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Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Before we begin this afternoon, in the Speaker's gallery, it's with great honour to welcome members of the Repatriation Project Steering Committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: They include Frank Sullivan, proponent of repatriation initiative for "Known unto God" war hero from the battlefields of Northern France, past president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Command of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Berkley Lawrence, chairman and proponent of the restoration project of the National War Memorial; 1st vice-president of Dominion Command of the Royal Canadian Legion; incoming president and immediate past president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Command of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Gary Browne, spokesperson for the Royal Canadian Legion Newfoundland and Labrador Command and historian.

Gerald Budden, president of Newfoundland and Labrador Command of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also, in the Speaker's gallery, welcome representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Office of International Cooperation for the Republic of Korea.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Moonseok Choi, Kidong Bae, Hoon Cho, Gayoung Lee and Seungwoo Lee.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also, in the public gallery, welcome to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 1, President Trent Chaytor and Legionnaire Ed Burke.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier with leave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Veterans, dignitaries and distinguished guests, colleagues, as the 14th Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, it is my most distinct honour and privilege to rise in this hon. House to speak about the repatriation of an unknown First World War soldier and to share the speech I made in Beaumont-Hamel on Friday evening. It rightfully belongs in this House, as well.

My friends, the name Beaumont-Hamel is spoken with a sense of melancholy in our province, but with an even deeper sense of pride. For every Newfoundlander and Labradorian, it is sacred ground.

In a leafy corner of Bowring Park there's a sculpture called The Fighting Newfoundlander. His right arm is cocked back, caught in mid-throw of a grenade. His left arm holds his rifle with a fixed bayonet. Around his neck is a gas mask. Beneath a push-broom moustache, he looks confident. Intent. Ready.

The man who posed for this sculpture was Corporal Thomas Pittman from Little Bay East in Fortune Bay, a tiny corner of our world. Thomas was injured in the Battle of the Somme but made it through the war to come home. Thomas was one of the lucky ones. The statue he posed for, while stationed in England, is more about those who did not make it home, those who gave their lives fighting for something they felt was bigger than themselves – fighting for us.

That is the essence of sacrifice. That is bravery and courage. That is being a hero. Hundreds more like Thomas Pittman answered the call. They proved their mettle in places like Monchy-le-Preux, where just 10 of them – 10 of them, Speaker – held off an advancing German army for more than 11 hours before being relieved.

The Newfoundland Regiment was the only regiment to be given a title Royal by then King George V during combat. No other British army was to have such a distinction awarded to it during the First World War while fighting was still in progress.

But great valour came at a high cost. In graveyards and memorials across Europe, many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are among those tombs bestowed with the words “Known unto God,” but they are known to us. Our brothers. Our sons. Our heroes.

They came, like many of us do, from tiny communities, towns and ports across the province where today many memorials list the names of those who never returned home.

This soldier, our son, is one of them. A name etched in stone and etched in the hearts of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Through the crack of artillery, the rumours of gas, I wonder how often this soldier, our son, thought of home. Longed for that quiet

that comes when you're embraced by our craggy cliffs or hear a breeze blow gently across our barrens. I wonder how often his family hoped for word from him but feared news from the front from a faraway land.

In the long days, weeks and years that followed, I'm sure they dreamed somehow, some day, some way, he would make his way home. On Saturday, we fulfilled that dream. To symbolically answer the long-ago prayers of many families across Newfoundland and Labrador, we began a journey to bring one of ours home.

While his journey started over a hundred years ago, it was only a couple of days ago that I had the privilege and honour to stand in quiet reflection alone, with my family, and him – the four of us – and I reflected on the impact of lost sons, lost daughters and family members in the name of service. That day, in that moment, I felt his family's fears. I felt his family's loss. I felt his family's need to bring him home. It shook me and moved me to tears.

July 1 is Canada Day across our big nation, and there are rightfully celebrations, barbecues and fireworks. But here in Newfoundland and Labrador, the day is also a day of mourning. It marks the great sacrifice of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment at Beaumont-Hamel.

This July 1 will also mark the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Newfoundland National War Memorial. This year, we have the great honour and responsibility of having this unknown First World War Newfoundland soldier reinterred in a new tomb at the War Memorial – a place in the heart of downtown overlooking St. John's Harbour, from where soldiers and volunteers, our brave men and sons departed for Europe over a century ago.

We completed that journey for one, but we honour all who remain behind; a quiet chorus to remind us of what was lost, and what should never be forgotten.

I would like to express my gratitude to those who made this historic journey possible; a heartfelt, special thank to Mr. Berkley Lawrence, Mr. Frank Sullivan and Mr. Gerald Budden from the Royal Canadian Legion Newfoundland and Labrador Command, along, of course, with their partner and historian, Mr. Gary Browne, for their commitment to honouring our sacrifice in the First World War. Please join me in yet another round of applause for these true patriots, these true fathers of our sons.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: I also want to acknowledge the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for allowing repatriation of our Unknown Soldier's remains with the same dignity and respect as they do for other Commonwealth countries. Their ongoing care of our fallen heroes in our absence is greatly appreciated by all of us.

We must also recognize the Republic of France for their unwavering commitment to our Allied comrades and the remembrance of their sacrifices in both world wars.

To my colleague and Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, Minister Crocker, thank you for your early support and dedication in helping us move this project forward.

To Members of the Opposition, in particular – I'm not supposed to use names, but I will – Mr. Lloyd Parrott, a veteran himself, thank you for making the journey.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: Finally, I wanted to thank the dedicated supports of Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces and our federal government, including Minister O'Regan, for their support.

Without their assistance, this journey and commemorative events that will unfold in Newfoundland and Labrador would not have

been possible. Your efforts ensure that the legacy of those who served, both past and present, will be remembered by future generations. Their names will be spoken.

This Unknown Soldier will represent the collective contributions, courage and sacrifice of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who served, fought and died in all branches of the military and respective support services, especially those with no known graves.

We are taught at a very young age about the strength and sacrifice of what's known to be a fighting Newfoundlander. That legend was born in the muddy trenches of the Somme in the dark days of the First World War.

I was fortunate enough to previously be here with my father and to return with my children as well, to pass the torch from one generation to the next. I've always felt it's a pilgrimage every Newfoundlander and Labradorian should make. To live the well-quoted line from the *Ode to Newfoundland*, "Where once they stood, we stand," because you can return these souls home when you carry them in your heart.

Lest we forget. God guard thee,
Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Premier, for the beautiful words.

When we got in Beaumont-Hamel last week, the first thing I noticed at the first gravesite that we went to were the ages on the headstones. My daughter is 18, my son is 16 and a lot of these people were much younger.

I had a hard time in the weeks leading up to the journey. When the Premier invited me, I

knew it was going to be an honour of my life, but I also knew it would be hard. I'll be honest, for five days, four days, I did a whole lot of crying and there are some people that are here today with us that hugged me out of the blue or patted me on the back or said nice words and it helped me heal a lot of things that I didn't even know were broken.

I'll do my best not to get emotional as I talk about the return of our native son to his final resting place, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Sitting in the gallery with us today, we have four very fine gentlemen over there who made this happen. They pursued this dream for several years and I witnessed first-hand the fight, at the very last moments, before the ceremony in Beaumont-Hamel, whether it was ensuring the Newfoundland flag, the Red Ensign, was flown, raised proudly beyond Canadian Army regulations – we did some back-door scheming to make sure it happened, and it happened – or that our fallen son was piped aside as he so honourably began his journey home.

Mr. Speaker, Comrade Frank Sullivan, Comrade Berkley Lawrence, Comrade Gerald Budden, Comrade Gary Browne, and not with us today, Comrade Rob Shea, who was also a key player but sadly passed away just over a week ago, were all a major part of this. What they have given back to this province is immeasurable, and we'll all get to witness that on July 1.

I don't think there's enough thanks, platitudes or gratitude to thank you for what you've done. So from my heart to you guys, thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: I had the honour to serve with Frank almost 30 years ago and stand with Berkley and Gerald in Beaumont-Hamel. Unfortunately, Gary couldn't make the trip with us last week, but I've known

Gary for quite a while. They've been my friends, my colleagues, and now I can proudly call them my brothers.

It's an absolute honour to stand here in the people's House and mark the arrival of our Unknown Soldier, my brother, and the entire province's son. This gives us the opportunity to pay tribute to all of the soldiers that this young man represents; those who suffered, sacrificed on behalf of us all so we could enjoy the freedoms we have today.

War is a terrible thing to face. Those who have never served in conflict have no idea just how terrible it is. Even the most graphic movies can't display what people go through, and as you walk, the thing that endured with me was the day we went to Beaumont-Hamel – it was probably the most emotional moment I had – within the first 500 metres of entering the park, we walked through the trail, and we walked down into a trench and I wept like a child. I didn't know why, but it really gives you a sense of what those men, and the women, the nurses, the people that were there, it gives us a real great sense of what they went through and the sacrifices that they paid.

They spent time in constant awareness of peril, with knots in their throats, knowing they could die at any moment, suffer catastrophic injury, the non-stop surge of adrenaline, the pounding of their hearts, constantly suppressing their natural fear to take that next step, pushing aside the moral questions, with sincere prayers, clinging to images of their loved ones at home and praying to God your buddies would not fall and that you, too, would be spared.

We call it courage, but it's much more than that. It's an unselfish sacrifice. It's honour in the face of fear.

In the green fields of Europe today, like the fields here in Newfoundland and Labrador, children can run freely in safety thanks to

the sacrifices of our young men – some of them barely out of childhood themselves. Hearing the call of duty, seeing the opportunity to save the world, they stepped forward, they volunteered. The pride and terror of their parents, marching confidently in lockstep down onto the waterfront. They were blissfully unaware of the hell that they would be enduring on the killing fields a full ocean away. We can almost hear the echoes of their boots clapping on the pavement in unison on the way to war.

On every Memorial Day and Remembrance Day we hear the same sounds of boots on the pavement. It's like the rhythm of a beating heart, reminding us how fragile life is and how many of those marching men never returned when war was done or came home battered with sadness in their hearts that words could never describe.

In unmarked graves so many of our brothers rest; older men and teenagers, side by side. The National War Memorial will never be the same now that one of them is here, back home, our native son, to represent us all and to represent everyone that we've laid to rest in any conflict throughout the world. We give their sacrifice meaning by remembering them, honouring them and treasuring what they have given us: democracy, freedom, safety and our ability to function as families and live as proud Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

War is not always the answer but sadly, sometimes, it has to be. Young women and men continue to step forward today, much more aware than those teens of a century ago of what they might face.

We salute their courage for stepping forward, regardless, ready to take on the monsters that threaten everything we hold dear, and we pray that someday sanity will reign, and we will never again have to send our boldest and best off to fight in another terrible war.

Mr. Speaker, it was the honour of my lifetime to experience this journey, with people I shared it with: my band of brothers.

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother."

I hope and pray that the return of the Unknown Soldier brings as much closure to dark chapters in people's lives as it has to me. It has been a healing process for wounds that I did not know existed. This quote will forever be enshrined in my mind: "When you go home, tell them of us and say, for their tomorrow we gave our today."

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all involved. I'd like to thank Premier Furey and Minister Crocker, specifically, for ensuring that I had the opportunity to do this journey. It was life changing and I think I've said that to both plenty of times while we were there.

It will provide closure to so many veterans just like me and their families. It was the honour of lifetime to take part in this and to be able to say: "Where once they stood, we stand."

"They shall not grow old,
as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning,
We will remember them."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We will remember them. Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

"Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we
cursed through sludge,

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.”

Speaker, I do not have the lived experience of the veterans in this House today nor of my colleague from Terra Nova. But, I think, in Wilfred Owen’s poem, “Dulce et Decorum Est” it captures some of the sacrifice, some of the horrors of war that our young men in the Great War experienced and the enormity of their sacrifice. Wilfred Owen himself was killed one week before the armistice ending the war was signed.

I will say that my appreciation, as that of my brother and my siblings, for that sacrifice probably started with our parents, in particular my father who, while my mother was probably looking after the younger children at home, would take us to the Remembrance Day ceremonies at the National War Memorial, every November 11, regardless of the weather.

It instilled in us, I would have to say, a deep sense of respect. I don’t know if at that age, when we were first going there, if we fully appreciated what the significance of that event was and why we were doing it, but it is something that stayed with us. With my own children, and I’m sure with my brother’s children, we did much the same thing.

It was not a war that we had lived through, we knew veterans, but this was a way of marking the significance of that war, of what it stood for: a war to end all wars; of the sacrifice.

As a teacher, I taught many novels and pieces of poetry: “Dulce et Decorum Est”; “In Flanders Fields”; Charlie Wilcox, *All*

Quiet on the Western Front; *No Man’s Land*, to name a few.

When I was at Holy Heart, in honour of the 100th anniversary with R. H. Thompson, scrolling through the names of all those who had been killed in action.

As a teacher with students, I had the opportunity to visit Vimy Ridge. I have to say it is when you walk there and you see the immensity of the monument, the impressiveness of it, with the names of all those who were killed in action listed, when you see that piece of high ground that people fought and died for, the trenches, which are covered with grass, but, nevertheless, the fact is you get a sense of what the reality was, again, reverential, the enormity of the sacrifice. I didn’t have the opportunity yet to visit Beaumont-Hamel, but that is one of the ones that I will be seeing and sometime soon.

As an MHA, I had the privilege, I guess, of being adopted by the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 1, awarded their friendship award and I’ve gotten to know some very fine people there. I had the opportunity on July 1 to visit and lay a wreath at Tommy Ricketts’s memorial – by the way, Jordan is a great-great-nephew of Mr. Ricketts – and to be intimately involved in their activities. It has been a privilege and I thank them for that. They made me feel as one of their own.

I also had the opportunity to meet Mr. Bill Saunders, who was a World War II veteran, a gunner in the British Navy, who was there at the liberation of Hong Kong, a long-term member of the Legion. If nothing else, a sense of humbleness, I guess, of being a quiet hero. Most veterans I know are not ones to go boasting about where they were and what they did; many are still unable to talk about it. I would assume for the same reasons that the MHA for Terra Nova said, it’s deeply personal. But you knew that these people served their country to the

best of their abilities and were willing to make that supreme sacrifice.

So that brings me to this weekend. As I waited along the Boulevard for the procession of one of our own, of the Unknown Soldier, I was there with my wife and my children and with our three grandchildren. I will say, based on their comments, they're too young to appreciate the significance. We could have stayed home, I guess, but it was important to me and important to their father that they be there. He's a member of the reserves himself, but it was important to be there because, at some stage, sometime later in life, they'll be able to say that we were here at that motorcade, at that procession. On July 1, we'll be there as well at the monument, regardless of the weather.

I have to thank the Members in this House, the Premier, Mr. Parrott and the members of the Legion for undertaking to bring one of our own back home. I do believe in many ways what we're engaged in is an act of remembrance.

In John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields" the second stanza:

"We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields."

I think if nothing else, that poem highlights the fact that who we are talking about were real living human beings. They had family. They had loved ones waiting for them. They had friends and comrades who they fought along with, expecting to go home, writing home, you name it. I think, if nothing else, it's not just about the sacrifice, it's about remembering that these are ordinary people and if you look at some of the photos – and I used to point this out to the students – they're not much older than you are.

At Holy Heart, I think we had roughly 1,000 students and when we would talk about

Beaumont-Hamel, I'd say, keep in mind that, basically, that was about the size of the Newfoundland Regiment, maybe a little bit more. Think about it, if we had 60 showing up the next day, you get a sense of the enormity of that sacrifice.

So I'll end with that. I think it's important that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who call this province their home understand the significance of this event, of bringing one of our own home, but also the significance of July 1 for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Stephenville - Port au Port, Harbour Main, Humber - Bay of Islands, Torngat Mountains, Lake Melville, Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, with leave.

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

Few people in any region of this province have done more to contribute to a healthy sporting environment than Stephenville resident Darrell Chipp. Over the course of his life thus far, Darrell has excelled in various sports: squash champion, scratch golfer, a national caliber pickleball, racquetball and table tennis player, and, most recently, national champion disc golfer.

Darrell is a natural-born athlete and a fierce competitor who constantly works to improve his skills. Darrell's latest passion is disc golf.

Darrell was instrumental in bringing this newest sport, disc golf, to Stephenville. His

persistent efforts led to the building of a world-class disc golf course in Stephenville.

Today, you will find Darrell trying to grow the sport by sharing his knowledge and skills with new learners. Through his constant efforts to include both able and disabled bodied people in the game, he has created an inclusive space for all people to enjoy.

Darrell's achievements extend beyond sports. He's also an upstanding community member. It is people like Darrell that make our community great.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Small businesses are the driving force in our towns and communities, creating local jobs and encouraging economic growth and prosperity. That's why it's important to celebrate small businesses whenever we can.

It was such an honour for me to bring greetings recently at the Town of Conception Bay South anniversary celebrations of businesses operating 50-plus years in the area.

I proudly acknowledge award recipients in the Harbour Main district which were: The S.S. Meigle Lounge, Seal Cove, established by Richard and Annie Parsons 73 years ago in 1951; Smith's Furniture and Appliances, Upper Gullies, founded by Winston and June Smith 64 years ago in 1960; Parsons and Sons Transportation, Seal Cove, has been in operation since 1962. Scott Parsons just recently was inducted into the town's Sports Hall of Fame as a Builder of Sport, an honour which recognizes the huge impact he has on his community.

Seal Cove Grocery opened its doors in 1970 by Norm Ares. Fifty-four years later, it is owned by Kristen and Thomas Dwyer, and partner Christopher Reynolds. Jim and Mary Hickey founded Hickey's Timber Mart in Harbour Main in 1973. Fifty-one years later, they have expanded to CBS and St. John's with three additional stores.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating these incredible businesses for the accomplishments they achieved.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the new Western Memorial Regional Hospital in Corner Brook will be opening on June 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

E. JOYCE: There is a group of individuals who must be recognized for their hard work, their advocacy and their tenacity for improvements to health care in the Western region.

The West Coast Health Care Action Committee, which includes Israel Hann, chair; Gerald Parsons, vice-chair; Wayne Rose, Bruce Randell, Agnes Brake, Barry Wheeler, Jim Drover and Ed Anstey were relentless in their goal to have a new hospital equipped with a radiation unit and a PET scanner.

This group of unselfish volunteers are owed a great debt of gratitude for their vision and commitment. Due to their desire to have cancer patients from Western Newfoundland and Labrador treated at home, many patients will now fight this dreaded disease at home near their loved ones. There are many more improved services being offered due to the diligence and hard work of this amazing group.

On behalf of the residents of Western Newfoundland, I want to personally thank you for ensuring better health care to Western Newfoundland and, for years to come, residents will benefit from your foresight and dedication for better health care. See you on the second.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

Ellen Adams of Rigolet, Nunatsiavut was everything you wanted in a child, sister, mother, partner, friend. Growing up, Ellen was a diligent student, Brownie, Girl Guide, athlete, summers spent at her grandparent's fishing places, spring breaks at Carawallow place. She loved the land.

Graduating from MUN, destined to teach in the place she loved most, Rigolet, Ellen, led in her humble, bold way, 28 years teaching at Northern Lights Academy.

Her grandmother Elsa was Rigolet's first Inuktitut teacher. Ellen's quote: I have extremely massive shoes to fill. I hope I make her proud. Ellen championed the Rigolet Inuktitut dialect revival, which had almost disappeared.

Nunatsiavut President Lampe – and I quote – we not only lost a respected resident but a guiding light in our effort to preserve our language and our culture. Her passion for promoting Inuktitut was not only confined to the classroom, she volunteered tirelessly organizing events, fundraising for graduation ceremonies and accompanying youth in various competitions, all aimed at fostering a deeper connection to our culture and way of life.

Ellen led graduation ceremonies, mentored and chaperoned participants of the Inuktitut

speak offs, drama group events and sports meets.

If you see a picture of Ellen, she will be surrounded by students or out on the land.

May you rest in peace, Ms. Ellen.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Speaker.

Today, I would like to congratulate the 2024 graduating class of Eric G. Lambert School in Churchill Falls. As the MHA for Lake Melville, it is an honour to attend the graduation ceremony annually. Family and friends turn out in full force to celebrate this first major accomplishment in the young lives of the residents.

Following the church service and community banquet, I was pleased to bring remarks and present congratulatory certificates to the eight graduates: Adria Cranford, Anna Humber, Joelle Bragg, Rachel Kent, Laiya Cassell, Megan Boily, Coady Penney and Kenyan Reynolds.

This year, the class chose as their theme: The Rest is Still Unwritten. Indeed, a fitting statement for what awaits. As with the song by Natasha Bedingfield:

“Drench yourself in words unspoken
Live your life with arms wide open
Today is where your book begins
The rest is still unwritten.”

Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Eric G. Lambert's long-serving educator and principal, Sandra Lane, as she retires after 22 years in Churchill Falls. On behalf of this House of Assembly, thank you for your service and

legacy of providing quality education in Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville with leave.

Does the Member have leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues.

Today, in this hon. House, I rise to recognize Mr. Ed Dunne, a proud and committed resident of Virginia Park, an important part of our District of Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

Ed was a tireless and committed advocate for the Virginia Park community where he proudly lived with his beloved wife of 58 years, Patricia, and they raised their six children: Scott, Alicia, Anita, Juanita, Paula, and Pauline.

Ed served on the Virginia Park Community Centre board with pride for many, many years. He was a fierce advocate, having been involved with the centre since its establishment. He was a big supporter of the work they do, the role they play in our community and the lives they improve each and every day.

He always had a joke to tell, a comment to make or advice to offer. If you knew Ed, you almost always heard all three in every interaction you had with him.

Ed was a constituent, but a friend first. His memory will live on forever through his family, his friends, his community and the Virginia Park Community Centre that was so dear to him.

I would like all Members to join me in recognizing Mr. Ed Dunne, a true son of our province and a leader from our district.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Speaker, I am happy to rise in this hon. House to welcome a delegation from the Republic of Korea, including representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Office of International Cooperation, who join us here today, as we continue to develop a working partnership related to early learning and child care and post-secondary opportunities.

Speaker, I had the opportunity to visit the Republic of Korea this past October to attend the Canada-Korea Colleges /Universities Networking Seminar. The visit was engaging and informative and we endeavoured to find potential opportunities to collaborate in all areas of education.

We had one-on-one meetings with participants and discussed potential partnerships in several program areas including early learning, K-to-12 education, engineering and fine arts. During these discussions, we determined that both our jurisdictions can learn from each other.

Speaker, our province has a prominent history in developing positive working relationships with other countries. We will continue to promote Newfoundland and Labrador on the global stage while creating opportunities for our residents here at home.

I look forward to joining our guests to tour some of our early learning and child care

centres during their visit, and to have further discussions with them on more opportunities for our jurisdictions to collaborate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'd like to thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

The PC caucus supports this great initiative, and we welcome the Korean delegation that is visiting to discuss potential partnerships in education.

Partnering with other countries, such as the Republic of Korea, not only enriches our educational system, but it also fosters cross-cultural understanding and collaboration. These collaborations not only benefit children and educators in the K-to-12 system, but also post-secondary.

From exchange in best practices and resources, we enhance the quality of education and learn from each other. Promoting global partnerships and creating a platform for meaningful dialogue can help create a more inclusive education model that will benefit students and educators both here and abroad.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advanced copy of her statement and also join her in

welcoming the visiting Ministry of Education delegates from the Republic of Korea.

The minister is indeed right, it is important to develop a positive relationship with other countries for what they might teach us. While we appreciate partnerships with other jurisdictions, positive working relationships with our education professionals here in this province are also very important, which is why we call on government to maximize the benefits to early childhood educators in terms of a pension and health benefits and also address class composition so that teachers are able to give the individual help to students that students need to be successful.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I ask today: What will be the full capacity of the hotel at Airport Road, that the province has contracted for three years and when will that capacity be fully reached?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

I'm delighted to say that the ramp-up and the phased-in approach is continuing at 106 Airport Road. The capacity for residents who will live there, who will actually sign

leases and be part of the Transitional Supportive Living Initiative, is about 100. It's a 140-bed hotel room, what was formerly a hotel room. It's being transitioned into this Supportive Living Initiative now. About 20 of those rooms are going to be used, as I've mentioned before, for things like counseling, office space, another 20 rooms are going to be used for family meeting rooms and others, but the capacity for actual residents who will live there and sign a lease will be approximately 100, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, can we get an estimate as to exactly when the government hopes to achieve that 100 people will actually be staying there?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, once again, I'll thank the Member opposite for the question, delighted to answer that.

We are continuing, as our partner End Homelessness St. John's, the executives with that group have stated numerous times, we're in a phased-in approach. We're anticipating within the next few weeks more residents will be taken in through the emergency shelter line, through our Coordinated Access table, which are our community partners.

They identify residents who could potentially move there at some point in time and stay there for not any specific amount of time, it could be a few months, it could be a little bit longer. Based on best practices and models that we've investigated jurisdictionally across Canada, it's important that we make sure that the people who are going to end up living there and signing the lease will actually transition out into the rental market and more stable affordable housing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

We all know that the three-year lease was for approximately \$21 million plus costs.

I ask the minister: With all of the costs included that he's talked about, what is now the total estimated cost expected to be for this hotel at Airport Road over the course of the next three years?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak.

As was pointed out in the budget delivered by my colleagues, the Minister of Finance, just a little while back, a few weeks back, we have budgeted for this year about \$13 million. That is at capacity. If there is a phased-in approach of 25 per cent capacity in the first quarter, 50 per cent through the second and beyond, but we're hoping to have that up and running a little bit quicker than that with the hiring of staff.

We signed the contract with End Homelessness St. John's on the 15th of April, I think. It was mid-April and within a short period of time they were able to hire their executive team. They're continuing to hire more staff. NL Health Services, the staff component that will be servicing folks who are living at 106 Airport Road, are also in the process of being hired and, of course, there is already the hotel staff on site and security.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

I wonder if the minister can tell us: How much did government spend for other temporary accommodation from January to March of this year and how many people are actually being housed in such temporary accommodations?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, we have a large component of staff who are working with people who contact our emergency shelter line. We have various groups around St. John's, and it's not just St. John's, it's across the province. The exact number I can get for the Member Opposite. I'm happy to deliver that as quickly as I can have our staff get it available to them.

But on a daily basis, what our staff strive to do, including those at 106 Airport Road, is to provide a safe place for people to stay, each and every night.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, will this facility be accepting people from across the province and, if so, will all of their costs be covered?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Thank you, again, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

Our Coordinated Access table, which is a group of – I could name them all but there's about a dozen or more and they do service areas across Newfoundland and Labrador. Some of them are more specific to the St. John's and metro area where the need is greatest, but there will be people from other areas who will be able to stay there, provided they have case workers who are attached to the groups that are dealing with

End Homelessness St. John's and 106 Airport Road.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, given the delay of the start-up, is the province attempting or is the government negotiating the possibility of an extension to this contract beyond three years or purchasing the facility outright?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, we are not, but what we are doing is working with our community partners to ensure that folks who are, right now, experiencing homelessness or facing it have the opportunity to stay either at 106 Airport Road or one of the many other options which we have presented through our Affordable Rental Housing Program, which has groups that have come forward to try to build more housing within the next couple of years. Obviously, it takes a little bit of time.

Our own Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation initiatives to build more housing – we announced 100 just in this last budget: 50 for Central Newfoundland, 50 for the West Coast and four for Labrador West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, thank you.

We've heard that people in the neighbourhood have expressed concern that this facility may not be properly secure.

What assurances can the minister give to the people in the region that, in fact, this is a secure facility?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, thank you, again, for the opportunity.

We, through End Homelessness St. John's, have hired a security company to make sure that people coming and going have a registry so we can keep track of who is actually in 106 Airport Road.

Obviously, you're dealing with a large number of people, or we will when there are more people who are living there, so we want to be able to keep a register of who's actually in the building at a certain point in time, including the staff and including the residents or any guests who they may have in visiting them on any point in time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, again, I ask the minister: Is the cost of all of this included in the \$13-million budgeted amount?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, yes, the cost associated with that would be the rental of the hotel, the staffing model as well, security. It involves three meals a day for any resident who may be living there and any associated costs with NL Health Services who are on site: medical equipment, bandages, any needles that they may need in terms of flu shots or various things.

I mean, that would be more operational to the Health Minister who can answer that, but those costs are included in that \$13 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

The terms of admission are very restrictive. What will the province be doing for the homeless who do not meet the restrictive terms of admission to the Airport Road hotel? Where will they be housed?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, thanks again for the opportunity.

I wouldn't say that they're restrictive. They are appropriate to residents who will live there, who will sign a lease, who fit the criteria in order to transition into more affordable housing over a period of time. As I mentioned, there is no point where you have to leave or when you sign the lease, that it's only for six months or it's only for three months.

It's based on the appropriate treatment that is provided in the Transitional Supportive Living Initiative which we are providing. So it could be mental health, it could be addictions, it could be transitioning to get back in the labour force and then, of course, having the ability, through help with your support workers, to secure a lease for somewhere to live within the rental market.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

Can the minister table any analysis done by the Department of Health or medical experts that housing people with complex needs at airport inn in such a restrictive environment away from their families will be conducive to recovery?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Great to rise in the House and answer a question. I'm actually going to take a liberty, wearing my municipal affairs hat, as this is my first available opportunity, to welcome back after a year's absence, the deputy mayor of the City of Mount Pearl, our own Nicole Kieley, who has demonstrated amazing resilience.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HAGGIE: And from personal experience in a previous life, to do this in a year is really quite outstanding.

In terms of the nuts and bolts of the question the Member opposite asked, the issue of supports services is done on a case-by-case basis. It is not done globally; we build a budget, as it were, from the ground up. I'd be happy to go into details, but there is a complex series of arrangements that can be made for such individuals.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

What is the exit strategy for people admitted to this facility? When will they be deemed fit to be transitioned out of the level of care and what will happen to them when the three years are up if they are not ready for transitioning?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

This is case management. And for the benefit of the House, case management is a process by which a team of experienced individuals will assess a person's capabilities and needs at any stage of their journey, as it were, through their problems. As my colleague has referenced, these leases are open ended; there is no need for people to renew or kind of be removed after a certain period of time.

We will be using that to engage in therapeutic endeavours. There are rooms there for counselling, there are rooms there to provide services and we have our own community-based programs these people could then transition into, when appropriate and safe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: I'm not really sure if I am getting any answers, Mr. Speaker, but I'll continue on.

Are the security guards of this facility being properly trained to deal with people in mental health and addictions crisis?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to answer that question for the Member opposite.

The security firm, which signed the agreement with End Homelessness St. John's at the 106 Airport Road facility, our Transitional Supportive Living Initiative, they are getting training and some already have training in dealing with folks who have mental health or addictions issues and, of course, we have staff on site at all times, besides the security who are there.

It has to be a facility that has security on it. If you're dealing with any facility, be it this or

a regular hotel, there would be security on site.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

We know the police struggle with dealing with people facing such crises. To request assistance of mental health units, if the police are struggling, can you assure us that security guards at this facility have sufficient training to do this work?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we have staff on site, as well, through End Homelessness St. John's. There are going to be social workers, occupational therapists; there will be folks who are trained in addictions counselling, grief counselling and also mental health and addictions.

So there will be staff on site to deal with the residents if they have issues as they arise. That will be on a daily basis. There will be staff on site at all times, including floor coordinators. There is a harm reduction team that could be called in and folks from NL Health Services at any moment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

Minister, can you tell us where and how long were the security guards trained for this?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to get that answer for the Member opposite and report back to this House. What I can say is I can repeat my last answer insomuch as there are staff on site who deal with folks who have mental health or addictions issues. That's the whole idea behind this, is to essentially have a wraparound support.

I've said it before and I'll say it again, rather than just finding housing for some people is not the only answer. What you need to do is also make sure that when they open the door of their secure room, that has heat and light and a bathroom and a bed and everything that would be in a normal hotel room, that there are folks outside who can provide those supports which they so desperately need.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaker, last week I heard from a constituent in the Harbour Main District, a small business owner who received a government grant of \$3,640 that helps small businesses offset the cost of increased wages. On May 10 this year, she was informed she owes the province now \$2,210.30 due to an overassessment. This is a huge financial hit for a small business struggling in these tough economic times.

I ask the minister to please explain how this is possible.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

What I would say to the Member opposite is, certainly, I think any of us as MHAs would be concerned if one of our businesses had a situation like this. I'm unable to speak to the specifics as I literally have no idea of the particular situation.

But I can say if it is something that is under the Department of IET, I would welcome a conversation so that proper confidentiality can be maintained, and we can have a look at this file to see what the specifics are.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer.

Later though, the business owner learned about a new government grant for small businesses to offset wage increases this year. However, when she tried to apply online, she found that the application process had been suspended due to overwhelming demand. This reflects the widespread struggle amongst small businesses in the province to cope with wage and cost of goods increases, while maintaining affordable prices.

What reassurances does the minister have for my constituent and other small business owners who feel unsupported by the government?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

G. BYRNE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the domain of this question falls within the Department of Environment and Labour. The minister would be more than happy to be able to provide more details as soon as he can make himself available to those details.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Speaker, we almost had another tragedy on the Trans-Canada Highway near Grand Falls-Windsor just a month ago. Again, we have seen a vehicle going westbound in the eastbound lane at speeds of a hundred kilometres per hour-plus this spring. Four years now I've been asking this to be addressed.

Minister, what has the minister done to address this since I've given you the information, Minister, a little while back? With the summer season coming upon us, with the tourism season coming upon us and a lot of traffic coming on that road, what has the department done until now?

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

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

To the Member, we did discuss the issue previously. I've had a fair bit of discussion with our staff and we are going to address the challenge in that particular part of the highway. At the same time, we are planning to twin that piece of highway from Bishop's Falls to Grand Falls, which will avoid any of those situations in the future.

We'll keep you posted on that. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

C. TIBBS: I thank the minister for the response but, again, it's summertime and with the summer season upon us, I hope it does get addressed, Minister. It's a huge issue and we want to make sure – maybe even lowering the speed limit until it gets

addressed wouldn't be a bad idea, but I'll leave that with your department.

I have forwarded all the information about a constituent of mine whose son was not diagnosed with several learning disabilities until his graduation year, which is this year. Minister, the family would like to know how this young man has gone through 13 years of school before he could get the help that he's desperately needed.

What is the department going to do to avoid this problem in the future?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

Again, I can't speak to specific instances or cases, but would remind the Member that certainly we are having discussions in the department on how we can better meet the needs of students here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Ensuring that timely assessments are available, ensuring that resources are available and continuing to build a workforce that will support learning for children of all types in our classrooms, and that we can have the best opportunities moving forward after they leave our K-to-12 system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Speaker, I have parents in my district who are concerned with the supports that are available for children in schools with autism. In one case, I have talked to a parent whose child has missed her first full year of school because of lack of supports.

I ask the minister: Why is this happening to our young children?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

Again, I can't speak to a specific case, but I would ask the Member opposite if there is an individual that would like to speak to our department to see where some of the resource gaps may have been identified or noted, then we would certainly be willing to do that.

In terms of how we support our students, we're continuing to build our workforce. This year, we were able to add 104 student assistants to the school system. That will be a tremendous support to the individuals in the classrooms who rely heavily on these individuals to provide them with the needs that they have in terms of their learning opportunities.

We'll continue to work on this. We don't have it right every single time, but over the course of time, as the evaluation is broader and we have a better picture of what resource the student needs, then we can better fit a student assistant to those specific cases.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Speaker, one in 50 are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder yearly in our province. We have been hearing stories about children with autism losing child care seats and now children missing out on school due to the lack of supports.

When is government going to allocate resources based on needs and not based on numbers so that children are not left behind?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

The Member opposite raises a very important issue that was identified during our time in the Teachers Think Tank when we looked at classroom composition, how students respond in different environments and how students have different needs. We then committed to the NLTA that we would take a look at how our allocations are done, looking at needs-based versus just simply a number to place in classrooms.

That work is ongoing. It wasn't something that we could turn over in a short period of time, as it required a bit of investigation. In the short term, we did allocate student assistant supports and again, in *Budget 2024*, we're able to identify \$3 million to continue those supports in our classrooms.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Speaker, Bill 54, *Towns and Local Service Districts Act*, requires towns who now utilize the poll tax to impose a real property tax.

Can the minister update those municipalities in my district on the implementation time frame and any communications to municipalities on this matter?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Great to have a question on Municipal Affairs. I thank the Member opposite for the opportunity to speak on a really important piece of legislation.

The proclamation for the regulations under the *Towns and Local Service Districts Act* I signed three weeks ago. It is quite likely now that it has been gazetted.

It will say, quite clearly, that the rollout is January 1, 2025. That's when the clock starts. The act specifies a three-year

implementation period. That was at the request of the Municipal Assessment Agency among others, as well as MNL and PMA. This allows them to do the assessments and allows them to phase it in over that three-year period beginning January next.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Speaker, regionalization was a hot topic a short time ago. The report of the Joint Working Group on Regionalization stated that viable Local Service Districts can be incorporated into municipalities to become towns.

How many of these LSDs are actively pursuing such? Is the pathway to become incorporated smooth and attainable?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Mr. Speaker, we have 120, or thereabouts, LSDs across the province. They form a valued segment of local governance.

By and large, should a Local Service District wish to follow incorporation or amalgamate with a neighbour that is already incorporated, they are more than encouraged to do so. Under the new regulations and legislation, the necessity for a feasibility study is not mandatory, it is optional. I would be happy to entertain any requests from any LSD that feels it would like to incorporate.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

Thursday in the House the minister announced mandatory off-road vehicle training was available. Friday in a press release, she announced mandatory training is a part of regulations, which will come into force in the coming months.

Minister, which is it?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I am very pleased to stand today and talk about the training for off-road vehicles. We have made the training course available in MyGovNL and I encourage anyone to have a look or you could try it.

We will be making it mandatory for certain classes of drivers; for example, new drivers, people registering an off-road vehicle for the first time. Those supervising a young driver have to make sure that the young driver has completed the program.

So we wanted to make the training course available to give people time to complete the course and we're working now with different municipalities and different organizations to come up with a date. I believe we have a tentative date in the fall but we'll certainly get back to this House when we have a date, when the training will become mandatory. But if anyone wants to do the training now and complete it successfully, you'll get credit for that when it's mandatory.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

It's been two years and now it's not mandatory. It should be mandatory if we're going to do it. The minister had two years to do this. Students who will get out for the summer and will be hitting the trails on the powerful ATVs and Side By Sides.

Again: Why won't the minister act to prevent serious injuries and fatalities in this province?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

The training will be mandatory for new drivers of off-road vehicles, people registering an off-road vehicle for the first time and those who are supervising a young driver have to make sure that the driver has the appropriate training.

So we just made the training live in MyGovNL last week. We will be proclaiming a date when the training is mandatory and if anyone wants to do the training in advance, they're welcome to and they get credit for that when it becomes mandatory.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, registered nurses have been waiting since last August for their long service premium. Nurses do not need another reason to consider the job offers they're receiving elsewhere.

When will this government start treating workers with respect and make Newfoundland and Labrador an employer of choice in health care again?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Delighted to get up and deal with this topic, Speaker.

Our health care workers are our biggest asset in health care. It is not the size of your CT scanner that matters, it's the quality of our staff and we have the best.

So from the specifics around that long-service bonus, there was a communications foul-up, for want of a better word, between NLHS and the RNU and its members. That has been remedied. Each zone now has a date by which those bonuses retro pay will be made and it's within the next three pay periods.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

For years, His Majesty's Penitentiary has been left to decay by successive governments. It has become a hazard for both workers and inmates. This week inmates protested their living conditions. I checked with the department's project update page this morning and do you know what I found, Speaker? P3 contract value to be determined, design to be determined, expected completion date to be determined. This facility is rat infested and has biohazard concerns and this government can provide no details other than they're proud, it'll be another public-private partnership.

I ask the government: Is their priority the workers and the people of this province, or their investor friends?

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

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

When it comes to Her Majesty's Penitentiary, it's certainly a priority for our department to get its replacement in place as soon as possible, and we're working diligently on that.

In the meantime, the budget has allocated sufficient funds, \$15 million over two years, to upgrade the facility to meet the immediate needs and we will continue to make sure that is done on a priority basis.

We are responsive. Obviously, we work with the Department of Justice and Public Safety to ensure the safety of the inmates and the safety of the staff at the penitentiary. We will remain focused on that.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

In 24 years, 24 reports on education have been published. The overwhelming call is to address classroom size and class composition, resourcing in the classroom and the support of educators across this province.

When will this government finally realize that educational professionals, the ones with front-line experience, have the solutions?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

I would like to reference the answer that I made earlier in Question Period where I talked about our Teachers' Think Tank and one of the primary concerns that came out

of that was our classroom composition and how we do allocations of teachers in classrooms. At the end of that day, after hearing many of their stories and getting their perspective, we did commit to take a look at how we do allocations for our teachers in our classrooms.

That's a priority for our department as we move forward, building our partnership with the NLTA towards a recruitment and retention plan, as well as the additional supports that we have provided in classrooms: our student assistants, our teaching and learning assistants and continuing to bolster that resource as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Mental health and addictions treatment in this province has a Labrador-shaped hole in it. The reannouncement of the \$100,000 to review mental health and addictions services at NL Health Services will delay giving service to people in Labrador that are in very desperate need.

I ask the Premier: Will he commit, today, to finally putting an addictions treatment centre in Labrador so Labradorians have the same access to service as those on the Island of Newfoundland?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

Yes, mental health services are in great demand, currently. The review that was announced, that the Member opposite references, will in no way slow up current rates of delivery. What it is designed to do is analyze those processes in place across the province in terms of how they can be made better and more streamlined or more

efficient and make recommendations as to how to do this.

I think it would be fair to say that once that report is done and received, those elements that the Member opposite refers to will be improved.

In terms of what else we can do to improve the situation in Labrador, specifically, happy to discuss that with him. If he has any ideas, happy to hear about those. I'll work with my colleague from Labrador Affairs.

Thank you.

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.

Notices of Motion

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Bonavista, the following private Member's resolution:

WHEREAS Crown Lands' application of the provision of the *Lands Act* abolishing squatters' rights against the Crown Lands has, in some cases, resulted in challenges to the claims of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who honestly, and in good faith, have occupied and developed their lands for years; and

WHEREAS some historical titles of Newfoundland and Labrador trace back

centuries and are relied upon by the public, but are not accepted by the Crown; and

WHEREAS people have occupied their land for generations, based on informal title without grant from the Crown; and

WHEREAS some people have strong local community support for their claims of title, but do not have their clear title from Crown Lands; and

WHEREAS some municipalities maintain records of land ownership that are not considered by Crown Lands in determining title claims; and

WHEREAS some applicants of Crown lands access are frustrated at wait times for their applications to be resolved, even for land which has been long occupied; and

WHEREAS the policies and practices of the province's Crown Lands Division are impeding economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador, imposing high costs upon the public; and

WHEREAS this issue impacts potentially thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House urge the government to move expeditiously to bring forward legislative amendments to ensure fair reconciliation of existing claims for people seeking title to the land they have occupied in good faith for generations and which is recognized within their communities; and take steps in the interim to address Crown Lands' actions against occupied properties in the province.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

That resolution just read in will be the motion that will be debated on Wednesday afternoon by the Official Opposition.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Are there any further notices of motion?

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion –

J. HAGGIE: No, we're not there yet, that's next.

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

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Yes, I have an answer.

SPEAKER: Okay, thank you.

J HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

We're all trying to get ahead of ourselves.

In a question earlier on, I believe, the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans referenced a number of LSDs. The number I gave is erroneous. It is actually 175. I'd like to correct *Hansard*.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question that was directed at me during Question Period that I didn't have the

answer for, but my staff have received it now and delivered it to me.

I think it was the Leader of the Opposition who asked it. Between December 1, 2023, and January 9, 2024, \$1.8 million has been spent on Transitional Supportive Living arrangement.

I also wanted to mention, as well, and I don't know if I was clear enough because I did say yes, that there was training involved in the security staff that have been hired for 106 Airport Road, but it was part of the analysis related to security that was their understanding and their approach to harm reduction which is the model which is under way at 106 Airport Road, as well the training was also a requirement of our proposal call.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Any further answers to questions for which notice has been given?

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Veterans Pavilion was opened on 1961 to care for veterans of World War I, II and the Korean Conflict and it originally housed 56 veterans.

Since the Korean Conflict, Newfoundland and Labrador soldiers have participated in over 30 operations and every single NATO operation.

Veterans suffer from PTSD, mental and physical health issues and are more likely to experience homelessness than the general population.

The war in Afghanistan saw the most Canadian soldiers killed in action and injured since the Korean Conflict.

We can expect to see more veterans requiring the services provided by the Veterans Pavilion in the years ahead. However, since its opening, the number of available beds for veterans in the pavilion has steadily decreased.

In 2022, 15 dedicated beds were available. In 2023, reduced to 12. Only 10 beds are available at the pavilion for 2024. There is a concern that the number of available beds is going to be reduced again.

The reduction of dedicated beds ignores the veterans in other conflicts and it means they will not have the services of the pavilion when available or when they need them.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately restore the number of designated beds at the pavilion for veterans to pre-2022 numbers and to develop a plan to increase the number of dedicated beds to accommodate post-Korean Conflict and those who might need them.

Mr. Speaker, as a veteran who has been injured, I know first-hand what Veterans Affairs offers and how it works. We look in this room today and we've been honouring veterans all day today, and we just repatriated the Unknown Soldier from France which took an effort of the federal government, the provincial government and Veterans Affairs to all come together and make that happen.

This petition is extremely important. It's not just here in Newfoundland where this happening. It's happening right across the country, and I know that we can say, as a province, that this isn't our responsibility, it comes under Veterans Affairs. Well, I will say it is our responsibility. We need to take action to work hand in glove with Veterans

Affairs and the federal government to make sure that these veterans are looked after.

We know now what conflict has done. There has been diagnoses of PTSD on a level that we've never seen before, not because it didn't happen before, but because it went undiagnosed. We have an aging society, and a part of that aging society are people who have served in our Canadian Armed Forces – the finest men and women that you will ever meet.

I'm sure that everyone in this House of Assembly has a family member who is either serving or is a veteran, and the importance of the Veterans Pavilion in this province is huge. We need to find a way to increase the level of beds. These men and women not only want that level of care, they deserve that level of care. This province needs to urge the federal government and Veterans Affairs to work with them in order to make that happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

This is a petition to restore designated beds for veterans at the pavilion.

The Veterans Pavilion was opened in 1961 to care for veterans of World Wars I, II and the Korean conflict and originally housed 56 veterans.

Since the Korean Conflict, Newfoundland and Labrador soldiers have participated in over 30 operations and every NATO mission.

Veterans suffer from PTSD, mental and physical health issues and are more likely to experience homelessness than the general populations.

The war in Afghanistan saw the most Canadian soldiers killed in action since the Korean Conflict.

We can expect to see more veterans requiring the services provided by the Veterans Pavilion in the years ahead. However, since its opening, the number of available beds for veterans at the pavilion has steadily decreased.

In 2022, 15 dedicated beds were available. In 2023, that number was reduced to only 12. Only 10 beds are available for veterans at the pavilion for 2024 and there is a concern that the number of available beds will be reduced further in coming years.

The reduction of dedicated beds ignores the veterans of other conflicts and could mean they will not have the services of the pavilion available to them when they need them.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately restore the number of designated beds at the pavilion for veterans to pre-2022 numbers, and develop a plan to increase the number of dedicated beds to accommodate post-Korean Conflict veterans who might need them.

Speaker, when the president of the Branch 1 Legion approached me about this and made me aware of it, we suggested one option he could do is to present a petition. This petition has 110 signatures on it, which tells you the importance of having a place for our veterans when they need it.

The gentleman I referenced earlier, Bill Saunders, was a resident of the pavilion and I would suggest that kind of care in the latter stages of his life was something very welcome, something very needed.

When we talk about remembrance and the need to remember and use the words, lest we forget, it is not just the veterans of World

War I, World War II and the Korean Conflict but all veterans since that time. If there's a way in which we can remember them and remember that sacrifice is to make sure that when they need them, that beds at the Veterans Pavilion are there for their needs and to make them comfortable and to provide the services they need.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

WHEREAS there needs to be sufficient resources to provide proper care for those who cannot speak for themselves. Instances within long-term care and other regional health care facilities have compromised the necessary care trained professionals need and want to provide; and

WHEREAS it is time our seniors and others in need are no longer ignored, but protected and treated with dignity, compassion and the respect along with all human rights and entitlements;

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House as follows: We, the undesigned, call upon the House of Assembly and urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to provide the level of resources to ensure residents in long-term care and all other applicable regional health facilities, housing persons with dementia, Alzheimer's Disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions receive appropriate safety, protection from injuries, proper hygiene care and all other required care on a consistent basis.

Next month, as we know, will be Seniors' Month. Two of my colleagues spoke to care for our veterans at the pavilion. Our seniors, especially during COVID, the stories that I heard from children about their parents, about seniors who were in isolation, in

different facilities and not getting the proper care and attention they need and, in many cases, not due to the staff.

Our health care professionals want to give them the care that they need. It's great, as I said the other day, to have report after report after report, but our seniors are aging, their time is limited. We do not have the supports for them. It's not there.

I hear it on a consistent basis. You talk about aging at home, they need supports at home. Children of these seniors do not have – they have the love of their parents and that, but they do not have the resources or the expertise to be able to care for seniors at home, nor do we have it in the many establishments out there.

We are an aging population. Our seniors deserve to age with the dignity, respect and the resources and health care that they need and deserve so readily.

So I call on this government, once again, on the eve of Seniors' Month, we have to do better to ensure our seniors get that dignity and respect.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

The reason for this petition:

Concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador urge our leaders to return the marine shipping service between the Island portion of our province and our Northern Labrador communities of Rigolet, Makkovik, Postville, Hopedale, Natuashish and Nain.

WHEREAS this marine freight service was removed in the spring of 2019, resulting in freight having to be trucked to the port of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, then shipped to our Northern Labrador communities; and

WHEREAS the additional shipping has directly impacted the price of food, building materials, vehicles, including trucks and off-road vehicles, household goods and many essential services.

Now, Speaker, I talk a lot on this petition, but it is becoming really serious now. We're getting into the summer – summer is around the corner. Last week, when asked about the Fogo ferry service, the Minister of Transportation said: We make sure that each route and each run is supplied with vessels that we have at hand that would be the case with Fogo.

So for us now, this season, we're seeing the earliest breakup of the sea ice on record and residents of Northern Labrador need a commitment from that our ferry, the *Kamutik W*, will be available for the June 10 start date. Because, Speaker, I only just came from Nain, the shelves are bare. The only thing left is things that people don't normally buy, like mussels and canned items like that.

I went down to the store in Nain looking for some milk for my coffee, I couldn't find any milk. In actual fact, I did find some milk up in Frank's store and it was that Grand Pre milk, that was the only thing left. Somebody said, oh, quick there's some Pepsi that came in on the plane, you might be able to buy some. So I went down to the cooler, it was all gone.

Speaker, right now, we need a return of the freight boat from the Island so that people can afford food, but, more importantly, we can start getting our vessels on a regular course, starting off on June 10, not having to wait until the end of the month when they give the Fogo ferry back to us.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure for a response.

J. ABBOTT: Thank you, Speaker.

I wanted to respond to the Member's comments because I think certain things are getting a bit confused. There will be no boat coming back from Lewisporte and that has nothing to do with the availability or the cost of goods on the North Coast of Labrador and the Member knows that, the community knows that and the Nunatsiavut Government knows that.

What we are focused on is the Labrador marine service. The vessel will be back on time to make sure the supplies and individuals are accompanied up to Nain.

What we want to be mindful of is that the service has been improved, the subsidies have come down and we will continue to do that.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

The Joint Working Group on Regionalization suggested that viable Local Service Districts within the province be incorporated as municipalities to provide better governance for its residents. Better governance leads to stronger and more viable communities, which is a noble goal. It appears the government is not creating a smooth pathway for those communities and Local Service Districts seeking to become municipalities.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to create an improved and more acceptable path for viable communities and Local Service

Districts who wish to be incorporated as municipalities.

I asked a question in Question Period, Speaker, I'm sure you recall that, I had asked about creating pathways for municipalities and how many there would have been. The minister didn't answer it at that time. He may wish to answer it now, but I just know that there were a couple in my district.

So if we're looking at 40 districts, I know there were at least two in mine of which I think the communication has not been great. Why I say that, the context of it not being great, is that the communication that came back from the department had stated to these two interested parties in pursuing becoming a town that they should start to prepare for the financial cost of items that would be involved in becoming an incorporated entity and they even specified \$25,000.

For any Local Service District or unincorporated areas, that's a pretty daunting figure, but the minister had said in Question Period that through Bill 54, we've eliminated that need for feasibility study so that cost may be different now. I would hope that for those that got a reply from the department with a cost of \$25,000-plus to become incorporated have been notified that the pathway is open because that cost is incorrect. If they haven't, they ought to have been. The two in my district, for full disclosure, have not been communicated that that cost is no longer valid.

I would hope that we realize the value of good local governance and for these viable communities out there, there ought to be a pathway. It ought to be a smooth pathway. I would hope the government does make it smooth.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs for a response.

J. HAGGIE: Yeah, thank you very much, Speaker.

There were some applications in the pipeline prior to the debate in this House about the *Towns and Local Service Districts Act*, and because that legislation had been pending, a lot of those applications that were there were kind of put in abeyance.

What I would suggest very strongly to the Member opposite is that he encourage those communities again to apply. The system will change. As I said in my answers during Question Period, the new regulations do not come into force until the first of January of next year, so the applicants would need to have some discussion with Municipal Affairs.

Our director of municipal support is very knowledgeable in his field and is a useful resource for any LSD to contact. I would encourage the Member opposite to encourage his community to do that.

Thank you.

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Speaker.

First of all, I just want to say Happy Birthday to my favourite Liberal, the Member for Mount Pearl North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. LANE: Mr. Speaker, Visions Employment Plus is a not-for profit, community-based, supported-employment organization. Established in Mount Pearl in 1994, Visions provides employment-related services and supports to individuals with intellectual disabilities who require assistance and support to access the labour market and

who experience barriers obtaining meaningful, long-term employment.

While we recognize that programs are undergoing some changes, we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to find additional resources to ensure funding is restored to supported-employment programs.

Mr. Speaker, I present this petition again. In fairness, the Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills has spoken to this. He has been out there in the media. He is basically calling upon the federal government to reinstate funding for supported employment. I definitely agree with him on that. Although I will note that this additional funding, this top-up funding, as it was called, that was going into the program, we knew five years ago that was only supposed to be a five-year program. Last year the federal government extended it for an additional year.

I will say that it should not have been a surprise to the provincial minister. He knew this funding was going to be cut and now he's playing a little game of let's go after and blame it all on the feds when he didn't budget the shortfall to ensure that the supported employment could continue.

So, again, obviously, we would like the federal government, any money we can get from them, to help support programs is very important and I certainly encourage people to reach out to our federal MPs, but at the end of the day I think the important piece here is that the funding, for all intents and purposes, has been lost.

The minister has reached out to supported-employment agencies and said we'll give you six months guaranteed funding but what happens after that six months is the big question. These organizations do tremendous work in providing employment opportunities for people with intellectual

disabilities and their concern is what happens in six months' time. They need that certainty. Staff are already, I'm told, looking for other employment opportunities because they don't know if they'll have a job in six months' time and these people availing of these programs will be the ones who will suffer in the end.

So whatever we need to do to make sure they have some certainty and funding, we need to do it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, that notwithstanding Standing Order 9, this House shall not adjourn at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 29, but shall continue to sit for the conduct of Government Business and, if not earlier adjourned, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

SPEAKER: 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.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 2.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, that under Standing Order 11(1), this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 28.

SPEAKER: 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.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, third reading of a bill, An Act Respecting King's Counsel and Order of Precedence in the Courts, Bill 53.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said 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.'

Motion carried.

CLERK (Hawley George): A bill, An Act Respecting King's Counsel and Order of Precedence in the Courts. (Bill 53)

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 Respecting King's Counsel and Order of Precedence in the Courts," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 53)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 12.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: I move, seconded by the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL, that An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act, Bill 79, be now read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 79, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act." (Bill 79)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I am very pleased to stand today and to talk about changes to the *Highway Traffic Act* and the *Provincial Offences Act* to enable speed cameras.

Speaker, last summer we had a pilot project in Paradise and the City of Mount Pearl where we had two cameras, three locations each, and the two cameras caught nearly 94,000 vehicles going over 11 kilometres an hour over the speed limit. So that was quite shocking, Speaker.

So ever since then, we have been working on what is our long-term approach to speed cameras in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is where we've ended up, Speaker. We're proposing a slight change to the *Highway Traffic Act*; we're also making it gender neutral, which is why the bill itself is quite large. There are a lot of gender-neutral changes to make.

And we're making a change to the *Provincial Offences Act*. In terms of the *Provincial Offences Act*, we're enabling electronic tickets, so ticketing could be issued electronically via email.

Speaker, starting out, I believe, that speed-camera tickets will be in the mail. There are still a few things that we need to work out in terms of the electronic ticketing, but the changes in the legislation gives the authority to do that and so our teams will be working with Justice and Public Safety to work towards electronic ticketing as an option in the future. When we're ready to roll that out, more information will become available.

What we are rolling out right now, following Royal Assent, hopefully, is speed cameras. The change we're making today is to enable a vendor to issue tickets. After Royal Assent, we're hoping to go, with other departments of government, with an RFP and in that RFP we would secure a vendor and the vendor would install cameras, maintain cameras, move cameras around. The vendor would also send out tickets, so that's a new thing, having a third party send out speeding tickets.

The other thing we're hoping the vendor can do is go to traffic court. If you get a ticket right now – and too bad my colleague the

Minister of Justice and Public Safety is not here today, I'm sure he can answer more questions about that – apologies, sorry. I'm not an expert in the matters of Justice and Public Safety, I'm happy to provide more information at a future time about that, Speaker – apologies.

But if you get a ticket right now, a speeding ticket, you can send it in and get a traffic court appointment. There will be certain criteria whereby you don't even need to go to traffic court, for example, if there's an error with the ticket. Let's say my vehicle was stolen out of my driveway or off-street parking last night and the person who stole my vehicle gets a speeding ticket, well, I get that ticket in the mail. But if my vehicle was stolen, then you take the police report, send it in with an appeal for the ticket and, in that case, Speaker, I would expect you wouldn't even have to go to traffic court.

But one of the changes we're making, Speaker, is to allow a vendor to go to traffic court. Our law enforcement officers in the province are very busy and we want to have speed cameras, but I also don't want to have all the police officers in the province in traffic court because people are appealing their speeding tickets, as they lawfully have a right to do so. The plan is that the vendor is also going to go to traffic court and stand in when if someone is appealing their ticket.

Those are the changes we're proposing today. Those are all the things that we'll be looking for a vendor to help us with.

So a reminder to anyone watching, and for the record, when we're going to issue a speeding ticket, the camera will take a picture of the back of the vehicle. We're not looking inside the car, it's just the licence plate, so that means that the fine goes to the registered owner of the car.

We're not talking about demerit points here, it doesn't go for the driver, it goes to the registered owner of the car. In giving a ticket to the registered owner of the car, that

means that if you don't pay that ticket, you also can't renew the registration on your vehicle without paying that ticket amount owing, Speaker. That's a very important part of our rollout of speed cameras.

So to start, Speaker, our plan is start with 10 speed cameras, because there are a lot of cogs in the wheel. We have to get the vendor on board. We have to get the vendor set-up to issue tickets. We have to make sure the traffic court has all those processes ready to issue tickets. So we're going to start with 10 and then we're going to ramp up after that.

Meanwhile, I've already had discussions with some of my other colleagues about cameras on school bus arms and red-light cameras, so we will be progressing those separately. This legislation we're changing today will enable those as well. So the vendor will be able to help us with school bus cameras and red-light cameras.

Just to clarify, when I talk about school bus cameras, I mean when a school bus is stopped and the arm goes out on the side of the road, a camera would take a picture of any vehicle who illegally passes the school bus while they're stopped. That is illegal, Speaker. So that's how a school bus arm camera works, it takes a picture and would ticket anyone passing a school bus.

I'm personally anxious to have a lot more than 10 cameras – and one municipality jokingly asked me for 200 cameras. But we're going to start with 10, I'm okay with that – make sure we get all the kinks out of the system and then expand as we are able.

I guess a few nuances, Speaker. There are provincial government roadways and we know that people speed on those, so we do have a few places identified, such as Veterans Memorial where speeds are very dangerous. We are going to work with municipalities.

Speaker, right now my intention is not to tell a municipality they have to have speed cameras. We've heard from many that they're very interested in having them. So if they are interested, we can work together and divvy up the 10 and then moving forward more and more. We would look to municipalities to tell us where they should go within their municipalities because they know their municipalities the best. So we're hoping to work with municipalities.

My ambition is to have some, if not all, of the 10 cameras up before the end of the summer, early fall, ideally at the end of the summer. I'll be pushing things on my side to make that happen as soon as possible.

I'm very excited. The culture of driving in Newfoundland and Labrador, Speaker, is that people speed, people drive too fast. This is one small change we're hoping to make to reduce that dangerous driving behaviour.

I do want to talk about the fines for a minute just to make sure while we're on the record. In the media availability this morning, I did talk about fines starting at \$200. In the *Highway Traffic Act*, I believe the fines start a bit lower than that. I think it's \$50 if you're caught speeding one to 11 kilometres an hour, so I don't anticipate there would be any speed camera tickets being issued to people going under 11 kilometres an hour over the speed limit. The ticket amount for someone going over 11 kilometres an hour, up to 20 kilometres an hour, begins at \$200.

So just to clarify the difference in those fee amounts. I would anticipate the lowest amount we'll be giving out for a speed camera ticket is \$200, but it is illegal to speed at all. It's illegal to go six kilometres an hour over the speed limit. Then obviously the faster you go, the higher the fine.

We are not changing any of the fines today. Those are outlined in the legislation and regulations, so I just wanted to clarify that. I

look forward to the debate and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

It's certainly a pleasure to be able to get up and speak to the *Highway Traffic Act* and the cameras that are being introduced to come in. We certainly agree with certain points of it and we'll have some questions when we get into Committee for sure – a good many questions. But that's something that is encouraging to see in certain municipalities and that stuff so it's great to see.

This bill seeks to amend the *Highway Traffic Act* in several ways. It would allow the minister to designate non-officers of the Department of Digital Government and Service NL as traffic compliance officers, which would enable management of images captured for enforcement purposes.

These designed officers would have the powers of a peace officer for enforcing violations using an image captured by the speed cameras. This change would likely mean that individuals at a desk checking data would be responsible for this enforcement rather than the peace officers, which to me, make a lot of sense.

If it's taken by a camera there should be less court issues happen, I would think, in regard to being able to write out the date or wrong date or the wrong person's name. You have the picture of vehicle; you have the picture of the plate. Whoever owns the registered vehicle is the person that's going to get it. There would be not a lot to debate on that and take it to court. They have the picture.

When going one to 10 over, so that's a fine of \$50. Hopefully, there can be a little bit of leeway. Where do you draw the line? I guess, that's certainly an issue, but anything going from 11 to 20 and so on up, then the fines are in place to do that.

Some of the fines, like I said, one to 10 is \$50; I think 11 to 20, as the minister said, is \$200. In the briefing – which I do thank the staff for, for the briefing when we were over the other day – they said fines as high as \$950. I'm thinking the minister today in her press release might have said \$1,900. I'm not sure if that was a mistake or not. But \$950 was the amount, so maybe she'll check into that while I'm speaking.

The bill also aims to incorporate gender-neutral language, update the names of the government departments and correct the reference to Trial Division from Supreme Court. The bill to amend the *Provincial Offences Act* will allow government to send tickets electronically. That's great, but there are still people that do depend on mail, they get it in the mail, which I'm sure will happen. They'll check out postage and stuff like that.

A pilot project took place and there were two cameras in six different locations for three months. There were over 93,000 violations, as the minister had said. There were places that they did have these cameras. Do we notify the public when the cameras are in certain areas, that there are speed enforcement cameras there? That's something that's certainly up for debate, I would think. It's nice to know that they're there. Will they actually abide by it? But these cameras will certainly slow down the people and the residents in the areas that are prescribed to have these cameras. So that's very important.

In the recent briefing, we were told there were initially 10 cameras deployed. So she said she's going to start with 10, the minister did mention today, and hopefully get some more in certain areas. I know that there's a town in my area that's – not

requesting cameras, but certainly requesting that speeds be reduced, certainly in school zones. One area of my district is in the Goulds. We have an elementary school that when you're driving down that road, the speed is 30 kilometres and it's probably hard to do that. But if you put cameras in that area, it would be something that people will become aware and they'll learn very quickly that they're going to have to slow down in those areas.

This bill would amend the *Highway Traffic Act*, too, to allow the minister to designate persons who are not officers of the Department of Digital Government and Service NL as traffic compliance officers. It allows for vendors to manage the image. Also, it provides a traffic compliance officer with the powers of a peace officer for the purpose of enforcing a violation of the section referred to in 177.1 of the act, using an image capturing enforcement system. This person would likely be someone at a desk checking data as opposed to a peace officer doing it or a police officer. They can do it from a desk and from the cameras and the visuals that they have.

Again, it will incorporate gender-neutral language, update names of government departments and replace, as I've said before, Trial Division from the Supreme Court.

This will also provide the *Provincial Offences Act* to allow for service of tickets by electronic means; allow the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to make regulations respecting the service of tickets by electronic means; incorporate gender-neutral language; update, again, government departments.

The background, in 2019 – so this is five years now in the making that we've been waiting for this to come in here so we can debate it. The thing I have to say, yes, it's coming in for legislation. As happened in the ATV regulations, it would be nice to be involved in the regulations as well. Not

saying to change it, but to be able to speak to it. Because once we leave here and the legislation is done, we don't have anymore say in it.

I would think it would be nice, as a group of 40 individuals, that we'd be involved in the regulations. We all may have a say in it, but there might be something that the department will pick up in regulations that maybe help make the act stronger. You know, it's just something that I may say that the Minister of Finance may have something to say about it that may be real important to it. And they look at that and they hear it from us before the regulations come into place. Maybe there's something we can do to strengthen that legislation.

We always leave here after legislation is done and never hear anything for the regulations until they come in force. And we had that happen in the ATV and the helmet regulations. Let's move on past that, let's learn from it and let's make this stronger. I think that's an important point in all legislation that we do in this House of Assembly.

In 2019, amendments were made to allow for the use of speed cameras to collect information due to safety concerns with red lights, which is very important. I wonder if the minister, when they're looking at this, when people are running red lights – okay, we're doing it based on speeding. No doubt about that, that's very important. But I'm wondering about running red lights. Again, it's a touchy subject. Sometimes when you start going through a light, it turns yellow and then it turns red.

But when somebody's actually running a red light, maybe it's another avenue that we can get to further, in the next piece of legislation, that's something that we can look at. Because I think that's very important for people that are running these red lights and causing some dangerous activity, certainly at intersections in the city, for sure.

Again, the cameras are there for speed, speeding in construction zones, speeding in school zones and speeding past a school bus, which again, the minister has said about the arms being out on the buses and being able to put the cameras on, I think it's very important. We've seen some incidents along the way this year, and you read them on social media, and it's scary to see that people are passing these buses even though – and I come in through Mount Pearl, when I come in here to the House of Assembly.

It's a four-lane highway. There's a bus stop down the other side of the road, then we stop here. Yes, they may not be going across, but you don't know what the kids are going to do when they get off the bus, so you should be stopping. I think it's important that they have these on the buses. I really do. I'm sure from a standpoint of buses, eventually when new places are buying buses or new businesses are buying buses, that these cameras will be installed on these vehicles from here on in I would think, or I would hope.

Currently the only plan for cameras is to track people's speed in high-volume areas and places that speeding is a problem. There was a plan for all buses, as I said, to have speed cameras. Actually, in dealing with, somewhere in this, we had mentioned about licence plates and being able to contest from the letter I or the number one. I know that in car dealerships and in vehicles that are built, there's no letter I in the serial number of a vehicle and there's no letter Q in the serial number of a vehicle. They done that for a reason because of the same reason as a picture may transpose it wrong. So there's no I or letter Q in the serial numbers of vehicles. They did that for a reason, obviously, because when they're trying to record this for warranty purposes and recalls, when people are looking at it, they transpose it wrong, a one or an L. If you do a capital I, it looks like an L sometimes and just the writing when you're doing it. So there's no I or L in letters of

vehicles. When I called the dealership today just to check on that, I thought that was pretty important because we're dealing with plates.

Also, when we're dealing with plates – and I'm sure the minister could check this for me – just this morning I was coming in behind a vehicle and the plate had the lettering gone off it. You could still see the number when you get close enough to see the letters on the plate, but the material is gone off. I know that was offered free for a period of time to go do. Is that still in place?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

L. O'DRISCOLL: It is? Okay.

The police have enough of a job to do, as we know, but if you're going to enforce speeding in some of these zones, then maybe that's another place you can tackle, when you see these pictures going through, these cameras, that they can jump on that as well to get these plates replaced.

I was behind another vehicle going home the other day – it is funny that it would come up in legislation – and the vehicle ahead of me had nothing on it only the imprint of the letters or numbers on the plate. The rest of the plastic was gone off it and you couldn't see it. Any material was gone. So I think that's important to be able to get these plates done and fixed up.

Also, in regard to safety – and we had this discussion in Estimates. We were discussing about this is done for safety reasons, so we know why. Speeding is an issue in all parts of this province. It's something that we look at, but I look at it, and I've said this before, there should be another safety aspect added to this and that would be safety inspections on vehicles.

Now, you do have to do a safety inspection if anyone buys a new or used vehicle – a used vehicle, I should say. When you're buying a vehicle or you're transferring it

from someone else, then an inspection has to be done. We all know that. Then you cannot have that vehicle if it's not registered to you.

When people are buying a vehicle, if I bought a vehicle off the Speaker here today, then he's got an opportunity on the registration of the vehicle to fill it out, who he sold it to, the amount that he sold it and send it in. So it's out of that person's name and if that person never registered, then you're off the hook for any tickets the car may get at a later date.

If they didn't transfer it, the person that you sold it to as a private sale, if they didn't transfer it, then you're going to get tickets coming back to you. But if you send in your registration, put your name and all the information that's required that it's no longer in your name, then you should be clear and free. So a lot of the time people neglect to do that, or forget to do it, but it's important for them later on down the road.

In regard to safety inspections, I worked in a dealership for 22 years, in service and in sales, and safety is the most important. At one point in time, when I first started in there, motor vehicle inspections were required every year. Now, do I think they're required every year? No, I don't think so, but there is a certain point in time that safety becomes a factor in all this, and the inspection of a vehicle and for safety, as we're discussing today, there should be something in place and government should have a look at it – now I'm not looking at putting more money or costs to taxpayers, but we're talking about safety. And a part of that safety would be motor vehicle inspections.

If you've got a vehicle that's five years, 100,000-kilometre warranty on it, okay, fine. But when you get a vehicle that's older than seven or eight years old, then I think it should be safety inspected. You look at them driving around today, there are holes in them – if you had a safety inspection on

some vehicles that are around this city and around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, when you've got rust holes in a vehicle in the quarter panels or in the rocker panels of the vehicles, or in the fenders, then they can't be inspected. That doesn't pass inspection.

So there's a certain point – you can pass an inspection with an ABS light on because you've still got conventional brakes. But there are vehicles out there – and we know, coming from a dealership when inspections were done on vehicles, when it comes to September, vehicle repairs that weren't mandatory were put off.

Because they had kids going to school, they're buying school clothes, they're trying to get ready for school and it's an expense at that time of the year. We always noticed in the dealership, September and October the repairs slowed down because they were trying to put their money somewhere else. Their kids are going to school, buy supplies, and do whatever. So that's something that happens.

But when the vehicle gets up in age, I think it's time for something to be done for safety. You know, that's something that should be done. My colleague from Bonavista did mention about Red Seal technicians, but I know from coming from a dealership, you had to be a licensed mechanic and you had to be a journeyman in order to write a motor vehicle inspection.

You can't just bring it in and an apprentice write an inspection. The inspection had to be done by a journeyman. Whether the apprentice looked at it, and then he had to go back and verify it, but the person that signs their name to an inspection slip – and we've seen some instances along the way over the years that one time, a long time ago, not now – because the people that owned these licences or the name is signed on the slip, they're responsible for that vehicle if something happens.

Now, if they're signing it today and something happens in three or four months' time, that's fine. But if they sign it today and a week later something happens, the brake pads are gone and you signed the slip – that doesn't happen anymore because their name is attached to that inspection and they're responsible; they're not going to put their job on the line. So that day has gone past us, as far as I can see, from working in a dealership. I hope to assure that it's gone.

We have lots of questions when we get into Committee, and there are certainly lots of questions that I'm sure other Members are going to ask as well.

Thank you. It's certainly a pleasure to speak on this bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I just want to take a brief moment. Like I said, I think this is a good move. I think this is one of the first bills I got to debate in 2019 when becoming a Member. I was in support then and I'm in support now, seeing that we're finally going to enact this and start monitoring, and obviously ticketing those who are in serious violation of speeds.

One thing that really pops out to me – and I think it's something I hear a lot about – is passing school buses. I'm glad to see that we're finally going to have some language around that and able to put that onto – cameras and stuff on the bus. If I'm not mistaken, I believe the deputy minister, at the time during our briefing, explained that's something the federal government is now talking about actually having the cameras as a part of it. Any school bus built and operating in Canada will eventually be forced to have cameras on them to do this

exact thing, so this change is actually something good.

I hear it time and time again from my constituents about people passing school buses. I think this is a good move going forward. I can't wait to see the day that those cameras are on school buses because it's dangerous behaviour, it's inappropriate behaviour and we should actually have the ability to capture that. I know speaking with law enforcement, speaking with the municipalities and stuff like that, getting the evidence was always the hard part of ticketing individuals who did it.

I think last year it reached some kind of pinnacle in my district because so many people were contacting my office about it, especially the families of those with special needs and really small children. There was an area in town where there were just two or three people that constantly were passing the school bus when it was interrupting their route. It's so unfortunate that people even consider passing a school bus.

Another thing that I'll take from this is speeding in construction zones and having cameras that can be placed up during construction time like that. Coming from industry, coming from that and seeing it, especially when they were paving and widening the Trans-Labrador Highway, how many times you'd be there with a flagger or stopping and then someone would just pass right on through, ignoring the flag person, ignoring that. It was unreal to see. It was so dangerous, especially for those workers.

I'm glad that we're going to have the ability to put speed cameras in construction zones. Even just having the signs and the cameras there as a deterrent is fantastic to see. It's not just about catching those who are speeding and dangerous behaviour, but also, it's a protection for workers and those who are actually working in those construction zones. They're not expecting a car to come around a corner or anything like

that. They're hoping that people will obey signs and people would actually use some common sense and stop and behave themselves in construction zones.

Unfortunately, we see time and time again injuries, unfortunately, and deaths in construction zones because people put themselves above others. It's so unfortunate but now we'll have the ability. I'm looking forward to seeing that day when we actually will have these cameras in construction zones to not only deter people from this unfortunate behaviour, but also to capture them and fine them appropriately to the full extent for their behaviour.

Once again, we're talking about stop sign cameras. I mentioned in the briefing with the deputy minister that travelling through Quebec often they're everywhere, stop sign cameras. I'm looking forward to the stop light cameras. I'm looking forward also to seeing those.

Once again, it's people putting themselves above others and creating dangerous situations, causing accidents, causing bodily harm and, unfortunately, in some cases, death, by just not following the basic rules of the road. These rules are here not to inconvenience your day; those rules are there to protect everybody and make sure that our roadways are safe. So these are great things.

Finally, I guess the big one is, obviously, the speeding. Time and time again we hear on our provincial highways, provincial roads and municipal roads of just speeding. I could name roads in my own communities that the community lovingly likes to call racetracks. There are some nice streets in Lab West, but they're long, they're straight and, unfortunately, people think it's an excuse to put a little bit heavier on the accelerator and they become racetracks.

So I'm happy today that hopefully now – I know either this 10 or the next 10 of cameras that come out, I'm looking forward

to the municipalities of Labrador City or Wabush to stick up a couple of cameras, and I think remind people that there's a reason there are speed limits in communities; there's a reason why we have this. Once again, it's not to inconvenience anyone's day, it's there to protect people around, especially in communities.

These streets are residential streets. They're streets with homes on them. So there are children playing, there are people out riding bikes, there are people out enjoying their time. That's why the speed limit is the way it is. It's not to inconvenience one particular individual on their way to get somewhere, it's for protection. It's to protect people around them.

I'd like to say I live in Labrador West, in Labrador City and Wabush. It takes about seven minutes to get from my house, which is on the one farthest side of Labrador City, to get to my office which happens to be on the complete opposite side of Wabush. It takes me a total of seven minutes.

Now, if I actually travelled my district, it's five hours, but just to travel from the actual two communities of Labrador West, from my office to my house, is seven minutes. There's no need to do 90 through a 40 zone. There's no need to do any of that. There are speed limits in place. It's fine. You'll get to where you need to go. It's okay. People need to slow down and curb some of this dangerous behaviour.

Thankfully now, we have the ability to capture them on camera and issue fines and tickets. That way, we can remind people to stop putting yourself above others. There's a reason there are speed limits. It's for safety.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker. I'm only going to speak briefly on this.

First of all, I thank the staff for taking the time to give us a good briefing on this bill coming forward. I would be very surprised if anyone in the House would be against this bill. Many know I lost my brother through a traffic accident, so anything we can do to make the roadway safer is certainly going to get my support.

I think of the – I'm not even sure if they're on now – old ads that used to be on about traffic. It used to be the big words, "speed kills," across the screen. No truer words spoken; that is, in fact, what happens. When you speed, either the driver or someone else is going to be killed if you're speeding in areas where they're just not designed for that use, that type of operation of a vehicle.

A common thread with my two colleagues that have spoken here, which is something that I think about, we talk about the amendments to section 177.1 of the act, and it talks to speeding in five areas. The cameras will collect the information with regard to red lights, speed, speeding in construction zones, speeding in school zones and speeding past a school bus.

It's interesting. I know from my time as deputy mayor in Paradise we had big issues around speeding. We would put a mobile unit in different areas where people requested it to collect information, as well as some of the fixed ones we had that would register information. The sad thing about it is most of the information in areas that we were putting these mobile devices were near school zones or in school zones. In fact, Paradise with the three areas they used through this pilot, two streets run through school zones and the third is relatively close to a school zone.

I did a little bit of research – and I know it's coming up, the minister touched on it and my colleagues touched on it – with regard to speeding in school zones. I know some

provinces are already looking at the cameras on the stop arms of those buses. I know the province, the government has allocated \$30 million in this year's budget to revitalize school buses and that would include either fixing them up or purchasing new ones. I would hope that any revitalization or any new buses would come equipped with stop-arm cameras. It's a definite need. As I said, two of the issues in the 177.1 is speeding in school zones and speeding past a school bus. So two of the five items relate directly with school zones.

I would hope to see that as we go forward, and I'm sure we will. We have to start somewhere, 10 cameras is a start. The minister noted that one municipality was looking for 200, I'd hate to be in that municipality, it must be crazy. But it gives a good indication of the severity of speeding in this province and things we have to do to address it.

We talk about potholes, and we might laugh at some of the issues around potholes, but when you think about it, potholes actually slow down the traffic, because once you pave that pothole, the speed goes up. But we really have to have something in place to deal with speeding. The minister mentioned her own law enforcement officials and how they're very busy and that. Maybe we need to consider looking at some more resources their way as well.

I don't know how the vendor process will come out in the wash in terms of costs and what it will involve but there will be cost associated with it. We'll look at this with a broad lens to look at the many different ways that we can curb the speeding in this province. The 10 cameras are a start. There are lots of roads out there to cover. As we know, in that pilot, there were 93,000 individuals who were caught speeding 11 kilometres or more. In actual fact, I think there were 72, if I recall, who were going 100 kilometres in 40 and 50 zones. That's amazing – that is amazing.

Again, I go back to what we're trying to do here; we're trying to make our roads safer; we're trying to ensure that individuals who are going back and forth to school, or going anywhere for that matter, do not have the fear of being run over. It's just terrible, because you have someone who's behind the wheel of a massively heavy piece of equipment needs to be able to drive at a reasonable speed. So everything and anything that we can do to ensure that people slow down, people are cautious behind the wheel, is going to help us.

So with this coming in, I applaud it, I think it's a start. Am I happy that it's enough to start with? No, but we have to start somewhere. I hope that as we move forward, we do start to focus on some of the more vulnerable areas, which tends to be school zones. We have some highways around that we also know are high-accident areas. So, hopefully, as we move forward, we'll start to build on this quicker than we expect. The faster we do this, the better we get some results. In that particular instance, speed will help, if we can get this done more efficiently.

Again, I applaud the minister and government for this, any move to make our roadways safer is needed. I look forward to putting this in the Committee, where we'll have some questions asked.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Seeing no other speakers, if the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL speaks now, she will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Thank you everyone for the comments. I'll just touch on a few things, but happy to answer more questions in Committee.

So there won't be any regulations associated with the *Highway Traffic Act* changes today. Justice and Public Safety do have options to have regulations in terms of the electronic ticketing, but I'm not anticipating moving ahead with electronic ticketing imminently, that's kind of a Justice and Public Safety thing we can take away. But there will not be any regulation changes for the *Highway Traffic Act* changes that we're debating today.

There is no cost to get a new licence plate if your licence plate is peeling or is kind of damaged in any way. So it's a good opportunity for someone who wants a Confederation plate, we have special 75th Confederation licence plates at the moment. You can make an appointment with Motor Registration or you can walk in and bring your plate and they'll give you a new one at no cost if there's an issue with your plate, like if it's peeling or if it's damaged.

The Member for Ferryland talked about safety inspections. We went into that in depth at Estimates, so thank you for your feedback. They haven't been in place since 1994, but always happy to have that discussion again. If the Member wants to or if anyone listening wants to have that discussion, I'm happy to. Always looking at ways we can improve safety for people.

The Member for Lab West talked about potentially mandatory cameras on school bus arms. I just want to inform the House that Transport Canada, they have draft regulations published in Part I of the *Gazette*. I think their *Gazette* process works a bit differently than ours does, but their draft Part I *Gazette* does include mandatory cameras on school bus arms. We have to wait for the final regulations in phase two, federally, but it seems as though Transport Canada has that draft in their published Part I *Gazette* regulations, federally.

Ten is not enough, but we are starting with 10 and we just have to make sure the Traffic Court and all that works. Then once

we have that, we will be moving as fast as we can with more. As well, simultaneously, we'll be working with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure on the school bus element and, as well, I'm going to be fighting for, as other Members mentioned, school zone cameras.

I guess one of the things we really need to figure out with the 10 starting is just the volume for the Traffic Court and all of the knock-on impacts, as we sound the pilot. So, I think, there are other areas where we can have a significant benefit for safety such as school zones, where the volumes won't be as high but it's still very important.

I will be progressing that on the side while we're working on the first 10. I imagine there'll be a long list of ones to work on next.

Happy to answer any questions in Committee.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is Bill 79 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.'

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act. (Bill 79)

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

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

L. DEMPSTER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 79)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move that this House do now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 79, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act.

SPEAKER: And a seconder for that motion.

L. DEMPSTER: Seconded by the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 79.

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 (Gambin-Walsh): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 79, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act." (Bill 79)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Chair. I've got a few questions here for sure.

When will the first of the 10 cameras be operational? I think you said earlier within a couple of months.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I don't know for sure yet. We are going to issue an RFP as soon as possible for a vendor who is going to put up the cameras and maintain the cameras. We just have to work with the vendor.

I would hope – and I'm going to try and push the team as soon as possible – by the end of the summer, early fall, but I won't have the definite timeline until after the RFP process and then we talk to the vendor.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: The cameras that we used this summer to get your information, was that put out in an RFP as well, or is that something you did internally?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

We didn't buy the cameras. A vendor allowed us to use them for free. So there was no cost to having those cameras. We don't own those cameras. We had an agreement with the vendor to use them for free for the pilot.

I don't know if they're available or not at the moment, but it depends on who wins the RFP and how many cameras they have readily available.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Will there be speed cameras across Newfoundland and Labrador in the initial rollout of the first 10?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

We don't exactly know where the first 10 will go yet. I mean if I just think, we did have a pilot in Mount Pearl, so maybe there. I know the City of St. John's is really anxious; there's a lot of speeding there.

I've said publicly Veterans Memorial. Other people have mentioned speeding is a big problem on Peacekeepers Way. We know that there are other places on the highway where there is excessive speeding, so we haven't finalized the first 10.

The other point I'll make is my expectation is that the cameras could move in consultation with the vendor. We might do six months in one place and maybe six months somewhere else. Just because we have 10 doesn't mean that's 10 fixed locations forever. It might be some of them

might stay in those locations, some of them might move, depending on what happens.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: So when you put these cameras in wherever you're going to put them, will there be a sign to say that these cameras are in this area? Or if you leave them in the same area – if you have 10 and you leave four in the same area – do you take that sign down after a period of time or do you just leave it there?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

That's a good question. We're not trying to trick people. There will be signage that there is a camera. So when you're coming up on it, it'll say there's a camera here. We had signs for the pilot in Mount Pearl and Paradise, so I imagine the signs would look similar to that.

I don't think we would keep the signs up if there's no camera; again, we're not trying to trick people. But if there's a location where maybe a municipality wants to have cameras twice a year – maybe it's seasonal – they might keep a sign up. I'm not sure about the nuance of having a sign when there's no camera, but I know we will not be having any cameras without signs.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Who decides on where the placement of cameras go? You're going to have the Paradise area, I'm going to use Mount Pearl and I'm going to say Goulds. Who decides where they go or what the criteria is to put them wherever you're going to put them?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I know that in terms of provincial government roadways, we're just looking at accident data and speed data. I believe there is data that the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and his department have. So we'll be looking at that.

Then in terms of municipalities, I don't anticipate that we would tell municipalities where to put them; I think municipalities know their roadways the best. I would look to municipalities to recommend where to put the cameras, ideally in the shared spirit of maximizing public safety benefit. We haven't exactly worked that out yet, but it's coming.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you.

What is government's plan and process to address concerns of other towns and communities across the province who believe that they could benefit from one in their town? I mean, obviously, you have to spread them out to certain areas, but how are you going to determine that, where they go in certain places across the Island?

It looks like it's only dedicated toward the metro area right now, but there are places across the Island that are certainly looking to have speeds reduced.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

That's a good question. I guess to start, really, we need to make sure that the Traffic Court process and the appeal process and all that works smoothly. In the pilot, we saw how many people sped but there were no tickets, so we can't really predict yet how

many people are going to speed when they're getting a financial penalty and then how many people are going to appeal.

So once we know some of that – and then, also, we have a good idea, but we don't know exactly how much a camera is going to cost to operate, how much the vendor would charge for that kind of thing. Once we have more information from the 10, we'll be able to better say when we might put a camera.

I do anticipate a lot of demand from a lot of municipalities. So we may look at other options for municipalities, if they want to work directly with the vendor, to put a camera in or something. I guess this is just for starting.

We're starting with this 10. The provincial government is going to work with the municipalities to put them in. We've really got to figure out just to make sure all the kinks are working with the vendor and the vendor is sending them the tickets and then the Traffic Court. We've got to make sure that works well and then we'll look at how to help all the other municipalities who want traffic cameras.

I think there will be a solution, I just can't tell everyone what that might be yet because we don't know. I've just got to make sure that the whole piece works first.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Have we checked with other jurisdictions to see how they make out with their percentage of people that take it to court across the country? I was just wondering if there are any studies you got or any information on that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

Yes, there is a lot of data. I've looked at the Traffic Courts. Currently, you can see how many people appealed tickets from regular speeding tickets. I think off the top of my head it was 4 per cent maybe, I think, if I remember.

You can see in other provinces how many people appeal regular tickets. It's not always broken down in terms of the data available, in terms of the speed camera tickets versus normal tickets and how many people have appealed those.

So we have a guestimate. We've just got to put it into practice.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Chair.

During this, the minister stated the legislation has been passed and any municipality could use speed cameras. Does the minister mean that a municipality can purchase speed cameras, write their own regulations for the cameras and submit amendments for town approval for a plan?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So yes, the legislation has been changed since 2019, that it's lawful to have a ticket issued as a result of a speed camera. So not everyone can issue tickets. So up until this change, a police officer could issue a ticket as a result of a speed camera. So I guess what we're proposing today removes that barrier, where a third-party vendor that the government assigns in regulations will be able to issue a ticket.

There are a few other data pieces. I guess part of the reason why I'm trying to champion this is because we have the data, Motor Registration, we know who has –

because once you get a picture of the licence plate, you've got to know who to send it to. You've got to get it to the right place to send them a ticket and that has to have all the judicial nuances, you know, all that stuff to go along with it. Then someone has to make sure that someone pays the ticket.

So all those pieces of the puzzle, if I had to guess, is why no one has done it before. I'm trying to be helpful in terms of doing it on provincial government roadways and also helpful to municipalities. This could happen with peace officers today. I guess, I'm just trying to bring forward this option that I'm hoping will be available to municipalities, so they don't have to do as much work.

As we saw in the pilot for Mount Pearl and Paradise, both municipalities assigned a full-time staff member just to mail out the tickets and they had to cap it to 50 a day, I believe, because they couldn't send out notices, because there were more than 50 a day for one camera.

So I guess I'm trying to propose an option which removes that burden from the municipalities, to have a provincial approach, but, legally, there's nothing stopping a municipality from working with law enforcement and then we'd have to come up for an arrangement for the data. So I'm hoping after this 10 – and we know the system works well – then maybe there will be an option where a municipality can work with the vendor directly to put in a camera. I'm just trying to get all the kinks out so that we can have a system that works for as many groups as possible.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: So using a municipality as an example, if they become someone that's going to do this and call the vendor, do they take the revenue from that then or does that go to the province?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

That's a question I get a lot from municipalities. Currently, any ticket revenue goes to general revenues from the provincial government. If someone speeds and gets a ticket from a speed camera, they pay that online currently today. One of the things we're also trying to do is make that process a bit easier, make it easier to pay and make that process a bit better.

The revenue goes into the provincial government general revenues. We have a general idea of how much it's going to cost but again we need to work that out with the number of people who appeal because we're going to pay essentially for the vendor to go to Traffic Court and deal with the appeals rather than having a police officer dealing with the appeals in Traffic Court.

So when we work out how that's going to cost, maybe it's going to cost more than we make and that's okay. Generally, in jurisdictions, we find that speed cameras pay for themselves.

I think once we get up and running, we can work out all the math and figure out how much it all costs and then if there's a reasonable amount of money coming in, we can talk about potentially shifting money around, but without knowing right now how much the vendors are going to bid for, how many people appeal the tickets, we can't say for sure.

I think that's more of a government budgetary decision at budget time to say if we're giving more or less money to municipalities for a different reason.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: So you had said yes in Estimates, you said about the municipality being able to use speed cameras and now

they would have to amend their town plan and you know how long that takes. So are they going to get on board to amend their town plan before this happens so they can do it?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

Sorry, just to be clear, in terms of the 10 or the 20 or let's say the first 100, they don't need to make any changes. That's if they wanted to do it on their own without this. So they don't have to do anything. There's no change required from a municipality perspective to accept one of these cameras and have it operate on their roads.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: No, but the point I'm trying to make, if the municipality does decide to do it on their own, then they'd have to submit to change their town plan. So you know that takes a fair amount of process. I'm just wondering is that something that you're putting back to the towns to be able to add to their town plan?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

I can certainly take that away. I don't really understand the nuances of the town plans. Outside of our program, if a municipality wanted to work with law enforcement and then work with us to get some data and then put it all together and operate a speed camera program, I'm not exactly sure what else a town plan would be required at a municipality level, but we can certainly – no one has asked me that. I've had a lot of municipalities reach out saying can we have a camera please, but no one has said we'd like to go this on their own, help us. We would certainly help them if they wanted to

do that, but I am happy to take that away and get more information.

CHAIR: No more questions?

L. O'DRISCOLL: Yes, a few more yet.

CHAIR: Sorry, the hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Maybe the Minister for Municipal and Provincial Affairs could add to that in regard to the town plan; if there is something that he can add to it?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Traffic within municipalities, moving violations, are not actually within the authority of municipalities. There are, however, seven that have exemptions under a different section of the *Highway Traffic Act* that allow their municipal enforcement officers to issue tickets.

So there would be several steps, if a town wanted to do this by themselves, to go through in terms of getting authority to issue tickets for moving violations. The police can still do it; they have complete jurisdiction.

One of the assumptions that I have rather generally gathered – and I may be speaking slightly out of line because I haven't discussed this in any great detail – was the impression that MNL and PMA felt that this was a provincial government initiative and it fell within Service NL and law enforcement, rather than necessarily within their individual municipal mandate.

I'm quite happy to have those discussions with municipalities, if they want to go their own route, or to act as a bridge if they wanted to advocate to my colleague behind me that cameras be placed at particular locations within their boundaries and they could do this on a collaborative arrangement.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: I figured there would have to be some changes made, for sure, for that to happen.

What process will be put in place so that the government can address potential concerns about the accuracy and the reliability of the speed cameras in capturing and identifying vehicles? For example, will there be regular maintenance and testing of cameras that the speeds that they're actually capturing are correct? I'm just wondering if there is something there.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

The law was changed in 2019 and the first thing as minister – I was minister in August 2020 – the first thing I bugged my team about was we need those regulations. I used to bug them every day in 2020: Where are the regulations for speed cameras? So the regulations on maintaining and calibrating and all that are outlined in the regulations. I think they were published in late 2020 or 2021, but they are already published. So there are rules that kind of align with other jurisdictions in terms of how often they have to be checked and all that stuff.

Also, we and the vendor would be keeping an eye on the appeals. So let's say you get a speeding ticket in the mail and then you find that that's not your number, obviously then you wouldn't have to go to Traffic Court. That would just be resolved.

But there are vendors across Canada who do this all the time and the accuracy is not a concern. Sometimes there are plates that are unreadable. As I'm sure everyone can imagine, an unreadable plate that's completely stripped of everything, my understanding is there is software that kind of reads it, yes or no. There could be a

margin of error, but they also have people who double-check the licence plates to make sure but if there was a mistake, then the ticket would be resolved prior to going to Traffic Court.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: When the vehicle is sold and a new owner fails to transfer the ownership and the vehicle subsequently gets a ticket, what if the vehicle is hauled in by police for speeding and is caught on the speed camera, will they get two tickets or how will you decipher that out?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So that's interesting and that's something we had to work through, through the pilot. So because we issued notices for people, it's all about on the date and time. You can transfer it online now, and so if you transferred your vehicle, we can generally know when you transferred your vehicle and then when the speeding ticket occurred. So that's kind of where the data exchange between Motor Registration and the vendor is very important.

I think that is part of the process that we sorted out in the pilot. Only one person would get a ticket and it would be whoever owned the vehicle at the time. If you no longer owned the vehicle, then you wouldn't get the ticket.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: There are all kinds of scenarios and everybody will come up with them, but what if a licence plate is stolen off a vehicle and then gets a ticket later on another vehicle? That happens fairly often.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

If a licence plate was stolen and put on a vehicle, then that's where the appeals process in Traffic Court, you say this is not my licence plate or this was stolen off my vehicle and you just show a police report and my understanding is that you wouldn't have to proceed. Like, that would be cancelled, I guess, as per the process of contesting a Traffic Court ticket. Just the same as if I got a ticket and it was the wrong licence plate written on my ticket, that would not proceed to the next step of Traffic Court. My expectation would be very similar to that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: How much is outstanding in fines now? I'm just asking that question so that we know in a year's time what the difference would be between speed cameras and not having speed cameras.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

From a Service NL perspective, we have amalgamated collections for most government departments, but not fines and administration for the Department of Justice and Public Safety. So I do not have a number from the Department of Justice and Public Safety. I was informed, though, that if you have any fines outstanding from a speeding ticket or any other moving violation, you can't renew your vehicle registration. So that has implications for insurance as well. People will have to pay their ticket in order to renew their vehicle. If you tried to do that online, if you attempt to renew your vehicle registration online, it forces you to pay the tickets prior to registering your vehicle again.

We are anticipating that there won't be too many owing. All the law-abiding citizens who register their vehicles, I'm hoping, will

pay their speeding tickets. But what the Department of Justice and Public Safety do, I understand, when a certain amount is owing, they go through the court process with the – I can't think of the word off the top of my head now, but where they go to court and retrieve the monies owing from people. They take whatever steps are necessary. But again, that's another department.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Will this strengthen the collection of fines? I think it will if you're going to register online. But with the outstanding fines that we have now and not being able to collect them, will that strengthen it?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: So that's in place today. You can't renew your vehicle registration if you have fines on your vehicle outstanding. There's no change, that's already built in. If you have a fine outstanding and you renew your vehicle today in MyGovNL, that'll come up and you have to pay before you can renew your vehicle registration. That's currently in effect.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Again, we've had this discussion over the last five years. It would be plate to plate in regard to – I think it would reduce fines, because you take your plate with you when you go to another vehicle. I know that it's a cost factor, but we spend money in other ways. But I think it could help in your fine situation, because when they get a fine today on a car, they go buy another used car for \$100 or \$200 and then don't pay that fine. So it just starts accumulating. It's just something that I think, over time, it would get some more fines being collected, really.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

We talked about this in Estimates at length. We have 3½ systems that are on the mainframe: student loan system, Motor Registration, Fines Admin and MCP.

This is my OCIO that now in charge of government IT and not my Service NL hat; but OCIO are currently working with Education to redo the student loan program. We're modernizing the student loan IT system. Then, I believe, we are shifting to MCP to redo the MCP system. I believe that is more important and timely to renew that, and then after that we will be moving to Motor Registration.

These are significant IT projects for government. I would love to have it done sooner but, you know, we have one team dedicated to this. We want to make sure we do it right. We're learning on the student loan system and then they'll go to MCP and then Motor Registration.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: I know there are not a lot of plates here, but we do veterans and we do firefighters and they keep their plate. I'm just wondering how cumbersome that is to be able to keep your own personal plate that's on your vehicle now.

If you don't have that answer, maybe it's something your department can get back to us with. How much is involved for those people to keep their plates compared to us keeping the plate on my car or anybody else in this House?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

These are very technical questions here about licence plates, but the way those work

actually, my understanding, is those individuals have another licence plate they keep in their glove compartment if they get pulled over.

The licence plate that is on their car, they would have another licence plate number on a licence plate in their glovebox, is my understanding.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Can the government provide a breakdown of costs associated with setting up and operating the speed camera? What does the \$100,000 business setup include.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I believe that's an estimate. We are going to wait and see when we get the vendor to see what the RPF options are. Once we get the RFP and we go through the procurement process and we decide that, we'll certainly make that available to the public and to the Member.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Can the government provide information on the training and oversight of personnel responsible for monitoring and enforcing the speed camera?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

Within our department, we have a range of skill sets and everything: highway enforcement, driver examiner, all that kind of stuff. Vendors also do this across Canada for other provinces, this type of work. The

vendors have way more experience with speed cameras than we do. We're learning from them and we're learning from the provinces, the governments as well.

So that would be something that we will take care of in the RFP. We will outline very clear expectations for vendors, in addition to the expectations that are in our regulations today, for the maintenance, calibration, all that kind of stuff on speed cameras. That would be part of the RFP process, our expectations of vendors in operating and maintaining and going to Traffic Court, all that, for the speed cameras.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Will information such as the make and model of the car be passed along to law enforcement when cars with no licence plates or covered licence plates will have been fined for speeding? And I don't know if they can do that from the pictures or the imaging that you will have.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

I think I understand what the Member is saying. We're operating a speed camera system and I guess we will certainly make that information available to law enforcement if and when they ask for it, or we'll work collaboratively with them.

That's all I can say to answer that question.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: I guess the next part of that question, if there's an accident at one of these traffic lights, or at an intersection, will the police be able to use cameras for information?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

Law enforcement can request and access any information from any cameras is my understanding. I'm not an expert in that. Yes, my expectation would be that if law enforcement is looking for any information from the cameras, it would be readily available to them.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Will the statistical data collected from speed cameras be posted online for public to view and, if so, how often?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

I don't yet know the timeliness; we're going to look at the 10 cameras, or as many as we can get up as soon as possible, look at the flow-through of how many people appeal those tickets, depending on what the vendor costs.

So that information is public annually, I believe. The courts have annual reports on their website that talk about the number of speeding tickets, how many people appeal those tickets. All that information currently is available through the court's website.

We'll definitely make annual data available. I'm sure anytime we make a decision, we'll bring some data forward to illustrate – there's a lot of information made available about the pilot, and I anticipate making data available about this as well.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Will law enforcement have access to statistical data to help them identify areas where additional support is needed? I'm sure every department has that as well, in some areas, I would think.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

We will absolutely share information with law enforcement. In my past conversations with the department, my understanding is law enforcement use data a lot to prioritize and to make decisions, so I imagine that this will be no different.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: So I guess these cameras are going to be 24-7, 365 days a year?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: My intention is yes, the cameras are 24-7, 365. Again, the location may move, so a camera might be in location A for three months or six months and move to another location for six months.

Although I do know in other provinces that the courts, for example, are a bottleneck and so in other provinces we know that some cameras are only on a few hours a week. But my expectation right now is the cameras will be on all day, every day.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Is there a process in place for when a camera captures the licence plate that it's not registered? What happens then?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: With the pilot, the technology only took a picture of the licence plate. The camera was only programmed to turn on if it was going 11 kilometres an hour over the speed limit. The cameras don't take a picture of every licence plate. They only take a picture if it's speeding. Obviously, these are quite big pictures and there's like data constraints from the vendor and the cameras.

In the pilot, we also saw out-of-province licence plates, so there's a range of scenarios that the team will work through with the vendor, but there will not be pictures of every licence plate, only speeding licence plates.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: I'll ask this one – it's just something that I thought on before is rental cars. If somebody comes in and rents a car, goes speeding, how do you handle that? Go back to the rental company and they've got to track down the people that rented that car that time and now you're putting the onus on those people. But anyway, I'll ask that question.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

I'm not sure if we have any in the pilot, but the rental car company would be responsible for the speeding ticket. I just know, anecdotally, of people who've had rental cars and have gotten speeding tickets and then the rental car company certainly comes back and gets the money back from them.

So I would expect this would work the same way. The rental car company would have to pay us and then I would imagine the rental

car company would go after the renter for the money.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: What about licence plates that are not from Newfoundland and Labrador?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: So that is an area where we would work with the other provinces. I think there's still some work to do on enforcing amounts owing from drivers in other province. I think that's kind of a tangly issue across the country for anyone in another province, but it would work the same as if you were caught by someone from law enforcement speeding.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Police advise drivers to reduce speed according to road conditions. Is the government concerned it will be sending a message that the posted speed limit is the safe, maximum during inclement weather or deteriorating roads?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: We're not giving people permission to drive the speed limit. The speed camera is enforcing the speed limit rules. I mean, we're not trying to suggest that – people should always drive to the weather and the speed limit is that. It's a limit. We're not saying please drive 100. We're saying the maximum to drive is 100 kilometres an hour, or 50 or whatever.

So I would say no.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Moving the cameras, which you're going to have signs up to say that there are cameras in the area, if you move them, you're going to move the sign, obviously, to say that speed cameras are there. Would you make the public announcement that there are speed cameras in the area? Like, if you're going to do it every few months or every six months, will the public get an announcement?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: That's a fair question. It's probably feasible with the first 10. I'm not sure it'll be feasible if we had as many as the municipalities are looking for, we'd have a news release every week. I mean, municipalities might want to keep their residents informed of where the speed cameras are within their municipalities.

I haven't gotten that far in the communications portion, but we'll certainly let people know where the first 10 are. Again, we're not trying to trick people, and I also don't want to add too much burden. So if a municipality wants to move it to another location, I don't want to micromanage that either.

I'm not sure yet, but we'll certainly get back to the Member when we have that determined.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: How about a provincial or federal government plated vehicle, who actually gets the ticket?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: The owner of the vehicle gets the ticket.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Does the government anticipate or is there a budget for higher court costs, additional court time, as drivers challenge these fines?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

We know how many people currently contest tickets, regular speeding tickets. I guess that's also kind of why we're starting with 10. We believe that the tickets for 10 cameras will be feasible to implement in our existing system without additional resources, but then as we expand – if we had 50 or 100 cameras, yes, I think there would likely be an impact to the Traffic Court and they might need more staff. We do have potential estimates for that. I guess that's why we're starting with 10 so we can get a baseline and then plan accordingly.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Does the government plan to do a review of speed limits? And I'm not saying they're wrong, but do you plan to review them to ensure that they're reasonable, ensure the signs are liberally posted so that the drivers know in any given area that the speed limit is correct, I guess?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I have full confidence that the speed limits posted everywhere are what they should be. I would not assume that they're not. The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, I believe, works with law enforcement on setting speed limits. I believe municipalities have a role in setting speed limits within municipalities.

Transportation and Infrastructure sets speed limits on highways and I would assume that every speed limit is what it

should be, but if anyone believes differently or has a concern about a certain speed limit, they can reach out on highways to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure or their municipality.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: That was just a question because sometimes speed limits are adjusted down as well in certain areas, let alone go up, but they're adjusted down because it's too fast.

Are there any concerns of the tie-up in court that could further slowdown the justice system that is already struggling?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: I will say that this approach has been thoroughly reviewed and considered. We're going to bring vendors into Traffic Court. So if you get a ticket and you contest it in court, as is your right to do so, the vendor will be there, not a police officer. We don't want to burden the police officers, so that's why part of the change is the vendor will take that role.

There will be increased volume in Traffic Court, I anticipate. We're still waiting to figure out exactly how much that will be. That's why we're starting with 10 cameras. More than that, I think will require more resources in the Traffic Court system and so we will plan accordingly. We're ready and prepared for that.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Fines issued after the fact may not keep roadways sufficiently safe without policing.

Has the government ensured police investments are not reduced as these cameras are rolled out? I mean, they're not (inaudible)?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I believe in this year's budget we gave funding for additional law enforcement officers. So absolutely in no way are we – if anything, I hope this helps law enforcement and helps them prioritize or gives them more information. We're trying to improve public safety.

I would personally be very much against – I just don't even – we're absolutely not reducing resources to law enforcement. In the strongest sense, I would personally be very much against that. If anything, we should be giving them more resources. I'm hoping to complement their work.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: So during the briefing it was said that eventually tickets will be sent electronically. What methods will be used to send it electronically? For example, will individuals receive an email to tell them to log in to their MyGovNL profile for a message?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So the bill does allow electronic ticketing, although I expect right away we will not be using – I think we still have a few things to work out for electronic ticketing. So day one, my expectation would be a paper ticket sent to your mailing address. Electronic ticketing will come and this bill gives us authority to do that. But I don't want to wait for us to work out all of the things to do with electronic ticketing for us to start speed

cameras. They are not linked, except for in this bill, and we can do one without the other.

So my focus and priority is on the speed cameras and then the electronic ticketing will follow. We have a few things to work out still on that before that's live. We'll have a robust set of information available to answer all the questions before we start electronic ticketing and we're not there yet.

Thank you.

CHAIR: No further questions?

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Could the minister provide an overview on where the department would get the data to determine where to place cameras and what type of information will be used to assess the first 10 cameras and their locations?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I know the provincial government has data around accidents and speeds on provincial government highways. Many municipalities have that data around their areas. If you drive around, you often see signs that show your speed. You know, your speed is 54, slow down.

As well as showing you and trying to get you to reduce your speed, municipalities are collecting data about speeds. So my understanding is that municipalities have that information. They might not have it for everywhere, but they also do traffic studies. There is a collision database as well that has information so we will be using that information.

I would be looking to municipalities and their guidance to where cameras should be placed in their municipalities. They know their municipalities best and I think we know our highways best. So a collection of that for the first 10, but I'm hoping to ramp-up to have more than 10 as soon as possible.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

So with this data, is there going to be a matrix set up or some kind of standardization made up to be sent to municipalities requesting this service? Will they have to provide very specific data and how it is to be collected to determine the whole speed camera thing from a provincial point of view if we're putting it in their community?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

I want to have 10 speed cameras on the ground as soon as possible. I don't want to create a very complicated process to get us there.

We did have pilots in Mount Pearl and Paradise. We have the city of St. John's with a lot of speeding. I've said Veterans Memorial has a lot of very dangerous accidents and Peacekeepers Way. You know, it doesn't take very long to come up with 10 cameras, especially when you consider there's two-way direction on those roadways.

I think anecdotally, I don't want to have an overly cumbersome process to get started and once we get past the first 10, we will look to municipalities to request where they need it. They don't need to justify it to me. I imagine we'll have a committee with

someone from TI and their expertise and someone from law enforcement, but we got to get the first 10 on the ground first.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you.

What other jurisdictions did we look to when we set up this pilot, but also what jurisdictions are we looking to for collecting data on how we proceed forward or are we carving our own path here?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

We're looking at everyone. Every province does it a bit differently, I'll be honest, because in many provinces the municipalities oversee speed cameras themselves.

In Ontario, there is legislation province wide, but the City of Toronto really is the leader in speed cameras. They have a very big department of the City of Toronto that operates, maintains, sends out tickets. In most provinces, the municipalities issue speed-camera tickets.

I don't think anywhere else has exactly the same implementation of what we're doing in terms of the province leading speed cameras and then the vendor issuing the tickets. I know vendors issue tickets in other provinces, but in those provinces the municipality is the lead. So I'm not sure anyone has exactly what we're going to do, but we did consider a wide range of implementations.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you.

What estimates can be provided regarding the cost of operating the program? I know in the briefing we talked about postage; we talked about staffing. Has the department determined an estimate on the go-forward cost probably for year one, year two? Has this been determined yet?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

In early discussions with our vendor, we have a general idea of – I think we have a starting point, but I think that's why we want to move it to RFP because the cameras and – we have to share data between – we have to have that agreement in place, but then also the vendors are going to have to go to Traffic Court.

So we don't exactly know how; I'm sure we'll come to a financial agreement in the RFP, which I'm happy to share – I imagine that will be public in terms of exactly the financial agreement, but we don't yet know what the RFP will bring us.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you.

Go with that, so the department is looking a third-party vendor to administer the program. Have there been any internal work looking at why it cannot be administered by the province and the vendor just provide the camera and the maintenance? Why are we having the vendor do the administration too and not internally within the province?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I guess there are multiple vendors in Canada who are experts in this. There are experts in the software. There are experts in the cameras. There are experts at the Traffic Court thing. So, honestly, I don't want to reinvent that. I think that this option is the best option right now.

If we get down this road and find out that it's way more expensive or we could do it ourselves better, then absolutely. But I guess without having the knowledge and the expertise, we don't have the IT systems, we don't have any of that, I don't really want to delay it any further. I'm trying to go as fast as I can.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Has the department consulted with the public service unions on this, knowing that this is going to be administered outside of government, has there been conversations with the public service unions about this?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: We are not outsourcing – I'm not an expert in this – existing work. These will be new – I'm not quite sure of the language to use to describe this. It's a new activity so my understanding is we have not consulted with unions.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: How much work and analysis has been done to provide an estimate of revenue expected from the 10 cameras once they're in place? Has there been any data in some of those areas that you're considering to roughly estimate is the revenue going to be sufficient for the program?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

I'm fairly confident in saying that every jurisdiction with speed cameras, the revenue pays for itself at least and then some. The City of Toronto has really detailed breakdowns of how much revenue they get per camera and they have a very detailed breakdown of all the costs. So I have looked at that.

It's different, based on the data in the pilot, if you look at where people are speeding a lot and roads with a lot of traffic, I'm fairly confident in saying that there will be more money coming into general revenues than what is outgoing. But that's to be determined based on the RFP and we'll certainly do some of those numbers with the RFP.

When we talk about school zones, I think about some of the school zones in my district where the volume of traffic is not the same as some of the busier roads in the province, but still we want to have that public safety component.

Maybe we end up losing money in school zones, for example, because there's not enough traffic, but that's okay. This is not a revenue generating activity, I guess that's the best way I can put it.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you.

Has the job description been created for the role of traffic compliance officer in these positions? Have the job descriptions been created and the qualifications required to perform this job been written yet?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: I'm not sure if that's happened yet. The information and the expectations will be in the RFP to the vendor. Government will not be hiring these people; the vendor will have people and our expectations for the vendor will be outlined in the RFP.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you.

Once these cameras are installed, how many employees will be required to analyze the data or send out the fines, or is this going to be reliant once again of an expectation of the vendor?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So our expectation is that the vendor will put the cameras up, put the signs up, move the cameras. The vendor is also going to send the tickets out in the mail and in the future send them electronically. The vendor would also go to Traffic Court. My understanding is we're going to go to RFP based on 10 cameras, and we'll be able to provide information about that.

There is a two-person check on each ticket that will go out, so two people will visually verify each ticket before going out. That's kind of where the vendor uses their expertise, the reason why we would use a vendor, because they do that already for

other provinces. I'm not going to tell them how many people they need, they are experts at that and that will be part of the RFP and they want to let us know how much it would cost, essentially.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Given that there's this expectation of the vendor to follow through on all of these things, if we sign an agreement with the vendor and it's not living up to expectations, what mechanisms will be available to the province to course correct, I guess, with the vendor, or if the province would just take ownership of the system?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

I'm not involved in contracts, but I'm aware of different mechanisms that we use to enter into contracts and maintain and enforce contracts. If vendors don't live up to our expectations, there would be stipulations for that in the contract. We're not looking at buying cameras right now. With this approach, we're looking for a vendor to manage all of that. If, once we're up and running, we look – I really think a vendor can do this cheaper and more efficiently and more effectively than we can.

But once we get into it, if we find out that is not longer the case, I'm very happy to take it over or to implement something ourselves. But there are multiple vendors that do this across Canada, and I believe that they can do it more efficiently than we can.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you.

How do other jurisdictions use electronic ticketing to determine the day in which the

ticket is served, or how will government follow this lead when it comes to electronic ticketing?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

So the electronic ticketing is a new element; we're getting legislative permission now to use. I guess, pragmatically, we're not intending to use electronic ticketing right now. We still have a few things to work out for electronic ticketing so I can't answer all your questions about – I think before we use electronic ticketing, absolutely, we will, between myself and the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, before we issue electronic ticketing, we will have fulsome package of answers.

At the moment, there will be regulations associated with electronic ticketing and so that will be worked out with Justice and Public Safety. I know they're both in this bill, but I don't want to wait for electronic ticketing to be worked out before we have speed cameras.

So we're going to start with speed cameras, you'll get a ticket in the mail and then, simultaneously, we'll be working with Justice and Public Safety on electronic tickets and before the first person gets an electronic ticket, we will have a fulsome package of answers for the public.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you.

And just on that, with electronic ticketing, I know some people go through email addresses as some people change their clothes, especially if they're changing jobs or one day their email just stopped working and they go and create a new email in

Hotmail or whatever it is. So I'm just curious on how easy it is to change an email and hoping to get maybe even just a suggestion from the minister – how will we navigate those kind of things? Because changing an address is a bit harder than changing an email address.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

Just to start, we have MyGovNL and you need an email address to create your MyGovNL account and you get notifications by email. We also have two-step authentication with email and MyGovNL, and now with the personal health record, we have a three-step authentication almost, where in order to connect to your personal health record you have to get a code sent to your mailing address and then input that in MyGovNL to be extra sure that it's you and you have permission to see this information about you.

My expectation would be that government would use the assurance, let's say, of if someone uses MyGovNL a lot and they've done the two-step authentication, that might give us a high degree of confidence that this is an email address that they actively use. If someone hasn't logged into the MyGovNL account for years, in my opinion, that would not be a suitable email address to use for electronic ticketing.

We still have to work a lot of that out, and we will not be issuing electronic ticketing until we have all of that worked out.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

How is government going to ensure that we're going to get these damaged licence

plates taken out of circulation? Are we going to do some advertising on MyGovNL or some advertising in the public? Because, boy, there are still a lot of those plates on the go. I'm wondering if there's something that the minister's department is planning on, getting those plates replaced or taken off now before this comes into effect.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

So it is currently not lawful to have a plate that is unreadable, it's unlawful to have a peeled plate, it's unlawful to cover your licence plate with a clear plastic thing and it's unlawful to cover your licence plate with a blue plastic thing. So it's unlawful today. I would say most licence plates are readable and there's no problem; I think that's a discussion that I'm sure we'll have with law enforcement.

I would encourage everyone – you can make an appointment, or you can walk into Motor Registration and get a new plate at no cost if your plate is peeling or damaged. I don't believe peeling plates is a big problem at the moment. There was one year of licence plates – I can't remember; I don't have it in front me – where Atlantic Canada wide, although it was a while ago – so I guess, it is unlawful to have a peeled, unreadable licence plate.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: I ask the minister maybe to take a stroll through the Avalon Mall parking lot. Even though I'm not a resident of the St. John's City, it's quite noticeable in the city of the peeling licence plates. So maybe there should be another advertising thing or something to go out to the public because there is a lot of damaged plates going around the province.

One last question there for the minister is: Some municipalities now are allowing ATVs on their roads. If an ATV goes through a speed camera trap, will that plate be picked up the system and would they be also be ticketed? There seems to be a few municipalities planning on doing that or already have allowed ATVs on the municipal roads.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

The way the speed cameras work is that if something is travelling faster than a set speed limit, the camera will take a picture. Obviously, that would be an exception. So my expectation would be that yes, that person would get a ticket. It might take a bit longer.

I'm just thinking about the pilot. We did have an exception process where there were exceptions – the system tries to read the licence plate and if it fits a certain mould, then there's two visual checks on that to make sure it's the right licence plate that the system has read, but then there's an exception process to deal with anything outside of the normal licence plate.

So my expectation and my team confirmed that yes, if an off-road vehicle, with a licence plate, speeds through a speed camera, they will get a ticket.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

J. WALL: Thank you, Madam Chair.

As a result of the discussion here in Committee this afternoon, I do have a couple of questions from the questions from my colleague from Ferryland and the answers that the minister has provided.

Minister, from the pilot program, we know that – and you have said this in the media –

94,000 vehicles recorded at 11 kilometres an hour over; 25 per cent of those at 20 kilometres over. So you know the number of offenders, the levels of speed incurred, would your department know what the income could be derived from the data that you have?

I know my colleague from Lab West touched on it earlier, but would you have an estimate of what that would bring into the coffers, as you said it would possibly cover the cost?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

Yes, so for the pilot, we do know how many people sped. I guess that is not 100 per cent indicative of how many people are going to speed, knowing they're going to get a ticket. In the pilot, we did have repeat offenders. So people sped through multiple times, the same licence plate. I hope and assume that people, knowing that they're going to get a monetary penalty and have to pay \$200 or more, they are going to not speed the next time.

So, yes, we can put models together. We don't exactly know how much a vendor is going to bid without all the pieces of the pie. I mean, anyone can sit down and do some rough math to work out some of that. Without having all the pieces, I don't know how many people are not going to speed when they're getting a fine. That's not the same as the number of people who sped in the pilot, essentially.

CHAIR: No further questions?

J. WALL: No, I have a couple of more, please.

CHAIR: Okay.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

J. WALL: Thank you, and thank you, Minister.

Minister, to the towns that wish to implement speed cameras within their municipal boundary, what process is in place? Have you had any discussions with the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs to correctly inform the towns? Because it's important that all mayors and councils are on the same page when they're coming to make these decisions.

Within media interviews, you have said you have collaboration with municipalities. So what exactly is going to go out to the towns here in the province with respect to speed cameras in their municipal boundaries?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

Like I said, we're starting with 10 cameras. Just logically thinking, we're going to have some of those on provincial roads. We did a pilot in Paradise and Mount Pearl. I would hope we'll do some of those in the City of St. John's.

I have had discussions with the Town of Paradise, the City of Mount Pearl, the City of St. John's, a combination of mayors and councillors. I have received many letters from municipalities across the province asking for speed cameras. We've responded with all of those, essentially, with some additional direction and information.

I think, really, it's question of after the 10, where do we go next and how do we decide that? We will certainly be having those discussions with municipalities. We'll come up with some criteria. We have an idea of all that, but we'll kind of put it all into force once we get some information about the first 10.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Minister.

It's important that all municipalities do be on the same page when making these decisions, and I look forward to that information package going out at that time.

Minister, what discussion have you had with the Department of Justice and Public Safety with respect to tickets that were issued from the pilot? Is there any possibility of retroactivity with respect to those warnings that were given that would turn into future tickets?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

We had a pilot, and we have a lot of data that is legally enforceable. I'm not sure how else to answer that question. If I were a police officer, I might be issuing some tickets, but I'm not a police officer and I'm not a peace officer.

We had a pilot, but we have a lot of data available. That pilot was last summer. If someone didn't get a ticket, I don't anticipate they'll get a ticket. But if you broke the law, you broke the law. So I'm not quite sure how to answer that question with any more detail.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The Member for Cape St. Francis.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Minister, for that answer.

Minister, earlier you said to my colleague from Ferryland, administrative constraint on the court system. You said that you're ready and prepared for that.

Can you please let us know how you're ready and prepared? Are there extra staff in place? Have the budgets been increased for

the court system? Can you just please give us some information on that, Minister?

CHAIR: The Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you.

In coming up with the number 10 to start with, we've considered the impact on Traffic Court. The staff in my department and in Justice and Public Safety have an estimate of potential resource implications as we expand past that.

That will be a discussion that we will have – there are processes in government to request more money and request more resources. So after we see how the first 10 work, we will be going through those processes to investigate the option of having more resources.

CHAIR: The Member for Cape St. Francis.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I'm not sure if this one has been asked before or not. With respect to the speeding tickets to be issued by the speed cameras, I would imagine it's the same result to affect an individual's vehicle insurance.

CHAIR: The Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Chair.

With a speed camera ticket, the camera only takes a picture of the back of the car. We're not looking inside the car, so the ticket is for the registered owner of the car. You can't renew your vehicle unless you've paid your fines outstanding on your vehicle.

There would likely be insurance implications, yes, for getting speeding tickets on your vehicle.

CHAIR: Seeing no further questions, shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 108 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 to 108 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 108 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act. (Bill 79)

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 79 carried without amendment.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 79 carried without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

S. GAMBIN-WALSH: Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 79, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Provincial Offences Act, carried without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and directed her to report Bill 79 carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

L. DEMPSTER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time.

L. DEMPSTER: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

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

SPEAKER: 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.'

This House do stand adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 1:30 p.m.