privileged to be able to overlap, to see how his leadership has grown and changed over the last five years. Wow, you really have had quite a five years.

I know how I feel when I go home; I know the responsibilities I have. I know how hard it is to turn off the day, I know how hard it is to look at social media and I know that I do not have nearly the same pressures as you. So I really, really am very impressed with how steadfast you have been, how level headed, how clear and the great leader that you have been in seeing us through these very trying times. I do thank you, Premier, for being a very good leader through this.

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

**MS. COFFIN:** I, too, have gotten to know the Premier throughout this. I know how hard myself and my caucus are, I know what our questions are like and that's our job. I'm sure there are days you're like, ah, but you have addressed our questions well, even when they've been a little bit angry and we've done our own version of sabre-rattling, as it has been. I've had the opportunity now, especially since the joint Committee, to get to know the Premier as well. I concur, you have a lovely sense of humour and I thoroughly enjoyed that. Thank you very much.

Your passion for our province is just incredible and it is quite obvious to anyone who speaks to you about the issues that are important to us. That comes through loud and clear in conversation, so that's an especial piece that I hold close. Getting to know you as well, we know now how to push your buttons. I appreciate the latitude there. Thank you very much.

The other thing that I also know about you is you are a very good hockey player. The rumour was that we were going to try sometime, but it was terribly thwarted. I doubt very much if you have your hockey stick in your locker right now,

so I doubt very much if we're doing it in the parking lot. Maybe perhaps when retirement comes I would be delighted to lace up my skates and perhaps play left wing.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak. Thank you, Premier, for your leadership, for allowing us to get to know you and for bringing us to zero COVID cases. I wish you every happiness and opportunity and so much time with your granddaughter when you retire. I can actually see the stress melt away from you, as we get closer and closer to August 3.

Thank you very much for your time and you enjoy yourself. Thank you much for letting me speak.

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

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Wow, I turned my phone off; I was expecting a call from a funeral director.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** I'm not surprised the Leader of the Third Party would decide to play left wing not right wing.

I really want to thank everyone for – yeah, I've been sitting and thinking and actually even staring at this desk and this chair for quite a bit of time today, just reflecting on all the things that have happened in the last 10 years since I first came into this House and sat in a number of chairs and benches that are here. I can tell you there are an awful lot of real good memories.

The memories are not really on the words that people have said but it's really about the personalities and the characteristics of the people who sit in the chairs and deliver those words. It's been entertaining at times, there's no question about that.

One of the things I said to the media in closing, as the mics were kind of shut off and the cameras were quiet, if there's anything I did not like – a lot of the questions that the media would have asked me in this scrum area. But I've

always had respect for those who asked the questions and that remains true to every person in this House of Assembly today.

I keep reminding many young people that I speak to quite often – people that we would have entertained and brought in, spoke about this House – how important it is to never forget why we sit in those chairs. Whatever wing you're playing or whatever position you're playing, you have a responsibility to represent the people that put you and allow you to sit in those chairs.

For all of you that have answered what would have been difficult questions from time to time and I know when you've sat down – I've been in that situation; you sit down and you often look over, wink and shake your heads. I know you have a job to do. I appreciate it and respect it and so you should.

There's a bit of a myth going on. I'm not retiring; I just don't know what I'm going to do yet. I know I don't qualify for CERB, I know I don't qualify for the other federal programs, but I'm going to find a way. Someone asked me today: what's the next chapter of your life? I don't know because there's the first chapter that I haven't finished writing yet. I have some more things left to do, just not sure what it is. I'm feeling great. I feel healthy. I have a lot of great family and friends.

I will say to the Leader of the Opposition, I had a lot of great opportunities and these will be part of my memories, of sitting at dinner tables and official functions with your father. I do remember – because he had a great sense of humour, too – his book well. I've taken it and just read it, and reread it and so on.

I can remember one conversation in a quiet room at Government House one day, and like we always do – and for those who will eventually sit in this chair, you'll recognize if you go to Government House, and before any official function, usually you're called into the room where the Lieutenant-Governor is and there's time for a little quiet chat.

Now, to the Leader of the Opposition, I'm sure you've been in a room with a lot of quiet chats with your dad for other reasons, but I was there and I can remember telling him, I said I really

think you need to take that book out, dust it off and write some more chapters to it. Because even after his political career was over and even after the book was released, he still had a major influence on Newfoundland and Labrador.

So maybe there's a chapter or two, I say to the Leader of the Opposition, that you might want to pick up that book and kind of add a few chapters of the influence that he had, even since that book was written. I always look back at that book and encourage people to read it because it tells a lot about history, the political life in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I don't want to go on and on and on, but it's been, as I said, 10 years of sitting in this Legislature, and here's the other thing: I've been here for 10 years, but it took me almost 10 years to get here, too.

I've always had an interest in politics, and in my own life, I wasn't the one in our family that people would have thought would have been sitting in this chair. It would have been my brother, or one of my other brothers or somebody else. It really wasn't me, because I didn't mind playing the wing. I wasn't interested in being the centre person in all of this. I was always a good supporter of others, but I think that's what makes leadership. That's what makes a leader successful.

I think it was Mandela who said that real leaders must learn to lead from behind and allow your team, allow your troops to get out and do some of the heavy lifting so that they can get the experience of being leaders. When I look around this room today, I see potential leaders in all of you and I encourage you, whatever the aspect of life where leadership is required, step up. You have the ability. If people put their faith, confidence and trust in you, never be afraid or fear stepping up.

Sometimes it's really nice to put yourself in the situation where – I like to do it often, when I get on snowshoes somewhere, I hate to go on and follow a beaten track. I love to get off somewhere where it's a bit of a challenge that you have to overcome in life. I think all of us in this room – I see many people like you that are able to do that, so I encourage you to continue to do it.

As I conclude my remarks today, the people in this building, the people who support us, they're numerous. There are just so many of them. We often refer to those, the security guards, the people at the desk that I come in early in the mornings and they're there. They're saying good morning to us and when we leave late at night – yes, I say to the Member for Bonavista just two nights ago, it was after 11 o'clock. I met you; you were coming out of the elevator and I was going out as well. There was someone at that entrance saying good night to us, just like they say good morning to us in the morning.

I've often went out late at night, especially in the wintertime, and realized that you know what that car didn't get cleaned off by someone; it was done on purpose by somebody who knew that we were working late and they took the time out of their day. Sometimes you did not even know who it was; you just had to say thank you to everyone, the way they respect and they way they treat us.

We don't have Pages here now, but there are so many of them that have touched my life and many of them, but it's refreshing, still keep in contact. The staff, the Hansard staff, all those people. As I run to the airport and being late and there were flights that were left and people were waiting for the Premier, I would duck in and make sure that if there was a staff member with me that we would go on because they were the ones. I know I might have interfered in some of your life, but I want to thank them for doing what they do and ask them forgiveness at this time.

As I finish up today, thank you. I've had the privilege to serve with a lot of great MHAs over the years, especially those who are my colleagues that sit with me as a party, people that I've had the opportunity to lead, people that I've had the opportunity to work with in our office staff, your Opposition staff as well. They all made a significant contribution to our ministers and EAs and the people that work with them. First and foremost, it is all about, let's never forget, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Regardless of the community they live in, they deserve us to support them.

I do want to speak for a few minutes about the All-Party Committee and the Leader of the



Opposition. I'll always remember the call that came in saying maybe this is an opportunity. I didn't hesitate; I phoned the Leader of the Third Party and within minutes, without a terms of reference, without spending days and days and days on what this Committee is going to look like, we did what you do with a 911 call: We all stepped up and responded to what was a crisis or is a crisis, in this province and around the world.

I really want to thank you because I got to know you a lot better and I'm not going to tell the story here today, that the picture that I had – maybe I will – in my mind when the Leader of the Opposition – this was just a few days ago – I won't call him by name; I know it's unparliamentary but we all know. He said, well, this is my birthday and I'm sitting here in my onesie and I think –

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

**PREMIER BALL:** I just can't picture that for some reason.

To the Leader of the Third Party, likewise, we've gotten to know each other so much better. I think our personalities and characteristics were just a really good combination; excellent teamwork and I owe and we all owe a lot to you for the success that we have. Here's where it made a difference.

Newfoundland and Labrador sent a loud, strong message to everyone in this country that we were willing to tackle this on to the benefit of the people of our province. I will tell you, we challenge other provinces, because I heard it every day on those calls. People were watching us, people admired what we're doing and I thank you very much for this, such an important (inaudible).

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

**PREMIER BALL:** So, with that said, I will conclude my remarks by saying thank you very much, have a good summer, enjoy your families and take some time for yourself. I'm going to be doing some fishing. And yes, to the Leader of the Third Party, that game is still on.

So thank you very much, everyone, enjoy your summer.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Before we close today, it's customary that the Speaker have a few words as well.

The ending of this sitting has been unusual time. It's interesting, I've been through a few ends of sessions and as the Leader of the Third Party said, it's often like the last day of school. People are in a good mood and things like that. Also, people exhibit a side of politics that we often don't see. It's the collegiality of Members of this House. We often see ourselves questioning, in a confrontational sort of mode, but it's good to see us be able to come together at the end and recognize each other as people and the work we're doing and the sacrifices we make to come here.

As I listened to some of the comments in relation to the Premier's contribution, that's certainly true in his case, the contribution he's made, the sacrifice he's made to be here in the House.

As the Opposition Leader's father said when he told someone he was Minister of Finance in Newfoundland for a while, that was one hell of a job, he said. So I guess that's something the Premier has an understanding of as well. It's been a turbulent time and it's interesting that we all recognize the contribution he's made over the years.

I, as Speaker of the House, would like to thank you as well for your contribution to the province.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** We've had an unusual session, so I want to give a few thank-yous as well before we conclude for today.

Thank you to the employees who've gone above and beyond in terms of making this session possible. I want to recognize some people, I may leave some people out, but I want to recognize these people: Natalie Hollett, Bill Davis, Darrell Kelly and their team from the Department of Transportation and Works. They measured this

House up several times and they moved desks around and things like that, trying to get everyone here on the floor and safe, so we could conduct our affairs in a safe way. I want to thank them.

I want to thank Cathy Simms and the team of Darren Churchill, Cal Tobin and Sean Dawe, in the House of Assembly Broadcast Centre for working their magic in allowing us all to be seen and heard as they rewired the House and things like that. I want to thank them for the work they've done in making this possible.

I also want to thank some people from Service NL and the Department of Health. Darryl Johnson from Service NL who did the final inspection of the House to make sure it was ready, that it was safe. I want to thank Alison Tucker, Colleen Simms, Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, Karen Stone of the Department of Health and Community Services who gave us advice and reviewed our plans for the configuration of the House before we opened.

I also want to thank Michelle Evans, Megan Neal, Andy Petten of the General Operations unit of Corporate and Members' Services who ensured that all the items, such as hand sanitizers and masks, things that we never needed and never had to think about before, were present here at the House.

I want to thank Bobbi Russell, our Policy and Communications Officer, who organizes the scrum and makes sure everything is compliant with the new realities that we live in.

I also want to thank the employees that are usually not seen here around the House, but they play an important part in the operations of the House. The employees at the library; the Hansard division who keep the records of what we say here in the House; Corporate and Members' Services; Information Management; Maureen Dooley and Yvonne Power of the Clerk's Office. All of these people do a vital job in supporting the House.

I also want to thank our Table Officers here and the Sergeant-at-Arms for the work they've done in making this all possible as well and making it all safe for us.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Again, thank you all. I wish you all well in your duties outside of the House as we proceed through the summer. I hope to see you all soon.

Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Again, I thank my colleagues in the House for their co-operation and their hard work over this session. I thank the Premier for his wisdom, his integrity, his honour and, most especially, his friendship.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the House does now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

This House now stands adjourned to the call of the Chair.

On motion, the House adjourned to the call of the Chair.