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*Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA*

Thursday

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**SPEAKER (Bennett):** Admit strangers.

Order, please!

Before we begin Routine Proceedings, I would like to observe an old parliamentary tradition. I have the pleasant task of formally welcoming the Member who was duly elected in the election of April 15, 2024. The Member is Jim McKenna, representing the District of Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

I have been advised by the Clerk of the House that the Member has taken the Affirmation of Allegiance to the Crown as required by the *Constitution Act, 1867*, and the Affirmation of Office as required by the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, and also has signed the Members' Roll.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, it is my great honour to present to you, Jim McKenna, the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels who wishes to claim his right to his seat.

**SPEAKER:** Let the Member take his seat.

Congratulations, Sir.

**J. MCKENNA:** Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** In the Speaker's gallery today, I would like to welcome Alice McKenna, wife of the new Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels, along with their family and friends.

Welcome.

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

**SPEAKER:** In the public gallery, I'd like to recognize former MHA Clayton Forsey.

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

**SPEAKER:** Also in the public gallery, welcome to Falon McLoughlan and her father, Wade McLoughlan. Falon is being recognized this afternoon in a Member's statement.

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

**SPEAKER:** Also welcome to Mayor Juanita Stone and Councillor Bob Stone who are visiting us from Red Bay.

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

**SPEAKER:** And, finally, welcome to the Pasadena Academy Concert Band with their teachers Catherine Dinn and Daphne Reid.

Welcome.

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

### Statements by Members

**SPEAKER:** Today, we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Humber - Bay of Islands, Labrador West, Lake Melville, Mount Pearl - Southlands, Mount Pearl North, Stephenville - Port au Port with leave.

The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

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

I ask for leave. It's going to be a bit longer than the normal 200 minutes.

**SPEAKER:** Does the Member have leave?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Leave.

**SPEAKER:** Leave is granted.

**E. JOYCE:** On April 21, 2024, tragedy struck in Lark Harbour when two of the finest young men made heaven a much better place.

Trevor Childs and Nicholas Skinner (Bruddy) were working at their passion, fishing, when the tragedy struck.

Trevor and Nicholas were loved by all and their tragedy brought the towns of Lark Harbour and York Harbour together as one to support the families and friends.

Trevor was a person who was always there to help anyone, and he loved the outdoors. He was a great husband, father, son, brother and friend, and a man with a huge heart.

Nicholas was an energetic young man who loved being in the company of Trevor. Bruddy loved the outdoors and loved it to the fullest. He loved hunting, fishing, ski-dooing, snowboarding and many other outdoor activities. His true love, Martina, made his life complete. They were inseparable and their love for each other was evident with their smiles and the fun they had together. Bruddy's smile was contagious and he made everybody around him feel like they were special.

Trevor and Bruddy could light up any room and everybody loved them, who they met and knew them, and they will be remembered fondly.

The towns of Lark Harbour and York Harbour were shaken by this tragedy but they came together to support the families in the true Newfoundland way.

Thank you to the Town of Lark Harbour, the deputy mayor and the two town clerks for opening the doors to give people an opportunity to grieve and share the lives of these two men.

Thank you for the two ladies who arranged the vigil. It was truly special.

Thank you, also, to the ACW who hosted the gathering after the funeral, and to Reverend Organ and the lay readers who were so helpful at this sad time.

Ryder and Trudy did a fantastic job of remembering the men and sharing the story of their lives.

Thank you to Premier Furey for attending the funeral and meeting the families, as it gave them a great deal of comfort knowing that the province was with them during this trying time.

Tommy and Sharon lost their son and grandson; Joanna lost her husband; and Carrie, Addisyn and Reece lost their dad; Terrie and Sandy lost a brother; and Dale and Valerie lost their son-in-law.

Martina lost the love of her life; Terrie and Darryl lost a son; Aleigha and Ryder lost their brother.

We all share in your grief and will keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

The extended family members and friends will certainly remember these two young men who were so kind, loved and were so special to the fellow fishers and anyone who met them.

There's a saying that it's not how long you're on the earth but the number of people you have touched while on the earth. With the outpouring of support, the visitations, the huge crowd at the church and school, which was never seen before, these two men touched many lives and made this world a better place. Their legacy will live on.

I thank all Members for their support, kind words and prayers, which you have shown the families through this difficult time. The families were appreciative of your kindness.

Thank you.

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

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

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Speaker.

I rise today to congratulate the Northern Lights Theatre Company who performed, *Making God Laugh*, written by Sean Grennan at the 72nd Annual Provincial Drama Festival held in Gander at the J. R. Smallwood Arts and Culture Centre on April 5, 2024.

The play was directed by Craig Robinson and the stage managed by Marty Byrne with five actors on stage: former MHA Nick McGrath, Sara Sheehan, Kathy-Lynn Shaw, Chad Reid and Daniel Janes.

The Northern Light Theatre Company was nominated for a number of categories and brought home a win for Labrador West. Kathy-Lynn Shaw won Best Supporting Female Actor, Nick McGrath and Daniel Janes were both nominated for Best Supporting Male Actor.

Opportunities such as the Provincial Drama Festival provides theatre groups such as the Northern Lights Theatre Company and the actors within our communities the ability to showcase their talent. We have some amazing talents within all our communities and we wish them the best on the next production and festival.

I'd like to ask all Members to rise and congratulate the Northern Lights Theatre Company on their accomplishments with the 72nd Annual Provincial Drama Festival and a big congratulations to Kathy-Lynn Shaw on her win as Best Supporting Actor.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

**P. TRIMPER:** Labrador bid farewell to a strong leader yesterday, Innu Elder David Nuke.

I knew this former Innu Nation president for 35 years, around the boardroom, on projects, often contesting issues; however, always supporting each other as friends.

Consumed with determination, he was a leader in Nutshimit, from a generation of great leaders that raised the profile of the Innu onto the national and international stage.

He had amazing stamina whether on a long trip or on a long meeting.

David Nuke faced tragedies, challenges and even convictions; however, he always moved forward with the support of the people he represented.

I recall David setting up in hotel lobbies at the Northern Lights events in Ottawa or Montreal. He would meet with businesspeople, politicians, friends or the curious, all looking for his wise counsel.

David recently called to console me when my wife died. He wanted to attend her funeral, however, was not well enough. His compassion for others, regardless of what he was dealing with, were at the heart of this man.

On behalf of Lake Melville, I extend condolences to his family, friends and future generations who will learn about David Nuke and how he made a difference.

Tshenashkumitin.

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

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

**P. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, last week the Mark's Mount Pearl Blades were pleased to host the 2024 Atlantic Junior B hockey

championships, also known as the Don Johnson Memorial Cup.

As one of the MHAs for Mount Pearl, I was pleased to participate in the opening ceremonies and take in some of the action, as did my hon. colleague for Mount Pearl North. Our Mount Pearl Blades represented us well, but unfortunately, fell a little short in the semi-finals to the Kensington Vipers from Prince Edward Island. It was a great week of hockey and in the end, the Antigonish Bulldogs walked away as this year's champions.

An event of this magnitude simply couldn't happen without the hard work and dedication of volunteers. I would therefore ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in acknowledging the efforts of our amazing host committee consisting of the following members: Dave Murphy, Bruce Good, Doug Tibbo, Rod French, Charlie Kearsley, Wally O'Neill, Tina Loveless, Kim Murphy, Trevor Murphy, Joe Guiney, Nicholas Hillier, Gonzo Bennett and Phil White, as well as to all the other volunteers who made this event such a great success.

Thank you for your commitment, not just to the sport of hockey, but to our community as a whole.

Go Blades, go.

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

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

**L. STOYLES:** Thank you, Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize an outstanding sporting accomplishment of Falon McLoughlan from Mount Pearl.

At eighteen months old, Falon was diagnosed with having 100 per cent hearing loss. She currently wears cochlear implants to assist her with her ability to hear.

Recently, Falon travelled to Edmonton to attend a volleyball tryout for Team Canada.

Speaker, following the tryouts, Falon was selected to join Team Canada at the Deaf Pan American Games –

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

**L. STOYLES:** – which will be held in Brazil in November of this year. At the age of 14, Falon will be the youngest member of Team Canada, as her teammates are all over the age of 22. What an accomplishment!

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

**L. STOYLES:** Locally, Falon is a member of St. Peter's 9A team and trains on their Gale Force Volleyball Club. In November of 2023 she was selected as a member of the Gale Force Volleyball 15U High Performance Team that will be competing in 2024 Volleyball Canada Youth Nationals from May 15 to 18.

Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Falon on her accomplishments and extend our best wishes as she and her teammates represent our province, our country on the national and international stage.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, with leave.

Does the Member have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** By leave.

**SPEAKER:** Leave is granted.

**T. WAKEHAM:** Our Lady of Mercy Church in Port au Port is the largest wooden church in Newfoundland and Labrador. Built in 1925 by the people of Port au Port, this church was designated as a Registered

Heritage Structure by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador in 1997.

This building now serves not only as a church but as a popular tourist attraction and the site for many local events. Over the years, climate has taken a toll on the exterior and the structure is maintained strictly by volunteers through fundraisers and donations from community members.

Now we have a chance to help. There is a national competition happening whereby 10 national structures are competing for the grand prize of \$50,000. The only entry from this province is Our Lady of Mercy Church.

I'm asking all Members of this hon. House, as well as the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, to log on to Next Great Save and vote for The Painted Lady. Voting is by email only. The Painted Lady is teetering between first and second place. Competition closes May 6.

Let's bring this home so The Painted Lady can be restored to her former glory for the 100th birthday in 2025.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

#### **Statements by Ministers**

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

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

It's a pleasure to recognize the Faculty of Medicine at Memorial University for its work in matching medical students with family medicine in rural communities.

The faculty is the 2024 recipient of the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada Rural Medical Education Award, which is

presented to a Canadian medical school that matches the most graduates to rural family medicine residency programs.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Memorial led the country by matching 71 per cent of its graduates in 2023 to a rural family medicine residency.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Speaker, I'd also like to recognize Dr. Lyn Power, an assistant professor at the faculty who practises on the Burin Peninsula, who was honoured with the Rural Long Service Award.

The award recognizes physicians who serve in rural Canadian communities for 20 or more years. Dr. Power was also recognized as a Fellow of Rural and Remote Medicine, which is presented to physicians with expertise in rural medicine in Canada.

We are proud of the faculty's and Dr. Power's work and dedication to practising medicine in rural regions.

Speaker, through our support of the faculty, investments in increasing seats for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and investment in recruitment and retention, we are excited about the future of physicians practising in rural communities.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating both the faculty and Dr. Power on these accomplishments.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Speaker.

I'd like to thank the Minister of Health and Community Services for providing me with an advance copy of his statement.

Speaker, the Official Opposition join the minister in recognizing the faculty of medicine at Memorial University and Dr. Lyn Power who was presented with the Rural Long Service Award.

We were delighted to learn the faculty of medicine at Memorial University has been honoured with the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada Rural Medicine Education Award. This accolade is a testament to the faculty's success in producing graduates who are well-suited for rural family medicine residency programs, a significant achievement for a Canadian medical school.

As a province with rural communities nestled from the Southeast Avalon to Northern Labrador, ensuring that we have a medical school that excels in matching medical students with family medicine in rural communities is crucial. That's why we must ensure that medical students who complete the residency program in rural Newfoundland and Labrador stay there.

The minister must also recognize the recruitment must involve retaining critical health care staff we already have in our health care system. The loss of one full-time doctor in rural communities such as Trepassy is a devastating blow and cannot continue to happen. Rural Newfoundland and Labrador need us to be there for them.

Thank you.

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

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

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of the statement. Congratulations to the faculty of medicine at Memorial University on this prestigious award. We applaud all your hard work.

Congratulations to Dr. Power, her commitment to the people of our province deserves applause. Rural doctors need support.

Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association and the Registered Nurses' Union have been calling for recruitment and retention for years. If government had listened and made the investments, more doctors and medical professionals would be winning these prestigious awards for long service instead of having to leave our province to find the quality of life they too deserve.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality.

**P. PARSONS:** Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, today rise to recognize Sunday, May 5, as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, also known as Red Dress Day.

The red dress has become a powerful symbol of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who have been taken from their communities, often without justice or closure for their loved ones. Each empty space in a family or community leaves a void that can never be filled.

Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people face higher rates of violence than their non-Indigenous, cisgender and heterosexual counterparts, so this day is also a reminder that we must confront the systemic issues that lead to gender-based violence.

We cannot allow these tragedies to continue and must therefore stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities and support their efforts to seek justice and healing. We also must listen to the voices of survivors and families and amplify their calls for change.

In '23-'24, our government allocated over \$1.2 million to support initiatives for Indigenous women, groups and organizations. This included the Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council, Indigenous Violence Prevention Grants Program, the annual Provincial Indigenous Women's Gathering and funding to support Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network.

Speaker, our government will continue to support actions that aim to prevent violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** I would like to thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement.

I rise today to recognize the importance of Sunday, May 5, Red Dress Day, the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

The symbolism of the red dress resonates deeply, serving as a reminder of the countless individuals who have been tragically taken from their communities, often without obtaining justice. Each loss leaves an irreplaceable void and highlights the urgent need for action.

It's an undeniable truth that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience disproportionately high rates of

violence compared to others. This reality underscores the imperative need to confront head on the systemic issues fueling this violence. It is vital to support initiatives for Indigenous women, groups and organizations. This government needs to vigorously continue its efforts of reconciliation.

Thank you.

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

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

**L. EVANS:** Thank you, Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of the statement.

I know missing, I know murdered – Indigenous women and girls need to be respected and treated fairly, given equality and empowerment, it is only then that the Red Dress can become a symbol of past harms – a symbol of past harms. We don't need empty tokenism, nice gestures or empty words. We need substantial change, solutions – solutions to past harms of colonialism, access to food, home heating, homes, adequate health care, until then your words and symbols are empty, harming all Indigenous people.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Thank you, Speaker.

Yesterday, at the Empire Club, when speaking to Tim Powers about the Churchill Falls power, the Premier said – quote: You can walk down the street, any street in any community in Newfoundland and Labrador and they will have an educated opinion, well a quasi-educated opinion about 2041.

I ask the Premier: Will you explain to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador what he meant when he said that we were quasi-educated?

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

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Happy to address that question. What I meant was there are many myths about 2041 and what happens after 2041. For example, have not appreciated, me being one, as a child and growing up and hearing the myths of 2041, to understand that Hydro-Québec owns 35 per cent of that asset, post-2041. I only learned coming into this job that there is a 100-year water rental agreement that is renewable for another hundred years, Mr. Speaker.

So what I meant by that was Newfoundlanders and Labradorians certainly understand the impacts of that imbalanced deal and what it could mean for the future of the province, Mr. Speaker.

I left no mistake with anybody in that room that this is our resource, we will own it and we will make sure it returns the best deal to the people of this province.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, it's unfortunate that the laughter that followed the statement was a bit condescending to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. If he was more open with the people of Newfoundland

and Labrador maybe we wouldn't be quasi-educated about this whole project.

Premier, you also told the audience in Toronto that wrapped up in the 2041 deal are 5,500 megawatts and then besides that there are 2,000 stranded megawatts and the 2,400 Gull Island megawatts.

Is the Premier now telling us that he has a framework for a 2041 deal and he knows what's in it and what's not in it?

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

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Happy to address that question. What I did say is what should be common knowledge to everybody here in this government and everybody across the province. We have incredible assets in Labrador now, Mr. Speaker.

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

**A. FUREY:** They are desirable. It's very public how many megawatts are in Churchill Falls. It's very public how much is available to do potential upgrades, by the way, which I wish we had done instead of doing Muskrat Falls, which is currently, this year, costing the government \$740 million, Mr. Speaker.

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

**A. FUREY:** Can you imagine what we could do in terms of hospitals, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**A. FUREY:** What we could do in terms of roads; what we could do in terms of education with \$740 million.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I'm not going to have Members shouting back and forth, it's hard enough to hear the question and the response.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**T. WAKEHAM:** Thank you, Speaker.

It's wonderful because one day Muskrat Falls is a great project, the next day it's not. All we have to do is go back through *Hansard* and check it out.

I'm glad to see he's so excited about this deal of ours, and now I ask the Premier: Will you assure this House of Assembly, that before any deal gets signed, that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador get to judge this deal for themselves by open public debate, by debate in the House of Assembly, by bringing in an independent group of experts to review any deal before it's signed, and certainly not before you call a three-to-five-week election?

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

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

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

(Disturbance in the gallery.)

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I just want to remind members of the gallery, you're not allowed to participate in the debate, either for or against.

The hon. the Premier.

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For clarity, I wonder if the Member opposite thinks that Muskrat Falls was a great deal, because I'm sure nobody on this side thinks it was a great deal.

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

**A. FUREY:** People in Newfoundland and Labrador don't think it was a great deal, \$740 million dollars this year alone in ensuring that the electricity rates don't double.

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

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

**SPEAKER:** If you guys want to lose your time, I will stand here until people have decorum.

The hon. the Premier, you have 30 more seconds.

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And this is such an important deal, if there is a deal to be had, that, sure, it will rightfully belong in the House of Assembly, in the Legislature for full debate.

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

**A. FUREY:** Different than what happened with Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker. In fact, there was a whole Commission of Inquiry, as you know, with respect to the Muskrat Falls. It said – and I quote – in so doing, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador at that time failed in its duty to ensure the best interests of the province's residents were safeguarded. The PC government, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I go back. I certainly wasn't in the House of Assembly when any vote was taking place. I can tell you nobody here in my caucus was, but there were some on that side that were. Check *Hansard* about the support; it's there.

Well, let's get past that for a second. Let's talk about something else the Premier

talked about when he went to Toronto. That was about offering up our ocean – our ocean – to hold the entire country's carbon output for decades. What he didn't say was how it was going to be done.

Why is the Premier offering to sacrifice our fisheries to offset the country's carbon problems?

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

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to talk about this opportunity for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We all know that carbon capture and storage is an important part of addressing climate change. It needs to be extracted; it needs to be stored.

What we are saying is that there is a synergistic opportunity in Newfoundland and Labrador, unlike any other, Mr. Speaker, where you can use the wells that are currently offshore to store carbon, multiple gigatons, the entire carbon footprint of every province and territory combined, for decades.

Are you suggesting that we not explore such an opportunity?

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** It would be great if the Premier did some research. One of the options will change the PH of the cold ocean environment, with unforeseen impact on our fisheries. Another option involves leaving more fish in the sea to cycle the carbon, meaning less fishing of species our fish harvesters and communities rely on –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**T. WAKEHAM:** The fish they are talking about leaving in the ocean, to capture carbon, include things like mackerel and capelin. So if Mr. Trudeau, who is prepared to see the end of our mackerel fishery and perhaps other fisheries, now we have our own Premier willing to sacrifice it.

So I ask the Premier: When will you stand up for the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to talk about the fishery, Mr. Speaker. I met with the federal Fisheries minister just a couple of weeks ago to ensure that she understood the importance of the mackerel fishery, the importance of the entire species and the fact that we are hearing from harvesters all over the province that that should be reopened. We will continue to fight for that but, as the Member opposite knows, that is rightfully and respectfully, now currently the purview of the federal government.

With respect to the carbon capture, are you suggesting that we not look at any opportunities? Not even consider any opportunities for carbon capture in Newfoundland and Labrador? Is that the proposal of the Member opposite? Multi-billion-dollar opportunity for the people of this province; we should just ignore it and forget it.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, I am glad to see the Premier – the Premier will have lots of opportunities to ask questions when, after the next election, he is on this side of the House and we're sitting over there.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** So right now, the Premier's friend in Ottawa, Justin Trudeau, has allowed American harvesters to continue to harvest mackerel, while shutting down that fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I ask the Premier, again: What else are you going to do about it, besides letter writing?

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

**E. LOVELESS:** Thank you, Speaker.

We support harvesters and we support the FFAW in terms of the mackerel fishery, Mr. Speaker. I can table the letter that I wrote to the federal minister in terms of not agreeing with the position. There are many positions that we don't support in terms of DFO decision-making for Newfoundland and Labrador.

But let me say to the Leader of the Opposition: Only time he wakes up about the fishery is when it is in the media or we got people in the gallery.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, last week or a couple of weeks ago, we saw harvesters on the steps of the Confederation Building because this Fisheries Minister went on a photo op in the summer talking about everything they were going to do, all of their concerns and did nothing.

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** And that's why the crab fishery didn't start on time. So I will not be lectured by somebody who has failed to do

their job as a minister. That's what's happened.

We've allowed the redfish quota to be taken by New Brunswick and other Atlantic provinces. Now, again, Justin Trudeau allows Americans to take the mackerel fishery.

Again, I ask: When will we stand up for fishers in Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

**E. LOVELESS:** Mr. Speaker, in terms of the importance of the fishery and going throughout the province, I was not interested in a photo op, I can tell you that very much. What we heard from the harvesters, we responded to. We actioned them. And we're getting reviews. Harvesters are telling us that there is a difference in the fishery.

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

**E. LOVELESS:** But I will say again, and I even did an interview with the Member opposite when we talked about aquaculture during the last election, and he didn't have a clue about aquaculture, didn't have a plan and he doesn't have a plan now. We do.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Speaker.

I guess he's the only over there who wasn't worried about a photo op.

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

**B. PETTEN:** He's the only one.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**B. PETTEN:** He didn't know nothing about –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

Enough – enough. I want to hear the questions and I want to hear the response. I'm sure everybody up in the gallery would like to hear the same.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Speaker.

They didn't know we had a fishery until we started speaking about it, either.

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

**B. PETTEN:** Speaker, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, in 2023 we were the worst in the country for timely access to radiation therapy.

Speaker, it's a critical tool for treating cancer. Only 57 per cent of patients received treatment in the recommended timeline. The national average is 94 per cent.

With such a high prevalence of cancer in our province, how is this acceptable, Minister?

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

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

I'm glad the Member read the report on CIHI, because CIHI also indicates, Mr. Speaker, that about 88 per cent of the people in the province have access to primary care. I hope that the Member opposite starts quoting that number.

Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about the wait times in this province. About a year and

a half or two years ago, we put in place a wait times task force that provided recommendations to government on reducing wait times for surgeries and for other procedures. We have taken all of those recommendations – I believe there were 32 recommendations. We've accepted them all. We put a full-time, permanent staff in place at the health authority to ensure that those recommendations are put in place. We are working towards improvements.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Speaker.

Improvements, but the people are still waiting. So that's the problem, it's always we're working on stuff and we're not getting the results.

Speaker, timely access to treatment is a major factor in beating cancer. Accessing radiation therapy took a sharp decrease in 2023 from 94 per cent to 57 per cent, a decline of 37 per cent of patients receiving timely treatment. That's hundreds, if not more than a thousand receiving treatment in unacceptable timelines.

Minister, why did this decline happen?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, there has been a human resource challenge in every province in Canada and, in fact, in many countries around the world. We are no different in this province.

We are looking to recruit the necessary human resource staff, the health professional staff, to ensure timely access to all procedures. That will continue.

We've had signs of success in our recruitment strategies, Mr. Speaker, and we continue with those, including the Come Home Incentive, which has been the most successful in the province's history.

That is action.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Thank you, Speaker.

I remind the minister retention only works if you actually retain doctors and health professionals. That's the problem. So if we got staff shortages, the retention program is failing.

Speaker, we did have a machine shut down and we're sending people to Toronto for months for radiation therapy. Why? Vacancies due to turnover caused by non-competitive salaries and benefits?

When is the minister going to understand recruitment starts with retention?

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

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

First of all, again, the Member would like for the people of the province to think that things are worse than they are. The College of Physicians and Surgeons have spoken publicly and said that our recruitment strategies are working. There are more licensures this year than in previous years. They are retaining more physicians than in previous years. So the recruitment and retention strategies are working, but it does take time.

There are recruitment challenges in every province in Canada. We're no different. It is the times that we are in. But we have been able to recruit to that unit, Mr. Speaker. We

were able to get that unit up and running again and the people are being served in this province.

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

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

**B. PETTEN:** Respectfully, Speaker, we're hearing from people on a daily basis, every one of us.

So the minister is saying he's trying, but it's not working, people are still looking. Cancer, it's very serious. It's probably the most serious and frightening thing that will ever hit people in the province, anywhere, so we need action.

After almost a decade, we're leading the country in crucial wait times. Vacancies are through the roof and the same Liberal government is patting themselves on the back.

Minister, what do you say to a senior citizen frightened for her life because she cannot access timely cancer care?

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Thank you, Speaker.

As I indicated, we have that unit up and running again. We have been successful in our recruitment, over 100 positions this year, certainly up from last year and the year previous.

As I've indicated, every province in Canada is facing that challenge, Mr. Speaker. It is challenging. It is a global challenge to recruit health care professionals, no different than engineers, no different than tradespeople, but it is something that we are up to the challenge. We've put a recruitment office in place to ensure that we are up to the challenge and it is showing signs of success.

We want to reduce the wait times, Mr. Speaker. We are focused on reducing wait times. We have many strategies in place, including the surgical task force, in helping identify areas that we can create those improvements.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

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

**J. MCKENNA:** Thank you, Speaker.

As I rise for the first time in this House, I'd like to thank the voters of Fogo Island - Cape Freels for putting their trust in me.

Speaker, during the by-election, the Premier promised a much-needed expansion to the Fogo Island Health Centre.

Can he update the House on when shovels will be in the ground for that expansion?

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

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

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

I'd like to congratulate the Member as well for his election.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Certainly, it's a proud day for his family, who are in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that the commitments made by this government will be kept – we keep our commitments, Mr. Speaker. I can assure you, you will have your hospital much sooner than the people of Western Newfoundland did with the Corner Brook regional hospital.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

**J. MCKENNA:** Speaker, the Premier also promised the Stoneville Volunteer Fire Department funding for 10 new bunker suits.

Premier, can you update the volunteer fire department on when they will receive their new bunker gear?

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

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

**A. FUREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to say that promise has been fulfilled. If there are any issues, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** A fine options program is available in almost all jurisdictions of Canada except Newfoundland and Labrador. Other provinces are offering alternate ways of paying a fine through options, such as community service, that benefits the offender and society.

Why is this still not an option for the people of our province?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you, Speaker.

The Department of Justice and Public Safety is looking at ways to implement a fines options program. It's not as easy as just saying everyone go out and do some work, or everyone go out and volunteer. We want to make sure that any program that's put in place is going to be successful, and

that we provide individuals with a way to get out of paying those fines rather than through monetary means.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** It was easy enough for other provinces in our country, why isn't it easy for here?

With a staggering \$50 million in outstanding fines, what message is this government sending when people are being fined with excessive speeding and reckless driving, but face no real consequences or accountability?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, they do face accountability. They do have to pay the fines. The fines are on the books. They're not going anywhere and of course when people have to get a fine for a motor vehicle issue, they remain on the registration or the licence so when they go to renew both of those things, they have to pay them.

People can't run away from them. They'll be there today. They'll be there tomorrow. They'll be there until they're paid off.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Still \$50 million in fines outstanding, Speaker, for years this government has been talking about implementing a fine options program. Since 2020, we've been told the program has been delayed; it's still in the

developmental stage. Just recently in Estimates, the minister still could not provide a timeline. The lack of progress is unacceptable and inexcusable.

Can the minister finally provide an update on the program's progress?

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you, Speaker.

An update was provided in Estimates. I believe one of the officials in the Department of Justice and Public Safety answered that question and said that we'll continue to work on a policy. We're getting closer to it and we'll announce it in the near future when it's ready.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**P. DINN:** Speaker, the PWC reconfiguration consultation was only announced April 18 and closed April 25. The decision was announced just four days later, on April 29. Parents feel betrayed by a consultation that seemed rushed and insincere, having already arrived at an outcome.

Does the minister feel a 10-day process is long enough to move hundreds of children and upend families?

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

**K. HOWELL:** Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to respond.

The children won't be moved until the new school year is implemented, but I do believe that 10 days is an adequate time frame for anybody in that community who has a vested interest and, certainly, wanted to

make their feedback known. If they made it a priority, 10 days would have been enough time for them to get the information to the department.

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

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

**P. DINN:** Unfortunately, the parents think otherwise.

Speaker, consultation only closed midnight on April 25. The decision took place four days later.

Did the minister actually look at the feedback she received?

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

**K. HOWELL:** Thank you, Speaker.

We had over 600 responses to the questionnaire that went out. We certainly did have a look to identify what the concerns were that were raised in those questionnaires. We did come to the conclusion that most of the things that were identified were things that we were already addressing as students moved from one school into another. There is some transitional support that's required, which was one of the priority issues addressed. We do recognize that's something we want to continue to build on and provide supports for those students.

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

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

**P. DINN:** Speaker, parents were never provided with enrolment projections after the proposed changes and basic questions about programming and school safety have not been answered.

Speaker, can the minister table the enrolment projections in the House for the three schools and the *What We Heard* document she based her decisions on?

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

**K. HOWELL:** I will make every endeavour to provide that information to the House, yes.

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

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Speaker.

A recent *Saltwire* article noted that the Team Gushue Highway completion is held up by several factors including government red tape.

After years of waiting, when can we finally expect to see construction begin?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

**J. ABBOTT:** Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond.

We did discuss that in the Estimates Committee. As I said then, I've said publicly, the design will be finished shortly, the tenders will be out shortly, and construction will start shortly.

Thank you.

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

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Thank you, Speaker.

Not according to the article. We haven't even got the land straightened out over

there yet. Must be waiting for pictures again, are we?

The Team Gushue Highway will be a vital link connecting my district and relieve the flow of traffic. Residents are becoming impatient with the constant delays and reannouncement, and pictures.

When can they expect the highway to reopen?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

**J. ABBOTT:** Well, thank you again, Speaker, for the opportunity to respond.

I guess I can't be any clearer than my previous answer and what I said in the discussion around the Estimates. So the answer is: Shortly.

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

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No light.

**SPEAKER:** Move to the next one.

**C. PARDY:** Mic test, mic test.

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

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Speaker.

For the benefit of those in the gallery: waiting for the mic to be active.

We believe that next to education, the fishery is our greatest industry. As our leader has stated, it is our largest renewable megaproject.

Can the minister highlight some recent initiatives or policies the Liberal government has taken that will grow our industry from a

\$1.4-billion industry to a multi-billion-dollar industry?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

**E. LOVELESS:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

It was when we had the gallery full of harvesters here on day one, the Premier and I met with them and we had targets to meet. Then followed the discussions – and I understand in terms of frustration on both sides that's part of the process. But we certainly did address capacity. We issued a new licence and we promised a review as well, which is important. That was important to the – and we've invested in marketing, specifically the crab species, but we will be doing it with other species as well.

And we're hearing from our actions that there's more competition. Harvesters have more options in terms of prices, and prices have increased. So that's good news. That's growing the rural parts of the province and I'm proud of that.

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The minister's time is expired.

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

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

**C. PARDY:** I think, Minister, nine years of government, we would hope that we would've seen that industry grow under the nine years.

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

**C. PARDY:** And another review is not going to move it along.

A past deputy minister of Fisheries and the Princeton-trained economist stated: The threat to our fishery from seals is a major public policy issue that both the

Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador have studiously avoided.

Can the minister highlight any actions that government has undertaken to address the imbalance in our ecosystem?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

**E. LOVELESS:** Mr. Speaker, great strides has been done in the fishery and about the review – even though he dismisses the review, the review was asked for by the stakeholders of this province.

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

**E. LOVELESS:** So while I say to the Member, it is easy to get up and read off paper, what's going on, or the challenges or whatever, but I've always asked you: Tell me what your plan is? I've never heard it and I certainly haven't heard it from your leader.

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

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

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

Speaker, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure states the conditions at the Colonial Building encampment aren't safe. Speaker, sleeping in tents during the winter wasn't safe. The shelter system is unsafe. Many of the housing options are unsafe.

Speaker, the Colonial Building was scheduled to open yesterday to the public. The first cruise ships arrive this weekend.

Will the minister admit that the real concern, his real concern, is about the tourist season and not the well-being of the neighbourhood and those experiencing homelessness, and that he's simply telling these people to go, move, shift?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

**J. ABBOTT:** Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to respond.

To say I'm disappointed in the question is an understatement.

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

**J. ABBOTT:** The whole mission of this government, the work I'm doing, the Minister of Housing and others, is to secure the safety of the individuals at the tent encampment.

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

**J. ABBOTT:** I agree, right from the get-go, the encampment is not a safe place, on any level.

We are now working towards, with the Minister of Housing, to make sure the individuals are housed appropriately and then the tent encampment will close.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, residents of this province have grown beyond frustrated with the cost and lack of access to intra-provincial travel. Costs have been climbing for years, access has diminished and now it's out of reach for most of this province, but nothing has been said by this Liberal government.

I ask the Premier: Will he set up a task force to finally address the lack of accessibility for most so they can travel within this province?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

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

Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Council of Atlantic Premiers, our Premier and the other Atlantic premiers have released an RFP, the results are back, it's being worked through by intergovernmental affairs and tourism and industry departments throughout Atlantic Canada.

The entire purpose behind that proposal was so that all four Atlantic provinces, led by our Premier, could work together to make sure that we could find a way to make inter-provincial travel more affordable for the Atlantic Canadians.

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

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

**J. BROWN:** When I see it, I'll believe it.

Speaker, this province is becoming more disconnected. It is less affordable for reliable airfare, busing or ferries and other options to move around this province for personal or business.

I ask the Premier: Make some meaningful steps and actually address the problem with regional travel in this province.

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

**S. CROCKER:** I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Member opposite should take some time and look at the

benefits of non-resident travel to this province. It is extremely important, but it is also the reason why our Premier and the other three Atlantic premiers have put together a group to address this issue.

This is not an issue that's Newfoundland and Labrador. If you go talk to any province in Canada that has a geography like ours, this is a challenge, Mr. Speaker. Our Premier and the other three Atlantic premiers, quite frankly, have been working to address that challenge.

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

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

**L. EVANS:** Speaker, both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls identified economic and social marginalization is at the root of the vulnerability of Indigenous women and girls, two-spirited people, LBGTQIA+ persons.

Will the Premier commit to ensuring his ministers stop turning a blind eye to the continued harm and address the real causes of Indigenous economic and social marginalization? Because we need real action.

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality.

**P. PARSONS:** Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for her interest in the topic and it's about time that we heard more about these topics here in this hon. House.

I do take exception to what you said, actually, in response to the Ministerial Statement, that they were just simply symbols and words. I will remind the Member that over \$300,000 in budget '23-

'24 has been dedicated to Indigenous-led violence prevention programs.

As well as, of course, I have to remind the Member as well, of the National Action Plan, which takes into all the topics that she just outlined. They build on pillars of support for victims and survivors and their families: prevention, responsive justice system, implementing Indigenous-led approaches and social infrastructure and enabling environment.

I will remind the hon. Member that even from the local Calls to Action, we, for the first time in our history of this province, have implemented a Reconciliation Council with Indigenous women here in this province.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The time for Oral Questions 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

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

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

WHEREAS Route 60 through Topsail is a heavily populated area with physically active residents; and

WHEREAS residents with young children who walk to school daily find it unsafe with

the deplorable state of erosion along the shoulders of Route 60 through Topsail;

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 find a more permanent solution to install curb and gutter to the areas affected by erosion.

Speaker, I presented this petition, I've lost count, over the last number of years. It's been presented to four different ministers of Transportation and Infrastructure and each one have given assurances that there would be work done in this section. It has not been done.

Outside of some patchwork in areas and filling potholes and grading some shoulders, every year residents are faced with the same issue: unsafe conditions, nowhere to walk and drivers are weaving through potholes and erosion. It's just plainly unsafe and more needs to be done.

Now, I understand there's some consultation between the Town of CBS and government, but right now, currently, that road, Route 60, is owned and maintained by the province. Right now, it needs to be maintained by the province.

So I hope that the current minister responsible will take the appropriate action and this year have some permanent solutions put into Route 60.

**SPEAKER:** Any other petitions?

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Speaker.

In our province we have large groups of community members who collectively operate their own wells. In Plate Cove West, in my district, we have 22 families on a well; while in Dunfield, we have 20 providing quality water. There is no financial

assistance available for these communities of taxpayers, but we know how significant it is that residents have quality drinking water.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to explore extending financial assistance to these community wells in unincorporated areas like Plate Cove West and Dunfield.

I attended the Estimates of the Department of Environment and Climate Change and they discussed how important clean drinking water was in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was a big goal that the department had. Our Member for Exploits, who was there, concurred and agreed that it was very significant. We're asking for these forgotten entities, where large numbers of people are being served by private wells, should have some available financial assistance.

Many people would say if they're located in unincorporated areas they may not be paying their share. That was a misconception that was in this House, I'm not sure if that continues, but government currently charges all those people in rural Newfoundland who are not in municipalities, they're in LSDs or unincorporated areas, a utility tax, 2.5 per cent of all their cable bills or 2.5 per cent of their Newfoundland Power bills goes to government coffers. How much does government take in? In '22-'23, \$2.3 million.

What we're asking, Mr. Speaker, is that consideration – because the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is correct when he says: Safe drinking water is of the utmost importance for residents in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're asking that some financial options be available to those people in Local Service Districts and in unincorporated areas to better enable them to provide quality drinking water to the numerous families that are drawing water from their wells. That's not a big ask.

Mr. Speaker, I would like for the government to give that some good consideration.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**L. EVANS:** We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador who urge our leaders to return the marine shipping service between the Island portion of our province and to our Northern Labrador communities.

This marine service was removed in the spring of 2019 by this Liberal government, resulting in freight having to be trucked up to Goose Bay then shipped to our Northern Labrador communities. Since then, the additional shipping has directly impacted the prices of food, building materials, vehicles, off-road vehicles, household goods, essential services for our communities.

Our Northern Labrador communities are totally isolated, not connected by road and our marine services basically only last five to six months, on average, so we are facing problems with our transportation. With the cancellation of direct marine freight service from the Island portion to our communities, residents are witnessing exorbitant price increases in the basic needs, impacting overall quality of life.

Now, Speaker, in actual fact, I ran out of time in Question Period, but I did have a question for the Premier. In my question, I was going to ask why so many Indigenous women, girls, two-spirited, LBGTQIA+ went missing? Why did they go missing in the first place? It was because the supports – the inquiry, the Commission of Canada, had stated that basically there weren't enough supports provided to them in their communities and they had to leave to seek a life.

And what's my petition for? My petition is about food, access to health care. My petition is about vacant Newfoundland and Labrador Housing that has not been properly maintained for years. I talk about the cost of electricity prices. I talk about the affordability of travel. I talk about students not being able to access courses.

At one point, they actually put all the students on the Newfoundland time zone and students were missing half an hour of their classes each day. They would show up late to their class because they had to get online and then they were half an hour late getting to their classes.

So there are so many things, in actual fact, about how the school board took all the teachers from the high school students and put them in the junior high to fill the vacancies so they could look good, so they could say there was no vacancies because they pushed the whole high school online. The Internet was so slow, we had 12 students in one class around a computer just trying to be able to access their courses.

The thing about it is, social and economic marginalization is alive in my district and my people are dying as a result of it, Speaker. It is not fair.

When I say these petitions in the House of Assembly, nobody – nobody – can say the government is not here to hear. Nobody can say that they never heard the issues in my district, Speaker.

So with that, my time is running out, but Red Dress Day on Friday is an empty, shallow symbol of what my people are going through.

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

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

**SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

**J. HOGAN:** I call form the Order Paper, Motion 1.

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Labrador Affairs.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Speaker.

It's a privilege for me today to get up and use a little time in debate to talk about – it's always challenging when you get up and you've only got 20 minutes, Speaker, to decide whether you're going to talk about your district and the wonderful things that's happening in your district, or in my portfolio as the Minister of Labrador Affairs and Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation. I'll probably do a little bit of both, Speaker.

First of all, I want to say how nice it is today to be joined by two constituents in the gallery. I didn't know that I would have constituents here on the day that I got up to speak in debate. Speaker, I want to say right from the get-go that constituents from the beautiful community of Red Bay UNESCO World Heritage Site, I often go back in my mind when I'm driving. I spend a lot of time on the road alone, long flights to get to Labrador and long drives to get home, whether I fly into Goose Bay or into Blanc-Sablon, Speaker.

As I'm driving through communities, I reflect back to 2013, when the people of Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair elected me to be their representative. The changes that have happened in the district over the past decade have been phenomenal – incredible, Speaker. We would not have been able to see progress, to make change if we didn't have volunteers like we have in the gallery today in community volunteering their time, submitting applications, reaching

out to me as their Member to talk about the needs that they have in their community.

As I look at Mayor Stone, I think about going into the community and she would say we need signage for the community, we need pavement down through the center of the community, and a whole list of other things. They would just be relentless. Today, a lot of these initiatives have been addressed and met, Speaker.

My district starts at the Quebec border in L'Anse au Clair, and I can start there and I can go right through every community and point to things that we have been able to accomplish working with leadership, working with volunteers in community – a beautiful new community centre in L'Anse au Clair. We've been able to work with the business community there and down through the districts, Speaker. Then we come to Forteau where the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and I just announced a new community centre that's coming there, Speaker.

Then we move on to L'Anse au Loup where we've just done some wonderful work with pavement in the community, walking trails, a number of things in that community, a new-to-them fire truck. All the way down, Speaker, into different communities I could go. I want to talk about, sort of sector by sector.

Over the last decade when we look at investments in the District of Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, we've been fortunate to have a number of new community centres like L'Anse au Clair, like St. Lewis, where I was on Saturday night as they kicked off their new Silver Fox 50+ Seniors Club and Port Hope Simpson, not quite open there but just about there.

When we look at fire equipment, when I became the Member, we were so lacking in fire vehicles and in fire equipment. Since that time, we can go right through the district from a new rural rescue response

unit in L'Anse au Clair, right to a pumper truck in Cartwright and many communities in between where we have been able to address the deficits working with leadership, working with the volunteer fire brigade.

In addition, I mentioned the roads. Folks who live in the area know that in 2013 when they elected me as their Member, we were driving on 40-year-old pavement in the Labrador Straits. It was actually being reconstructed with cold patch. I brought people in from Transportation and that's what the gentleman said. He said: I can't believe people are driving on this. It's being reconstructed with cold patch.

Then, since that time, the 76 kilometres that we have, totally redone by this government, working with leadership in the communities, in the Labrador Straits. I really want to give a shout-out to Mayor Stone who was a force in ensuring that 22 kilometres of pavement between Pinware and Red Bay was widened.

At the time, it was looking like we were going to have an 1,100-kilometre stretch of highway from the border in L'Anse au Clair to the border in Labrador West and we were going to have 22 kilometres that was more narrow. Even though we may not have increased the RUL and it's a lot of turns, it really was a safety manner.

Thanks to people like the mayor of Red Bay who came in here and had meetings, we really made a lot of progress and now that's all done. When I would leave Red Bay driving north, I would be driving on a gravel road. Speaker, as we know, the House usually sits in the spring and in the fall and that is the worst possible time that you can drive on a gravel road. It was just horrible.

I mentioned the other day I was on my third vehicle in nine years. Now we've got new pavement all the way, thanks to investments by this government. As we moved and put infrastructure in place, then we began to look at the social needs of communities.

The district is very large and spread out, so when you go farther north and southeast, NunatuKavut Community Council makes some wonderful investments into the communities, and they do phenomenal work with the small amount of money that they have.

You can really see the impact that they have in communities. One of the things I heard in the Labrador Straits repeatedly was, we've got a big Development Association building here and one time it used to be full of people and now the offices are empty.

So again, working with leadership, working with the Southern Labrador Development Association, we talked about what are the needs. If we're enticing a professional to the community, what do we have there for their partner? What do we have there for their children? Now today, Speaker, when you go in, we have welcoming communities positioned there that the province has partially funded. We have a position there for new Canadians that the province has partially funded. We have supports for seniors in that area. Really, you're seeing a difference in the area. It's more of a beehive of activity.

As we move, Speaker, into these social programs and set them up in the region, we begin to now take a look at, okay, we're opening up what a lot of people – and especially my grandfather – used to refer to as Canada's last frontier. People want to get to see Labrador. They've heard much about Labrador. I call it like a mini-Alaska. The scenery is absolutely majestic; we have a lot to offer. So now let's focus on tourism, and that's what we've been doing.

As we know, this is the 75th year of our union with Canada, so there are lots of things happening to celebrate that. In Labrador, we're actually celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Labrador flag and we're into planning some events in July that's going to centre around that. So,

Speaker, as we look at tourism, we know that Indigenous tourism is the fastest-growing sector across the country and beyond, really. Last March, I was in Winnipeg, Manitoba for the world's largest Indigenous tourism conference. So we now have a focus in that area.

One of the things that really struck me when I was in Winnipeg is that whatever was happening all around the world in Indigenous tourism, we have it in spades. We have the ability to offer that to the tourists that visit Labrador as well. So we're moving in that direction. The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation supports the Newfoundland and Labrador Indigenous Tourism Association, represented with members across the province, including Labrador. And we're going to continue to put a focus there.

As well, Speaker, supporting small business is so important. When we think about targeting tourists who come into the area and we think about the economic spinoffs – and in this budget, I was happy to see a reduction in taxes that will benefit small business. I think about 6,200 small businesses in our province will benefit from some of the changes that we made in this budget.

In addition to that, some of the smaller items, but definitely noteworthy of mention, is we've had a real focus as we focus on people's physical and mental well-being, we've been investing in walking trails. I say to all of my colleagues, if you want to visit the beautiful District of Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, you can start right in L'Anse au Clair down the Jersey Trail. We're actually working on a trail that's going to eventually go all the way to Red Bay – 76 kilometres – along a coastline where there are whales and icebergs.

You'll come to Point Amour, which is the tallest lighthouse in Atlantic Canada, the second tallest in the country. Then you have Red Bay, which is a World Heritage

UNESCO site and then you'll go another 85 kilometres to Mary's Harbour and you can go out to Battle Harbour, which is a step back in time to when cod was king, an absolutely beautiful place. Every community, Speaker, I could go through and talk about the different aspects that would draw tourists into that area. So as we have worked to get our infrastructure in place to where it needed to be, and roads and things like that, we're now focused on packaging tourism and things like that, Speaker.

In addition to that, besides the walking trails, I want to mention community gardens. We have seen so much reward from community gardens. I'm just thinking of Goose Bay, now, where we actually put our little garden out behind Pumpkin House. How educational that is for the children, to be planting things and watching it grow. In a number of our communities, we have community gardens that have been very successful.

Speaker, one of probably my greatest passions is education. I live in a community, Charlottetown. It was not always called Charlottetown, but the community was started and named by my grandfather and really it was with a focus that all of the people who lived in the little nooks and coves and crannies would move into what was then Old Cove and maybe if we got enough families together and children, the government would give them a teacher to teach the children to give them an education.

So, Speaker, that's why I was really pleased with the school council in Cartwright, to work with the students in Cartwright, to work with the leadership there at the municipal level. We were at it for years, Speaker, but finally in *Budget 2023* and again in *Budget 2024*, working with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, working with the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance, we were able to announce a brand new school is coming for Cartwright.

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** A substantive investment of more than \$20 million, because we do place a value on educating our children.

Really, Speaker, one of the things I'm so passionate about is no matter where you live in this province, you do have a right to a good quality of education. That's your stepping stone for getting out and where you're going to go, and over the next number of weeks I'll be attending most of the graduations in my district. Nothing brings me more pride than to see the young people in the area doing well and going out, making their mark and making good, worthwhile contributions to society, Speaker.

I'm looking at the time. It's going fast.

So that's a number of things about my district. I always want to commend the leadership in the community that I have so much respect for, that step up, that volunteer their time, that work with me as their Member, for no other reason than they want to make a difference, they want to leave their little corner of the world a little bit better than they found it.

Having said all that, Speaker, I just scratched the surface there, but I want to talk about two or three things that are in the budget that I know also will be well received by the people that I represent and really a number of these initiatives that hit right across Labrador.

Always good, Speaker, in these challenging times, when you're able to bring in a budget that has no new taxes, no tax increases, no fee increases – not easy to do. We start, probably in November, looking at the budget and every department is coming with their big, big ask and then you sort of go through what's a top priority, what's critical and you weed through and you weed through. It's months and months of work, led by the Finance Minister who – I'm sure she doesn't

sleep for the last number of weeks leading up to the budget. She did an incredible job pulling it all together again this year.

Speaker, one of the huge ones: we hear much about the federal carbon tax. We've been very, very clear in this House that we do not agree with the federal government on the carbon tax. We do not believe that it is the right tax for the right time. We do not have options in this province to modify behaviour and all of that. It's well-documented. The Premier has said it. I won't repeat.

So even though it was – was it \$65 million, I ask the Finance Minister, or \$70 million, that we made sure was put into the budget to continue that 8.5 cent-per-litre reduction on the price of gasoline? So we put an incredible amount of money from our small provincial Treasury to save the residents of this province who would not have to pay that 8.5 cents on the gas tax. We have totally continued to eliminate that, Speaker.

We have continued the 50 per cent reduction of the cost of registering passenger vehicles, trucks and taxis. We have maintained free drivers' medicals for people 75 years and older. We have continued removal of the 15 per cent retail sales tax on home insurance. I've had people say to me, they were so pleased and that certainly made a difference for them. We have maintained Home Heating Supplement that provides up to \$500 to residents who rely on furnace or stove oil to heat their home.

Also, Speaker, this year in the budget, recognizing that because our communities on the North Coast and the South Coast rely on diesel generators and were not eligible for some of the money that is out there to help reduce emissions, we have a food and heat supplement – once the budget is passed – that will go to seniors on the North Coast of Labrador and on the South Coast of Labrador to help offset some of the costs there.

I do want to say I had way more here than I'm going to get time to speak to, but I do want to say, Speaker, health is big. Health is a big issue, we're quite challenged. I remember saying to the CEO of Eastern Health a while ago: Where did everybody go? What happened to all of the health professionals in the system, right across the country? He said: Really, you know, right across the globe. They left in droves. We're kind of building from the ground up.

In this particular budget, Speaker, \$4 billion is there in place for a litany of health initiatives because we recognize that we're very challenged in health care. In Labrador, one of the things that we continue to grapple with is the air ambulance system. We know the system is broken. We know the system needs to be fixed and that is why, following on the recommendations of the Health Accord, we are moving toward a fully integrated road and air ambulance system. There is an RFP that's out right now. We're going to have a bigger fleet of aircraft. There are going to be faster response times. There are going to be helicopters and moving to a central dispatch. I know that the people I represent, it cannot come quick enough. I know the Member for Lab West raises this issue. I know that if you live in Labrador and you live far from services, those are the things that you grapple with.

Speaker, I represent a lot of seniors. I have become so endeared to them. My district is spread over a large land mass but it's small enough in population that I know most of the people I represent. So I'm always happy when we're able to put initiatives in place that will benefit seniors.

*Budget 2024* includes \$10 million for a new Seniors' Well-Being Plan. There will be grants to low-income seniors living at home for supportive services, such as snow clearing and grocery delivery. There will be increased investments for home repair and modifications for seniors. There's a whole list of things and I'll be talking about this

more in my district. I'm running out of time now, but I want to mention, Speaker, a community that's near and dear to my heart, in the last couple of minutes I have left, and that is the community of Black Tickle.

We have heard Black Tickle mentioned very much this spring, Speaker, in the House and the complete story has never been told. Black Tickle is in a much better place today, than they were. The Members opposite ask all the time: Are we any better off today than we were nine years ago? I wouldn't want them to be in Finance, because we were only elected to government eight years and four months ago and they keep saying nine. They've been saying nine for a long time.

But, Speaker, there is no doubt about it, when we came into government, we were facing a deficit that was more than double what we had thought. We were in a very bad predicament, this government, left by the mess of the PCs, at the time, and difficult choices had to be made, Speaker.

When departments and agencies were asked to find efficiencies to the tune of 30 per cent, it was the Leader of the PC, today –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Not true.

**L. DEMPSTER:** I know what I am talking about; I lived it, I say to the Speaker – that brought forth an option, let's take the nurse out of Black Tickle, that would save us a lot of money. I was, like, so who is going to provide the medical services? We're going to train paramedics. What's going to happen to all the diabetics in the community? We're going to give them tablets. Oh, but we don't even have Internet there.

My problem, Speaker, with that, from day one, my problem is –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**L. DEMPSTER:** Speaker, I sat and listened to the Opposition all spring and this is the first day I've been on my feet in the House and I ask the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands to be courteous and give me my time as the voice for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** Speaker, my problem was when the Leader of the PCs had to make choices, he reached into the most vulnerable. He didn't have to make that choice. He didn't have to present that as an option.

Speaker, do you know what we found out? We found out that Black Tickle was a very big bill on the health books and due to the mismanagement, Speaker, it was costing an absolute fortune. We got in there and we provided proper management to –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** (Inaudible) in my last few minutes here and the story that was not told is that it was that leader that said here's a good option – here's a good option. It was that man that presented it –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**L. DEMPSTER:** Speaker, I did not want (inaudible) budget '24 without the people of the province knowing the full story of what happened there.

Thank you very much.

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

**SPEAKER:** Seeing no other speakers, it is moved and seconded that this House approves –

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

If Members don't stop, they're going to lose speaking privileges or be removed. This is the last warning – on both sides.

Seeing no other speakers, it is moved and seconded that the House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

Motion carried.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Division.

**SPEAKER:** Division is called.

Call in the Members.

### Division

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

We're voting on the motion that the House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

All those in favour, please rise.

**CLERK (Hawley George):** Andrew Furey, John Hogan, Lisa Dempster, John Haggie, Gerry Byrne, Bernard Davis, Fred Hutton, Tom Osborne, Siobhan Coady, Pam

Parsons, Elvis Loveless, Krista Lynn Howell, Andrew Parsons, Steve Crocker, John Abbott, Paul Pike, Scott Reid, Lucy Stoyles and Perry Trimper.

**SPEAKER:** All those against the motion, please rise.

**CLERK:** Tony Wakeham, Barry Petten, Lloyd Parrott, Paul Dinn, Helen Conway Ottenheimer, Joedy Wall, Jeff Dwyer, Chris Tibbs, Loyola O'Driscoll, Craig Pardy, Pleaman Forsey, Jim McKenna, James Dinn, Jordan Brown, Lela Evans, Eddie Joyce, Paul Lane.

Speaker, the ayes: 19; the nays: 17.

**SPEAKER:** I do declare the motion is carried.

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

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

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

**S. COADY:** Speaker, I've received a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

**SPEAKER:** All rise.

As Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I transmit Estimates of sums required for the Public Service of the Province for the year ending 31 March 2025, by way of further Supply, and in accordance with the provisions of sections 54 and 90 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, I recommend these Estimates to the House of Assembly."

Please be seated.

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

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

**S. COADY:** Thank you.

I move, seconded by the Premier, that the message be referred to the Committee of Supply.

**SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that the House resolve itself into the Committee of Supply to consider the bill and that I do now leave the Chair.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

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

We are considering Bill 72, the main Supply bill.

### Resolution

*"Be it resolved by the House of Assembly of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to His Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2025, the sum of \$6,456,314,400.

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

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

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

**S. COADY:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Today, we're discussing the *Supply Act, 2024*, for the main Supply, which is introduced following the completion of the budget debate. The requirement is to introduce, debate and pass a main Supply bill to cover government expenditures during the fiscal year and it's a requirement of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, and the *Financial Administration Act*.

Before I move into the act itself, Chair, I'd like to recognize and send a bouquet to four amazing young journalism students who are heading off to Halifax to compete in the Atlantic Journalism Awards.

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

**S. COADY:** Congratulations go out to Abigail Butler, Ariyana Gomes, Madison Ryan and Ka Chai Tam.

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

**S. COADY:** Thank you.

These four Newfoundland and Labrador journalism students are in their second year of the College of the North Atlantic's journalism program and they're going to be competing against the best in Atlantic Canada. We already know that they have been proven to be the best and they have earned the right to be there and we're very excited for them.

So thank you for that opportunity.

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

**S. COADY:** Chair, the approval of the *Supply Act, 2024*, will ensure funds are available to meet government expenditures during the '24-'25 fiscal year and provide sufficient legislative authority for government to meet its financial obligations.

The main Supply bill is a routine and administrative measure. The introduction of

this bill will have no incremental impact on the province's financial position in '24-25, beyond what is included in *Budget 2024*. The total amount of the main Supply bill is \$6,456,314,400. When combined with the previously approved \$3.3 billion of Interim Supply, it gives a total of \$9,743,070,100, which ties to the total amount voted as per Statement III of the budget documents, *Statements and Schedules*, and the details in the Estimates of 2024.

The total amount voted, \$9.743 billion represents the amount of total gross cash expenditures, minus payments that are preapproved by statute, such as interest payments, deferred pension contributions, debt management expenses and the salaries of the Auditor General and the Comptroller General.

The highest amount can be attributed to health care, reflecting the record investment in health care this year. The time frame covered by the Interim Supply bill was three months, April 1 to June 30, and represents 33 per cent of the budgeted expenditures based on the 2023-24 fiscal year and the main Supply bill will provide funding for the remainder of the fiscal year up to March 31, 2025.

Now, just by way of discussion around this Supply bill, what are some of the things that are contained in this year's budget? Again, no new taxes, no new fee increases and no new tax increases. We're continuing to focus on affordability during a time of higher interest rates. So we're continuing with the 8.05 cent per liter reduction in the provincial sales tax on gasoline and diesel. We're continuing with the 50 per cent reduction of the cost of registering passenger vehicles, trucks and taxis. We're maintaining the Home Heating Supplement for furnace and stove oil and continuing with the elimination of the retail sales tax on home insurance. These are big measures to help with affordability.

As we know, we've debating in this House reducing the small business tax rate and making meaningful action to cut red tape and speed process to support business. We're also making record investments in health care, the well-being of seniors, poverty reduction and housing. Some of those include \$4.1 billion for health care representing close to 40 per cent of the total budget. Chair, I can say that's a billion dollar increase since 2021.

We also have \$10 million for our new Seniors' Well-Being Plan, incremental investments totalling \$41 million for the new Poverty Reduction Plan, \$265 million in housing and related spending, and record investments in infrastructure for health, education and housing. We have a small projected deficit of \$152 million, which represents just 1.5 per cent of revenues.

I can say, Chair, we're expecting a very solid economic outlook this year. We have forecasts of our economic indicator that show Newfoundland and Labrador as having one of the highest rates of economic growth for 2024. We expect our real GDP forecast to increase by 5.1 per cent in 2024. That's really a rebound in our oil production and nickel production.

Total employment forecast to increase by 0.9 per cent, and that is really strong employment in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and it's driving our unemployment rate down. It's expected to remain one of the lowest on record unemployment rates that we've seen at 10 per cent.

Our household income is up, our retail sales are forecasted to increase by 2.8 per cent, our population is expected to rise, our capital investment is increasing by 3 per cent, Chair, to \$9.7 billion in 2024, and our inflation rate is expected to be lower this year at 2.6 per cent.

I can say, Chair, February of last year to February of this year, our inflationary rate

was just 2 per cent. So we're making big strides. There are big opportunities and big strides in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, not only record investments, but record growth and, I think, Chair, that is speaking volumes to all the actions that this government is taking.

With that, Chair, I will take my seat and look forward to debate on this Supply bill.

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

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister.

Not seeing any speakers, shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

The resolution is carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2025 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service." (Bill 72)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 2 through 4 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 through 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

**CLERK:** The Schedule.

**CHAIR:** Shall the Schedule carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Schedule 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:** WHEREAS it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain expenses of the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending March 31, 2025 and

for other purposes relating to the Public Service.

**CHAIR:** Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, preamble carried.

**CLERK:** An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2025 and for other Purposes Relating to the Public Service.

**CHAIR:** Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the resolution and Bill 72 carried 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 resolution and a bill consequent thereto, carried.

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

**S. COADY:** Thank you, Chair.

Chair, I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, that the total contained in the Estimates in the amount of \$9,743,070,100 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year be carried, and I further move that the Committee report that they have adopted a resolution and bill consequent thereto.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the total contained in the Estimates in the amount of \$9,743,070,100 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year be carried and that the Committee report that they have adopted a resolution and a bill consequent thereto.

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.

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

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

**P. TRIMPER:** Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have passed the amount of \$9,743,070,100 contained in the Estimates of Supply for the 2024-2025 fiscal year and have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

**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 that the Committee have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

**J. HOGAN:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Premier, that the resolution be now read a first time.

**SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

**CLERK:** *"Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

*"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to His Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2025 the sum of \$6,456,314,400."*

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Premier, that the resolution be now read a second time.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Second reading of the resolution.

*"Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

*"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to His Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2025 the sum of \$6,456,314,400."*

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Premier, for leave to introduce the Supply Bill, Bill 72 and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce Bill 72, the Supply Bill, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, that the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to

introduce a bill, "An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2025 and for other Purposes Relating to the Public Service," carried. (Bill 72)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2025 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service. (Bill 72)

On motion, Bill 72 read a first time.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Premier, that the Supply Bill be now read a second time.

**SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that the Supply Bill be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2025 and for other Purposes Relating to the Public Service. (Bill 72)

On motion, Bill 72 read a second time.

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

**J. HOGAN:** Speaker, I move, seconded by the Premier, that the Supply Bill be now read a third time.

**SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that the Supply Bill be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2025 and for other Purposes Relating to the Public Service. (Bill 72)

**SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, A bill, "An Act for Granting to His Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2025 and for other Purposes Relating to the Public Service," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 72)

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

**J. HOGAN:** Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, that this House do now adjourn.

**SPEAKER:** The motion is that this House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

This House do stand adjourned until tomorrow, May 13, at 1:30 p.m.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, May 13, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.