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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, in the Speaker's gallery, I'd like to welcome parents of the late Jake Anstey. They are Lisa Loveless-Hodder, Doug Hodder, Jonathan Anstey and their family members. They're here this afternoon for a Member's statement.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: In the public gallery, I'd like to welcome Bella Short and her parents, Chris and Faye. Bella is also the subject of a Member's statement this afternoon.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Also in the public gallery, I'd like to recognize Greg O'Grady, co-founder of the Newfoundland and Labrador Stuttering Association, visiting us this afternoon for a Ministerial Statement.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Finally, welcome to the students and teachers from Prince of Wales Collegiate social studies class, 1201.

Welcome this afternoon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Torngat Mountains, Waterford Valley, Baie Verte - Green Bay, Bonavista and Topsail - Paradise.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

Rachel Edmunds of Hopedale moved to Makkovik in 1985. Rachel and partner, Perry Voisey, later started a small business, A&K Variety.

Rachel and Perry are quiet, hard-working people who don't want a lot of praise for helping others. They quietly sponsor many community events and activities, such as paying for the entire community at the annual Makkovik Trout Festival supper, covering all minor hockey player registrations for the entire season and all ice fees for the first month. They go out of their way to support our elders. They are – quote – just trying to help out, keep the prices in their store as fair and as low as they can. Rachel is detail-oriented, honest and has earned the community's trust. Perry, an expert hunter and fisherperson whose knowledge and ability has made a tremendous contribution to search and rescue operations.

This spring, Franks General Store in Makkovik was ruined by electrical fire, losing all merchandise and a lengthy shutdown. Although A&K Variety had limited storage and shelf space, Rachel and Perry stepped up, doubling their orders that initially arrived by small Twin Otter. Over the summer and still ongoing, they are providing the food and goods that Makkovik needs.

Makkovik thanks you.

Please join me in applauding the contribution of Perry and Rachel.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Waterford Valley.

J. KORAB: Thank you, Speaker.

I attended a Remembrance Day ceremony yesterday in Shea Heights, a close-knit community known for its strong sense of camaraderie and tradition. Every year, the community comes together on Remembrance Day to honour those who served and sacrificed for peace and freedom. The ceremony held at the Shea Heights War Memorial and community centre is a solemn and heartfelt event that resonates deeply with its residents.

Organized by volunteers of the Shea Heights community board, the ceremony was a special gathering of veterans, families and community members who paid tribute to fallen soldiers and to reflect on the bravery and resilience of past generations. Wreaths are laid by family members and representatives from various organizations symbolizing respect and gratitude for those whose sacrifices were made by those who served.

The ceremony not only honours those from Shea Heights who served but also instills in younger generations a sense of history, pride and responsibility. It's a time when the community unites in collective memory, ensuring that the legacy of those who served is never forgotten. Through this ceremony, Shea Heights keeps alive a tradition of remembrance and resilience that defines its spirit and strength.

I call upon all Members to join me in applauding the members of Shea Heights and the community board.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

L. PADDOCK: Speaker, the Dorset Soapstone Quarry and Museum.

Post-Remembrance Day, the need to remember and promote our history should be understood.

I'm privileged to highlight the Dorset Soapstone Quarry and Museum nestled in the heart of Fleur de Lys. This museum embodies the human ingenuity and connection to the land and sea that defines Newfoundland and Labrador. The quarry is a tribute to the Dorset –Tuniit – Indigenous people who lived there 2,000 years ago and whose artistry and culture come alive through ancient soapstone artifacts. Moreover, the area encapsulates our French fishing history of Le Petit Nord. These historical periods along with their cultural remnants, seen through the lens of the Dorset museum, have the potential to be an enhanced tourism magnet for our province.

Today, the dedicated Dorset museum committee have undertaken an ambitious fundraising plan to expand their museum offerings.

I invite my fellow MHAs and all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to escape the ordinary and discover a place where the whispers of our collective history mingle with a salty sea breeze, embracing visitors with a sense of wonder and a true respect for our heritage.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

A life saved from the District of Bonavista.

A recent graduate from Heritage Collegiate school in Lethbridge, Bella Short, a resident of Musgravetown, put her life-saving skills to use over the summer.

On the afternoon of Friday August 9, 2024, a male resident of the District of Bonavista

suffered a heart event in Clarenville, just outside the Walmart entrance. Immediately, many assisted in seeking an individual, both inside and outside Walmart, who was able to assist.

Fortunately, it was 18-year-old Bella who put her CPR skills to use, resulting in the man's heart being restarted. Bella states that she was nervous but knew what she was trained to do in such situations. Her chest compression skills led to the gentleman regaining partial consciousness before the arrival of the paramedics.

Assisting Bella on this fateful day were Felicia Phillips of Bunyan's Cove and Susan Keats of George's Brook-Milton. It is worthy to note that the gentleman who suffered the event has made a full recovery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: I ask Members of the 50th House of Assembly to join me in recognizing Bella Short of Musgravetown for her life-saving action as well as those who assisted her.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, two weeks ago as I prepared for the opening of the House of Assembly, I planned to bring a young, community hero here, along with his family and his friends, for a Member's statement. Unfortunately, that plan took a tragic turn.

I wanted to introduce you to young, 11-year-old Jake Anstey of Paradise but, sadly, Jake passed away on November 2, surrounded by his family and friends.

Jake was an active child. He loved hockey, basketball and spending time with his friends. However, after suffering a cardiac

arrest, his life changed dramatically, leaving him confined to a wheelchair. Despite these challenges, Jake's spirit remained unbroken. Jake's positive attitude was infectious and many were moved by his story and quickly became a part of Team Jake.

I first met Jake in September when I visited his home. Although Jake was non-verbal, he communicated by holding one thumb up or one thumb down. His mother, Lisa, would put one thumb in this position and one in this position and Jake would fix his gaze on either/or, depending on his answer. I can tell you it was so inspiring to meet him.

Jake, in his short life, made a huge impact on many and will not be forgotten. I ask all in this hon. House to join me in honouring Jake's memory with a thumbs up.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to raise awareness about stuttering and how it affects the well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Stuttering can make it difficult to communicate with others, which can seriously affect individuals' mental health.

The provincial government recognizes that there are unique challenges for people who stutter and we are very supportive of the work of the Newfoundland and Labrador Stuttering Association.

I would be remiss if I didn't just take a quick opportunity – we all talk about how great our constituency assistants are. My former

constituency assistant, Matthew Babb, is a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Stuttering Association.

Each year, the Department of Health and Community Services provides funding to support “A Million Things I Need To Say” Walk, Run and Roll for Stuttering Awareness and Bursary Program Fundraiser.

The bursary program is open to preschool and school-aged children, adolescents, adults and seniors who stutter, and individuals challenged with communication disorders.

To learn more or to apply for a bursary, please visit NLstuttering.ca.

Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in recognizing the Stuttering Association for their commitment and dedication to the stuttering community.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I would like to thank the hon. minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Speaker, I join the minister in noting the opening of bursaries through the NL Stuttering Association. Anything we can do to support the individuals who are struggling with communication challenges should be commended. The ability for an individual to participate in society without fear of bullying or being singled out should not be overstated. The effect on one’s mental health can be lasting, whether in a school setting or a workplace. We all know the power and influence of social media such as TikTok.

Mr. Speaker, we wish the Stuttering Association continued success in making a difference.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

Although we applaud this support for the Stuttering Association and their invaluable work, we would be remiss without mentioning the many vacancies across allied health professionals such as speech language pathologists.

That’s why we call on the government to create a comprehensive recruitment and retention program that not only fills current gaps in the staffing but ensures that all allied health professionals feel valued and want to stay in our system.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, in 2022 the province commissioned Deloitte for a \$2.1-million study to develop – quote – a master plan to replace St. Clare’s.

I ask the Premier: Has that report been received and will he table it today in the House of Assembly?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question.

Certainly that work is ongoing with respect to the scope and scale of that particular facility. As the Member opposite is aware, the Northeast Avalon does need a new hospital, a campus-style hospital. It's one that we've committed to and it's one that will serve, not just the members and people of the Northeast Avalon but, indeed, the entire province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, one of the conditions outlined in the report that Deloitte was supposed to look at, was to consider site options for the replacement for St. Clare's.

So I ask the Premier: If site options and this report have not been completed, how did you choose the new site for St. Clare's hospital?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The site was selected based on information and intelligence gathered by the department, recommendations of officials in the department, both of TI and from Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services.

It's a great location; it has the support of four adjacent municipalities. Not only does it have the added benefit of providing modern health care to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, it will allow for adjacent,

much-needed infrastructure projects, non-health related infrastructure projects, like some modern roads and infrastructure projects for Paradise, Conception Bay South and others around.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, I ask the Premier: Can you table the tender documents or the request for proposals that you used to select the new St. Clare's site?

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

F. HUTTON: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to answer this question.

We did not have to go through a tendering process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

F. HUTTON: We are compliant when it comes to site selection for hospitals, for schools, for the new penitentiary we are going to build; we are within compliance of the act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, I say to the minister opposite, while he may not have to go to tender, he should go to tender. This is the people's money we're talking about, not theirs.

I would ask the Premier: Can you table to cost-benefit analysis, value-for-money assessment or land-bank study that has been completed to say that this is the best site?

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

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, as the Member opposite pointed out, we did enlist a consultant to look at best options and the functional process of what this hospital will look like.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

F. HUTTON: We looked at that with our consultants; we looked at it with NL Health Services; we looked to our own expertise within Transportation and Infrastructure. This is literally at what is called Kenmount Crossing. It's an area of land that borders on Mount Pearl, Paradise and St. John's, three of the largest municipalities in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

F. HUTTON: It is also adjacent to the Outer Ring Road, which is the main artery, the main highway that runs through Newfoundland and Labrador, and this new acute-care hospital, this campus-style facility –

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

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, what I find really interesting here is they paid \$2.1 million for Deloitte to be the consultant for the new St. Clare's plan, yet the minister is referring to other consultants.

What consultants is the minister actually talking about?

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

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, I may have misunderstood the question. If I did, I apologize, but we have enlisted a consultant to look at the functional plan of what will be a campus-style, new acute-care tertiary facility for the entire Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are working on what the campus is going to look like.

Our teams, in conjunction with NL Health Services, are looking at where it will be located and where it will best serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and their health-care needs for the years coming – for decades coming, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, the Liberal government just spend \$2.1 million of taxpayers' money to hire Deloitte to do the very job of defining what options should be looked at for the land. Now, we're hearing that their report is not even finished or completed, yet we're out making announcements about land that we're going to use for St. Clare's.

So, again, I have to ask: Why is the government paying over \$400,000 an acre for this land, when there's land across the street that has 70 acres and it's for sale for \$1.75 million?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the consultants are looking at what is going to, as well, go in that campus. We are looking at the ability to unlock infrastructure problems that we're having, to solve those on the Paradise side, as the Premier alluded to, in terms of being able to have

access from the Outer Ring Road, access from Kenmount Road –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

F. HUTTON: – access for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Deloitte is also looking at what that –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I can't hear the minister's response when people shout back and forth.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, you have 20 more seconds, Sir.

F. HUTTON: We are working with the consultants, we're working with our own officials as well and consulting with NL Health Services to determine the best location for it. All four mayors of St. John's, Mount Pearl, Paradise and CBS are in agreement with this in the location because it is centrally located. It's literally on the borders of three of those four communities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, again, I'm wondering, why did we pay \$2.1 million for a consultant which we're not going to use apparently?

Speaker, the Premier failed to mention the \$23-million hidden cost at the photo op when they announced the location for the new St. Clare's hospital. It was only a release from the company that actually exposed that. So, again, his own press release by the Liberal government failed to mention that fact.

So I ask the Premier: Why did you deliberately hide that?

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

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, we did not hide anything. We made an announcement on where the new St. Clare's hospital is going to go. It is much needed.

I might add that we're in a situation now in the province, in the metro area, the Northeast Avalon, where we used to have about 170,000 people living here with three hospitals over two decades ago. We now have about 270,000 people living here in this region, in this vicinity of the new health care facility that we're going to build, with two hospitals.

Is the Member opposite suggesting we not build a hospital?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, let me address the issue. This is not about need; this is about process and their process is not to go to public tender. That's the process they're using.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: There's a new game show in town, Speaker, a new game show in Newfoundland and Labrador: *Let's Make a Deal*. But here's the catch, in order to play –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

T. WAKEHAM: – you have to have the Premier's phone number or you have to be a supporter of the Liberal Party.

Why aren't we going to tender for these projects?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, as I stated in the beginning, when we are going to build a school, when the province, when the provincial government decides to build a school, we pick the land and we can build it there, in conjunction with the community that we are dealing with, as we are doing in Cartwright, as we are doing in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, as we are doing in Paradise, as we're doing in Kenmount Terrace, or if we're building HMP. We are in compliance with the *Public Procurement Act* in terms of acquiring the land.

What happens afterwards when we're actually going to build something from the ground up? We go to the tendering process. There is a process for that, which we will abide by, as we did with the purchase of the land.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, this is public money we're talking about. This is the money belonging to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, the government, the Liberal government opposite signed a lease for the Comfort Inn without a public tender that is now costing more than \$40 million over the next three years. The hotel sits half empty, yet taxpayers are still on the hook.

Did this lease agreement also begin with a call to the Premier's office?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Housing.

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

In terms of 106 Airport Road, it's been debated and discussed in this House, certainly, for the past year, and what I can say is it's been successful to date.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. ABBOTT: We have a quarterly plan that allows both staffing and new residents to come to that facility. Right now, we're at roughly 54 residents. Already seven have moved on to permanent and more suitable housing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. ABBOTT: We're providing wraparound services, in terms of health care and housing supports. So the model is working. We are quite satisfied with the return to date.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Again, Speaker, we're talking about the money belonging to the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador and how this government is spending it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: The most expensive travel nurse contract in Canada happened here in Newfoundland and Labrador and it started with a call to the Premier's office.

So, again, was this land purchase another deal that started with a call to the Premier's office?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Let me take an opportunity to address the preamble, Mr. Speaker.

We in this House, and I think around the province, want to end agency nurses, there is no question about it. When you look at the history of agency nurses, where it started, where it came from, it can be traced back to 2014.

Do you know where it can be traced back to, Mr. Speaker? It can be traced back to Labrador-Grenfell Health. Do you know who was CEO of Labrador-Grenfell Health at the time, Mr. Speaker? The Member opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

A. FUREY: So he wants to cut nurses out of Black Tickle in Labrador and use agency nurses. Shameful on you, Sir – shameful.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, travel nurses have been used in our province for a long, long time, but they were always done in conjunction –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

T. WAKEHAM: – with the Nurses' Union and the people here. This particular government, this contract started with a call from a premier's office in New Brunswick. That's how this nursing contract came. I can guarantee you that there was no

renovations or purchase of irons or microwaves –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

T. WAKEHAM: – or anything else.

I ask again: Did the purchase of this land deal start with a call to the Premier's office?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sure the Member opposite is fully aware of how agency nurses are hired, because he created the plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: He started it in Labrador, Mr. Speaker. He was intent on cutting nurses, shutting down clinics and using agency nurses. On this side of the House, we use them because we had to and now we have a plan to get rid of agency nurses and use the ones that are educated and recruited here at home, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Yes, Speaker, this Liberal government has a history of cuts and let me tell you about those cuts. They did cut community nurses in Labrador; they cut OR nurses in Corner Brook; they shut down clinics on the South Coast of Newfoundland; and they laid off over 100 people in Eastern Health. And that was in the first year of their mandate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

T. WAKEHAM: So, again, I ask the Premier: Was this land purchase another deal that started with a call to your office?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, to the preamble, as we all know, the problem in health care right now didn't happen overnight. It didn't happen in minutes. It didn't happen in days. It happened in decades of leadership, Mr. Speaker. Decades in which the Member opposite was a leader in the health care system that led to agency nurses and cutting nurses.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Premier, you have 30 more seconds.

A. FUREY: No, I'm good.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I think the Premier and his government need to realize this is almost 2025, almost a decade in power, it is time for them to start answering questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

And the Premier needs to realize that people need answers to these questions. They're very important questions and he should have the respect for the people in this province to provide meaningful answers. Not getting up with these theatrics you see across the way.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

That's enough chatter back and forth. It's very hard to hear any Member speaking when people are shouting back and forth. I ask that you keep the level down, please.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you for that, Speaker.

The government's reliance on travel agency nurses, with their own graduates left without jobs, expose a systemic failure in recruitment and retention. To quote the RNU: These students are eager to work in Newfoundland and Labrador, but they're being dismissed and overlooked by recruiters. Once again, the words of the Registered Nurses' Union.

Premier, when can the 118 other students in this class expect full-time, permanent job offers in Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

NLHS, as was advised this morning in the media, have told every single nurse in that class that they will have a job here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: Speaker, more importantly, the focus is on making sure that rural Newfoundland and Labrador, that those vacancies are filled in that part of the province because delivering health care in rural Newfoundland and Labrador is a top priority for this government and for the Department of Health and Community Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: Speaker, my understanding is that these students were advised via email

on October 31, that there will be job opportunities officially rolled out and offers to them in December and January.

Of course, it takes some time to do interviews and to match nurses in what parts of the province and what areas of nursing they want to work in, rather than dictating to them you're going here, you're going there. NLHS will work with them, find the positions that they want, that they're committed to, to deliver good health care in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: It's the second week in a row now. Last week, the Newfoundland Medical Association weren't telling the truth. Now the Nurses' Union are telling mistruths.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: I heard Yvette Coffey this morning and she was not saying what the minister was saying, but he followed her right up. Debbie Malloy, also a staff person in NL Health Services, she also went against the other way. So we're a bit disillusioned.

Speaker, on Friday, we learned from the Registered Nurses' Union that only three out of 121 nursing students in their fourth year at the Centre for Nursing Studies were offered jobs.

Given that the Premier's claiming over 90 per cent of nursing graduates are hired, why is it only three out of the 121 were offered jobs? Who's telling the truth, the government or the Nurses' Union?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The over 90 per cent, which I will say is a historic high, was from the graduates of 2024. We're talking about the graduates of 2025. They were given a letter from myself and the former minister of Health saying that if you want a job as a nurse in Newfoundland and Labrador, you can have one.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: We are now at the point of matching those nurses with particular jobs in particular areas of specialty so that they can have a fulfilling long-term career in the health care system of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I guess everyone else, outside of government, are living in an alternate universe because that's not what they're being told.

Even more shocking, Speaker, is that the press release from the Registered Nurses' Union goes on to say that none, and I mean none, have been offered the rural incentives that the Liberal government announced.

Premier, these nursing students are wondering why there aren't incentives being offered to our soon-to-be graduates in Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll just repeat what I said and what the Premier said. There's a process ongoing right now to match nurses with positions that they want and that they want to work in in terms of the area of the province and the

specialty that they've desired to work in. Those incentives will be there for anyone who accepts those rural positions.

Speaker, NLHS is working with the nursing students to find placements for them. In fact, they are ahead of schedule compared to where they were last year. We all know what happened last year. Almost 100 per cent of the nurses got jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: There's a major disconnect, Speaker, between the Nurses' Union and government because that's not what they're saying. It's absolutely phenomenal. They're not talking about last year; they're talking about this year. They're talking about here and now.

Speaker –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

B. PETTEN: Speaker, I'm not sure why they're shouting at me. I'm only repeating what they said. Maybe they should go shout at the Nurses' Union. I'm only bringing up what they said and I'm going to continue on.

Speaker, in the words of the Registered Nurses' Union, this is a major missed opportunity to straighten out health care in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Just like the doctors, the Registered Nurses' Union are being ignored by the Premier as well.

If we have no nurses, if we have no clinics and if we have no ERs, Premier, is this the future of health care in rural Newfoundland and Labrador under your government?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond. In my past life, I had the opportunity to be part of the Registered Nurses' Union. I was a nurse in rural Newfoundland for 10 years and I have to give a big shout-out to my former colleagues and all those who are still working in health care right now to make sure that the system is working for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

But there is a process that unfolds. As the Minister of Health has identified, these are students that have not graduated from nursing school yet. They are operating under graduate licences and they have to be matched appropriately to health care facilities or job vacancies in Newfoundland and Labrador. That's going to take some time.

They have to evaluate where the vacancies are and where these nurses want to find themselves here in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is going to take time but, as we've shown, a 90 per cent record of employment last year and we're on track for greater this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Speaker, they have a lot of matching to do. Last time I counted, there was 600 vacancies and the on job board, apparently, there are very few jobs being posted. We can't get updated numbers. They're only stuck there about a year back in their numbers, so I can't wait to see the updated numbers. We should get that sometime before the election.

Speaker, even more alarming is the fact that one student told the Registered Nurses' Union vice-president that a Newfoundland Health Services manager in Central Newfoundland told the student that "he prefers hiring private agency nurses

because they are easier to make happy.”
Can you imagine?

Premier, is this an indication of a larger systemic problem in our health care system?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

K. HOWELL: Mr. Speaker, I have to stand and say again: Thank you to all those who are working in health care.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

K. HOWELL: I was an RN who operated in Labrador-Grenfell Health when travel nurses were first introduced in 2014, as was referenced by the Leader of the Official Opposition. While it might have been a good idea at the time, the subsequent poor decision-making and leadership that was demonstrated left Labrador-Grenfell Health in turmoil.

I have to say that standing here right now, I’m probably the only person in this House who’s worked in that setting. There’s a reason why my wagon is hitched to a red train and not a blue one.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Speaker, I think she better watch out which direction that train is headed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: She may want to unhook. She may want to unhook, Speaker, before it’s too late.

Speaker, \$300 million and counting is what we spend on travel nurses. We have a Minister of Health, we have a Premier, yet they pass it back to the Minister of Education.

Now, I have a lot of respect for her, a former nurse; I have no problem with her answering. But the Nurses’ Union here and now today, and the nursing students, they want to hear what our Premier and the Minister of Health got to say about this. This is a very serious issue. Respectfully, I think those two people in their positions should stand and answer these questions.

So the next one I’m asking: How many nurses have already left the system due to this alarming attitude?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I fully respect my colleague, the Minister of Education –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: – a professional nurse who has served the people of rural Newfoundland and Labrador. I respect her opinion. She educates all of us with respect to the specific issues. I’m proud for her to stand up and speak on this government’s record on nurses. We have taken the position that we will hire every single nurse of this graduating class.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. FUREY: For the Member opposite, that means 2025. So there will be jobs available for them, if they can be matched. We can’t have a thousand cardiac care nurses, but we will match them to the best of our

abilities, like we did last year, to succeed at over a 90 per cent rate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

The conductor of the train just said basically what I said about the Minister of Education. We agree, but he's not answering no questions again, but be careful which way your train is headed, Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

B. PETTEN: Following this spring's travel nursing fiasco, the Liberal government promised a renewed focus on retaining local talent.

How does leaving 100 recent graduates without job offers fulfill that promise, Premier?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

We can only say it so many times that every single nurse in the graduating class for 2025 has been told that they can work here in Newfoundland and Labrador and they will have a job here in Newfoundland and Labrador. That's on top of the 850 nurses that have been recruited to Newfoundland and Labrador over the last year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: That's on top of increasing seats at the nursing school so we can have more nurses who will be offered jobs here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: So I'll just say this: This train will say choo-choo get on board over here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: And I would say the people of Newfoundland and Labrador aren't going to choo-choose them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Premier, once again it's become clear that your health care modernization plan doesn't work or include rural Newfoundland. This week, I learned patients at G. B. Cross Memorial can no longer receive wound care.

Instead of wound care, it's amputations; instead of ostomy, it's the risk of sepsis with no internal medicine.

I ask the Premier: Is this the future of health care in this province?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

Again, we are committed to delivering the best health care for every Newfoundlander and Labradorian in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: We are continuing to work on these issues. No one here is saying that the situation is perfect. We are continuing to recruit, we are continuing to make sure we retain, we are working on the Health Accord, we are building infrastructure, we are recruiting from all over the world to make sure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have the best health care.

If there's an individual issue, again, not a problem if they want to raise the issue in the House of Assembly, but if they want an individual issue worked on, they can send the name and MCP number directly to my email – as they have done in the past.

L. PARROTT: It's a position, not a name.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. HOGAN: If there is an individual case that needs to be addressed, we will do our best to address it.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Seeing as there was no public tender, I ask the Premier: How did he determine that buying 40 acres of land at the enormous price on Kenmount Road was the best location for the new St. Clare's hospital? Was it similar to the process of determining the new school for Portugal Cove-St. Philip's?

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

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

As I mentioned earlier, the process was done in consultation with NL Health Services. We had hired a consultant as well, Deloitte, back in 2023, I believe it was, in terms of working on what the function of that site would look like, included in that, where it should be, should it be within proximity of the Health Sciences complex.

When the offer of the land from the vendors came forward, we took a closer look at that. We had investigated other areas around the

capital city, given the footprint that is needed. If you just looked at, for context, the Health Sciences complex is currently on a footprint of 53 acres; the old Grace Hospital is about eight acres, and the current St. Clare's site is about 5½ acres of land.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

It's quite all right if the minister just says no. A simple no will suffice here.

Speaker, did the Premier get an independent land appraisal done for the site before agreeing to it?

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

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, in consultation with NL Health Services and in consultation with the consultant and our own folks at Transportation and Infrastructure, we looked at this site, we realized that it unlocked potential for infrastructure issues that we're facing there at the Paradise interchange, which the Premier referenced earlier. It's on the main highway that leads through Newfoundland and Labrador; it is directly in the middle of Kenmount Crossing, the area of Paradise, Mount Pearl and St. John's.

It's optimal for their access for the rest of the province, because it's not just for those communities, which are three of the largest in the province, it is for the entire province, and it is right on the highway, the Outer Ring Road.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

So there's no public tender, no independent land appraisal; pretty free with the people's money in determining if this is even worth it.

Speaker, \$23 million is what this piece of land on Kenmount Road is costing the people of the province. No public tendering, and there were cheaper, equally suitable and just as accessible – and did I mention cheaper – parcels nearby. Come to think of it, there was no tendering for the Comfort Inn either, also owned by a Liberal donor.

So is this about what's best for the people of the province or what's best for the Premier's friends and donors?

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

F. HUTTON: Mr. Speaker, that's an easy one. It's about what's best for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and the health care that we're going to deliver for decades to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, government recruited internationally educated nurses with assurances of permanent, full-time registered nursing jobs. Now we hear that the government is breaking that promise. We also continue to hear from local nursing students who have not been offered full-time positions.

I ask the minister: Why is it so hard for nurses to get into a job when we are in so desperate need, especially in rural Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker, and again I thank the Member opposite for the question.

All the nurses who are in school right now have been told they will have jobs here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: They were told at the end of October that the formal rollout plan of offering those jobs and placing those nurses throughout the province will happen in December or January. So it's still a couple of months away. They need to do the interview and the matching process to make sure that nurses are placed where they want to be and in the fields that they want to be in.

That takes time but, again, NLHS is ahead of schedule from last year, where we know almost 100 per cent of nurses were placed throughout the province.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: I ask the minister, again, though: What about government's recruited internationally educated nurses who are doing clerk jobs and other non-nursing jobs when they were promised registered nursing jobs in this province?

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

J. HOGAN: Speaker, so we're really pleased that not only are we growing our own, but we're recruiting people from all over the world who want to come to Newfoundland and Labrador to work in the health care system. A lot of them I have spoken to it's because they see the promise of Health Accord NL, Speaker. That is going

to deliver the best health care in this country when we're finished with the Health Accord.

However, they do come over; they do need to do a bit of training before they're fully implemented to provide those services to Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a new process. It's ongoing and more are coming to be here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SPEAKER: Quick question. No preamble.

J. BROWN: Also why are they not getting the jobs that they're promised? They are continuously saying they're not getting the jobs they are promised.

I ask the minister, again: Why aren't they getting the jobs they're promised?

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

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

They will and they are going to get the jobs they are promised. There is a period of time where they need to be upskilled and to adapt to Canadian standards in Newfoundland and Labrador here. They will be given the jobs that are promised.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

SPEAKER: I do have one.

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

May 21, July 2, August 27 and September 18, 2024.

Any further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Two notices – Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Public Safety Act, Bill 95.

I give notice that I will on tomorrow to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Repeal the Financial Services Appeal Board Act and to Amend Various Acts of the Province to Eliminate Appeals to the Financial Services Appeal Board, Bill 96.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: Any further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move that notwithstanding Standing Order 9, this House shall not adjourn at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, but shall continue to sit to conduct Government Business and if not earlier adjourned, the Speaker shall adjourn the House at midnight.

SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

We have had many situations reported in the House of Assembly where a resident of our province, after having a heart event, was fortunate enough to have someone with life-saving skills set close by. Unfortunately and sadly, there are situations where this is not the case and the individual loses their life. The more people with first aid knowledge in our population, the greater the chance of someone surviving a heart event.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to implement immediately first aid certification within our K-to-12 school systems health curriculum.

I had a Member's statement today – and Bella is in the gallery. She was the one who saved the life of the resident in the District of Bonavista this past summer. She had her first aid skills from the education system, but it was an occupational health and safety course. Great on the school system that made that available and the gentleman's whose life she saved is thankful that she had the education that she did, but Bella is a small percentage of those graduates that come out of our K-to-12 system with the first aid course being available within the system itself.

What this petition asks is that everyone, through the integrated health curriculum, everyone who comes out of our K-to-12 system will have this first aid certification. What that does, it's a great health learning for our residents, our future citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador, but you can see where exponentially it grows that the probability that someone is in need and will have somebody with the skillset going forward to save their life, it becomes a much greater probability that this would occur.

So the ask would be that we do that now. We have a health curriculum in our school that, until recently, was over three decades old. We talked of first aid, but we ought to

be to the point now where they can become first aid skilled and become practitioners in order to save someone's life, when, in fact, that is needed out in the general population.

We think that Bella's act is one that can lead into our curriculum to make sure that every student that comes out of our K-to-12 system has the certification that Bella had, and we'll have more students out there that can save the lives, when needed, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador who urge our leaders to ensure that our Northern Labrador residents are provided with access to timely and adequate health care.

Frequently, patients are prevented from getting to and from their medical appointments at provincial health authority centres in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, St. John's, St. Anthony, Corner Brook, et cetera.

Some of the delays are due to inclement weather, but often patients are prevented from getting to and from their medical appointments because there are no seats left on the flight. There are multiple reasons for this. We are calling on government to work towards removing these barriers so patients can access their medical appointments for diagnosis and treatment.

Speaker, I presented this petition many times and the petition calls for government to work towards removing these barriers so patients can access their medical appointments for diagnosis and treatment. I talk a lot about timely access to adequate

medical care. To be quite honest, we can take the conditions that my constituents face in Northern Labrador and put them into a UNICEF commercial or any commercial on TV that talks about Third World conditions and, basically, calls for action so people can access timely health care.

But we're not in a Third World country; we're in Northern Labrador. The problems of getting out to your appointment are compounded when people are looking at getting on that flight, if they can get a seat to get out to their medical appointment, they run the risk of being stuck in Goose Bay. Back in the day, being stuck in Goose Bay referred to bad weather but now it's all about not having enough seats on the flight. The patients sometimes will cancel their appointment if they know that they are not going to be able to get back from Goose Bay, and that's impacting our overall health care.

Speaker, I personally have witnessed people who have passed away, diagnosed too late, from cancer and other health and circulatory problems that really shortened their life. So, at the end of the day, we have to ensure that the access to health care in Northern Labrador is the same as elsewhere in the province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

This petition is about bringing back the residential energy rebate. These are the reasons for this petition:

In 2011, the provincial government lifted the 8 per cent provincial portion of the HST on residential heat by introducing the Residential Energy Rebate or RER.

The RER was later cancelled by the provincial government in 2015. Heat is a necessity of life and a health concern, particularly for seniors; and the cost of living is rising and current measures by government are not doing enough to combat inflation.

Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to bring a HST rebate on home heating.

Speaker, there have been a number of measures by the government to address the cost of living and affordability for seniors. The Aging Well at Home Grant, there have been home repair grants, but I will tell you that many of the seniors who I've spoken to say they are far inadequate compared to what they need. Actually, many seniors are getting more from the Carbon Rebate than some of the provincial measures.

I'll give an example. A senior in my district, to buy the dietary supplements, it cost \$400 a month, Speaker, not \$400 that's provided by the Aging Well at Home Grant. Seniors who want to be able to repair their house so that they can stay in it, maybe put a new roof on it, are finding that while their income is low, the threshold hasn't been increased so they don't qualify. One gentleman at a cost-of-living town hall we had recently made note that when he retired 20 years ago, \$43,000 was a decent retirement pension; not so now.

One practical way, Speaker, of making sure that all seniors and those who heat their home, whether it's through oil or through electricity or otherwise, is to remove the provincial portion of the HST.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance for a response.

S. COADY: Thank you very much.

I appreciate the petition, but allow me to inform the Member that we do have a home heat rebate that is \$500 for those that are eligible for that home heat rebate. We're accepting applications currently. Five hundred dollars is a lot. It's probably more than what the HST is on a lot of these bills, Speaker.

The Member opposite knows that the HST is a harmonized sales tax with the federal and provincial governments. It's the federal government who has the ability to make changes to the HST itself.

Our answer to that, of course, is to put in this particular home heat rebate up to \$500 for those that are eligible. It's very important to be able to offer this. It's probably more than what most people are paying in HST during the year on their heating as it is.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Long Run Road is the main access road from the Goulds to Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove. This piece of infrastructure is in need of major repairs. This road is in a deplorable condition and relied on by both residents and visitors on a daily basis. Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove is a well-known tourist attraction in this area.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to complete necessary repairs to the Long Run Road in Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove to enhance and improve the flow of traffic to allow safer travel on this important roadway.

Speaker, I've done this petition a number of times as well. It's a very big tourist attraction area. The condition of the road is something left to be desired for sure. Down in Petty Harbour, we have Chafe's Landing restaurant, Tinkers Ice Cream Shop, Petty Harbour Mini Aquarium, the East Coast Trail, Fishing For Success, North Atlantic Ziplines, plus many other tourist attractions down there as well.

When people come to St. John's and they fly in, sometimes they don't have time to drive to the places in the Bonavista area and all that, three hours. They want to see rural Newfoundland and in 15 minutes they can be in their car or rent a car, get down there and see it; go to Cape Spear and come back through Petty Harbour.

People in the area probably don't realize how much tourist attraction is in that area. People just drive through. There's no count of how many people are going there. There's a big tourist attraction down there and I know it because I drive down there a lot in the summertime, even during the winter. There are no spots to park, basically when you do go down there, it's full.

This road is used by fishermen, it's used by truckers in the area as well. The condition of the road, you have to go down there, it's two or three kilometres. It's something that the government should be looking at.

The Town of Petty Harbour sent a letter back in April of last year, sent it to the former minister – there have been two ministers since this was sent, so they probably have to send it again. But it's gotten to the point they say of deterioration, that more is needed than simply filling in potholes.

We haven't seen the potholes repaired properly over the last number of years. The town was advised in conversation with employees a few years back that a major asphalt project would take place on this

roadway. To date, they have seen little or nothing completely.

Hopefully, the minister can see it in his wisdom to go down there, look at this road. I had a previous minister go down, we tried to solve a couple of issues down there. It's nice for this minister to get down and look at the condition of this road, because it's used by many, many tourists in our area and many, many residents that live there as well.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the Exploit's District has seen increased speeding and ATV activity in the area causing safety issues for residents in their communities.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to increase enforcement in the district to provide adequate safety and protection to our residents.

Speaker, we've seen an increase in activity, crime in the past few years in the Central area, where the lack of policing in the area is a concern to a lot of the residents. They find that the lack of presence, there's more violence, more crime, more ATV activities, more things happening in the district; whereas, we need to see more increased police services, more resources in the area to have more adequate safety and those checks made on a regular basis.

In 2019, there was a comprehensive study that recommended an increase of two positions for our detachment in Grand Falls-Windsor, yet they're still short resources.

Now, the minister keeps saying he's putting funding in, but we are still short resources in Central Newfoundland. We need those resources in Central Newfoundland to adequately fit the situations, especially with the crime increasing, safety issues, speeding, all that kind of stuff that's happening in the Central area so that the police can do their jobs.

They're overworked. They've got a big geographic area. The Exploits Valley takes in from Buchans right down to Leading Tickle. They've got a big geographic area, less resources. We need resources put in there so that the RCMP officers can do their job safely and adequately and provide the service to the Central Newfoundland area that those residents deserve.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 2.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that An Act Respecting Health Research Ethics, Bill 64, be now read a third time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

It is moved and seconded that the said bill, Bill 64, 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.'

Carried.

CLERK (Hawley George): A bill, An Act Respecting Health Research Ethics. (Bill 64)

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 Health Research Ethics," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 64)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 3.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that An Act to Amend the Animal Health and Protection Act, Bill 65, be now read a third time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill, Bill 65, 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.'

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Animal Health and Protection Act. (Bill 65)

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 to Amend the Animal Health and Protection Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 65)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, the third reading of Bill 80, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 80 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: A bill, An Act to Amend the Medical Act, 2011 and the Psychologists Act, 2005. (Bill 80)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Medical Act, 2011 and the Psychologists Act, 2005," read a third time, ordered

passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 80)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 5, the third reading of Bill 82.

SPEAKER: And a seconder?

L. DEMPSTER: Seconded by the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 82 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: A bill, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act. (Bill 82)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 82)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 88, An Act to Repeal the Municipal Financing Corporation Act.

SPEAKER: And a seconder?

L. DEMPSTER: Seconded by the Minister of Finance.

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

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 88, An Act to Repeal the Municipal Financing Corporation Act.

A bill, "An Act to Repeal the Municipal Financing Corporation Act." (Bill 88)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Chair.

I just have a couple of questions. I think we touched on some of them, Minister, last week before we recessed. Does the Municipal Financing Corporation have any assets or liabilities on the books that will be transferred to the Crown at this time?

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

S. COADY: Oh, sorry. I have a habit of standing up.

There is about, I think, \$5 million and it will be transferred back into general revenue. There is money in the account and it will be transferred back into general revenue.

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

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

The other question was: Are there any assets or liabilities on the books as well, in addition to \$6 million or \$5.5 million that will now be transferred back to the Crown?

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

S. COADY: Thank you.

It's hard to break a habit of standing up.

There are two outstanding that we've already been in discussion with two municipalities. There are two outstanding items well in hand and we've made provisions for repayment to the Crown.

CHAIR: No further questions?

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 4 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

CLERK: 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 Repeal the Municipal Financing Corporation Act. (Bill 88)

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 Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 88 carried without amendment.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 88 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): The hon. the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's and Chair of 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 88 carried without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and directed that Bill 88 be carried without amendment.

When shall the bill 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. Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 21, second reading of Bill 91, An Act to Amend the Family Relief Act.

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing, that we move into second reading for Bill 91.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 91 entitled, An Act To Amend The Family Relief Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act to Amend the Family Relief Act." (Bill 91)

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to speak about important amendments to the *Family Relief Act*. It won't be too long, so I'll just qualify that right early.

The proposed amendment seeks to change the act to include the term "cohabiting partners" as dependants of the deceased individual. The current act provides the

opportunity for deceased individuals' dependants to have standing in the court of law to apply for relief from their estate. Relief is a financial support for dependants that is made by the deceased person's estate.

Currently, the act does not define or include any reference to common law or cohabiting partner and only includes the widow, widower or the child of the deceased. As the term is not defined, it is unclear whether a person in a cohabiting relationship would be able to apply for relief under the act.

Speaker, cohabiting partners would be defined in the act as two individuals cohabiting in a conjugal relationship for at least two years, or a year, where they are, together, the biological or adoptive parents of a child. This aligns with the current definition of partner in the *Family Law Act*.

This act allows certain dependants to make an application to obtain relief when a person dies, either with a will, but has not made adequate arrangements to support the surviving dependants; or, without a will and the share of the estate with the dependants are entitled under the *Intestate Succession Act* is not sufficient to support the surviving dependants. Under the act, a judge may order the relief in the form of a financial support from the dependants is made out of the deceased's estates.

Defining cohabitation partner provides clarification regarding who is considered to be the dependant for the purposes of this act and makes clear that they have the option – I'll be very clear – of applying for relief under the act.

It also demonstrates that government continues to modernize legislation and ensures that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians approach aligns with other provinces and territories to be more reflective of the modern family situations.

Amending the act will enhance access to justice by clarifying who may apply for relief under the act, as it will affect thousands of couples across the province who are in cohabiting relationships with a partner.

Society is changing and over 10 per cent of all couples in Newfoundland and Labrador are living in a common-law partnership. By including and defining the term cohabiting partner as a dependant in the *Family Relief Act*, it will ensure that the partner can make application to obtain relief when their common-law partner has passed away. Making this amendment will also ensure that we are compliant with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and align Newfoundland and Labrador with other jurisdictions.

We will also be amending the act to include gender-neutral language, which is what we do any time we're trying to update acts in this Legislature.

Speaker, I encourage all hon. Members in this hon. House to vote in favour of these important amendments for the *Family Relief Act*.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

I am pleased to stand here on behalf of the Official Opposition and support Bill 91 and the amendment to the *Family Relief Act*. When we look at this amendment, it is clear that there are many positive reasons for supporting the legislation.

The minister has cited what those reasons are and to reiterate by clarifying what the cohabiting relationship is, that will provide reassurance and that will also give confidence to the many thousands of couples in our province who are in

cohabitating relationships yet are left without recourse prior to this amendment. So that is, of course, a very important justification to support this resolution.

As well, it will – as the minister has indicated – enhance access to justice, which is always a very positive and important goal for us to reach and to attain. Access to justice is important for all individuals and, yes, it is changing times. We do know that our society today, in 2024, is different in years gone by. So we have to change, but we have to ensure that the law adapts and changes with those times.

As well, another important reason and justification for this amendment which we support is that it makes it consistent with other laws and legislation that we now have in place, for example, the *Family Law Act* as well as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

So for all of those reasons, it is crucial and it is important for us to support this legislation and to support the amendments which will bring this law in accordance with our times.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

I do reiterate that us here in the Third Party will also be supporting these amendments. They are crucial, they are critical and as the minister did say earlier, there are more and more people in this province who do live in cohabitation arrangements, common law. Society has evolved and changed and I guess different sections of our legislation are also going to have to evolve and change to make sure that cohabitating partners and common-law partners do have the same rights afforded to them as some married partners when it comes to things like this.

Absolutely, the last thing a cohabitating partner wants to deal with during the loss of their partner is having to go to stand in the court and realize they have no rights there. It causes a lot of heartache and pain on top of the loss of their loved one, as well.

So we do support the amendments to these changes. We also think it's important that we upheld this and we'll just have some questions in Committee when we get to that point.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Seeing no other speakers, if the Minister of Justice and Public Safety speaks now, he will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd just like to thank the hon. Member for Harbour Main for the support for this piece of legislation that just aligns us with the rest of the country as she identified and hands us access to justice, which we can all agree on in this House of Assembly is a good thing; a changing society, it helps us adapt and I thank her for her positive words on those things about the piece of legislation that we're bringing forward.

Also the MHA for Labrador West, he's right. Society is evolving and we have to evolve with it. With that means changes to legislation. That's the good thing about us 40 Members in this House of Assembly, we all get the opportunity to try to bring forward and make meaningful change when we see it needs to be made to reflect our communities that each and every one of us represent.

We want to make sure that they have the same rights. It's important. It doesn't guarantee that they're going to get something but it gives them the option to apply to the courts, which is not necessarily

there right now, and aligns us with the other consistencies right across the country. I think that's a good thing.

I'm glad to see all my hon. colleagues across who spoke are supporting this and I look forward for the vote to happen in the House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 91 now be 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 Family Relief Act. (Bill 91)

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

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

J. HAGGIE: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Family Relief Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave.

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Corner Brook, that this House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to discuss An Act to Amend the Family Relief Act, Bill 91.

Thank you.

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 discuss Bill 91, the *Family Relief Act*.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Trimper): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 91, An Act to Amend the Family Relief Act.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Family Relief Act." (Bill 91)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I have first of all a question to ask you with respect to these changes or these amendments. Who asked for these amendments? Where did this come from?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the question.

There was no specific people who asked for the amendments. We were going through and we wanted to make sure that all legislation – to be completely honest, I think it was caught up in the whole looking at all legislation over periods of time to see what needed to be straightened out.

Any time we've heard from any individual, not necessarily about this piece of legislation but any piece of legislation where there may be a gap or we can see a gap potential, we move forward and try to find ways to move that forward.

This was a fairly easy one that we noticed that we could fix fairly quickly and then, obviously, bring the piece of legislation up with gender-neutral language and things like we do any time we bring a piece of legislation here, but that's the two only changes with respect to this.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

So what have other provinces done that align with these updates? Has there been any analysis of other provinces and their work in this area?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: Yes, thank you. That's another good question.

We do jurisdictional scans whenever we do a piece of legislation like this. These changes that we're making here today with cohabiting partners bring us in line with other jurisdictions across the country, as well as make sure we're not on – I won't say

shaky ground, but make sure we're definitely clear on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms with respect to individuals, making sure that they have every option to be protected.

I think most people would tend to believe they are protected. We want to make sure we close that loop.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

So, Minister, as we realize it's very important for us to have consultation with the public and others on any proposed legislation, can you please provide who was consulted with respect to these changes?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I can get you the full list of the consultation that was done. I know that within the department we're always looking at our own lawyers that would deal with this within the department, but I'll get the list of the external people that would have been consulted on this. Generally, the consultation would have been with the other jurisdictions to see what gaps we have identified in our own legislation that we can fix and close those gaps, and that's what we've done here today.

Obviously, if others see other things that we'd like to do, like any piece of legislation, we have the opportunity to update it and bring it up to the next level if some other individuals – not necessarily with this piece of legislation, but any legislation in Justice and other departments I've been a part of, when people reach out, we'll try to look at the legislation and see if it makes sense. Just because one person reaches out, it doesn't mean it's a good change in the legislation.

In this case, it's a very good change and aligns us very closely – almost perfectly – with other jurisdictions across the country.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes, thank you. We would appreciate a list of that information with respect to who else was consulted.

While the definitions are now being updated, have there previously been situations where the outdated terms or definitions have caused hardship for individuals?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: Can you repeat that again? Sorry, I did miss that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: So while the definitions are now being updated, have there been situations previously where the outdated terms or definitions have caused hardship for individuals?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: Thank you very much.

Like anything in justice, you can't be specific about individual cases. I'm sure across the country there has been cases that this would have been called in question. We want to make sure we close the gap with respect to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I can't speak specifically about any cases that would have dictated that but what I can say is that I know, across the country, other things have helped shape legislation and that could be in this case as well that we're trying to close that loop on cohabitating

partners, which is really important to improve the access to justice, as we talked about earlier, and just improves the overall usefulness of the piece of legislation that we have here.

We want to make sure that every piece of legislation we have is useful. This makes this piece of legislation much more useful from the perspective of the individual that would be living in some of those 10 per cent of couples that are in that situation.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

While I wasn't actually asking for specific cases or instances, I was requesting information perhaps about general situations that you may be aware of hardships, circumstances that these outdated definitions may have caused. Just in a general sense. So are you able to provide any information or shed any light on that at all?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm not aware of any specific situations that's caused hardship in this particular piece of legislation. Although, I will go back and look into that and if there is, I will discuss that with you after this. It's a very good question, but to my knowledge, there hasn't been.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

When will this bill be enacted?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: After we get the opportunity to finish the debate here, we'll move as expeditiously as we possibly can to get it adopted. I'll get the actual date as soon as I can for you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: The final question is one for clarification purposes, Minister. When we look at the definition of deceased spouse and specifically subsection (iii), it says: "... had gone through a form of marriage with the deceased, in good faith, that is void"

Could we get some elaboration or perhaps an example of what this could be, just for the purposes of clarification, so we understand it fully?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: Mr. Chair, I'll come back with an example, if I have one, in a couple of minutes. If you could just give me a few minutes.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

That ends my questions.

Thank you.

CHAIR: No further questions?

Anyone else speaking to the bill?

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Given, I guess, that most of my questions were asked by the Member for Harbour Main, I do have one question. Given that

we're making the changes to cohabiting partners in this bill, are there any other bills that you're aware of that the department is going to have to make similar changes to bring it into line, given a lot of the changes of the province? Are there any other bills that we're going to have to make changes similar to this now coming up, given that this bill also had this gap in it, for lack of a better word?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This will align us with the *Family Law Act*. It's the reverse way of what you just asked. The definition of partner in the *Family Law Act*, this will align with that. There are no other resulting amendments that would have to be made, other than this would align with the *Family Law Act*.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: That is my final question.

Thank you.

CHAIR: No further questions?

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 12 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 12 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 12 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 Family Relief Act. (Bill 91)

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The title is carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 91 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Gander.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I move, seconded by the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, that the Committee rise and report Bill 91 passed without amendment.

CHAIR: It is moved and seconded that the Committee rise and report Bill 91 carried without amendment.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Thank you.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

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

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Speaker.

The Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and completed their job and asked me to report Bill 91 carried without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and report Bill 91 passed without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

J. HAGGIE: Now.

Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

As this House is aware, to practice nursing in the province, individuals must be registered and licensed with the College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador or the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador, depending on their qualifications.

J. HAGGIE: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

The College of Registered Nurses is mandated by the *Registered Nurses Act, 2008*, to regulate nurses and nurse practitioners in the public interest and while the College of Licensed Practical Nurses is mandated by the *Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2005*, to regulate licensed practical nurses in the public interest, this bill does not affect them.

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 16, An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act, 2008, Bill 84.

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

This amendment is to provide the College of Registered Nurses with the authority to regulate a new nursing discipline to this province, that of a registered psychiatric nurse. Significant work and stakeholder engagement has been ongoing to understand what it is that registered psychiatric nurses can do, fit them into our system here, make room for them, and also provide for a smooth integration into the field of mental health and addictions. That is their role: Registered psychiatric nurses are specially educated and trained to provide mental health and addictions care.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Lake Melville, that Bill 84, An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act, 2008, be now read a second time.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 84, An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act, 2008, be now read a second time.

It's important at this point to pause. I'll probably be accused of being a little but dry but here we go. There is a difference between psychiatric registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses. The former are registered nurses who practice in the field of psychiatry. The latter are nurses who are distinct within nursing profession. These registered psychiatric nurses have a different education, they have different entry-level competences and a different scope of practice from registered nurses who work in a psychiatric nurse position.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act, 2008." (Bill 84)

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you, Speaker.

I am pleased today to introduce this bill, An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act. This bill is a result of close collaboration between the Department of Health and Community Services and the College of

Again, it's a new discipline to this province. Registered psychiatric nurses focus on mental and developmental health, mental illness and addictions, whilst integrating physical health and use a biopsychosocial model with spiritual input for a kind of holistic approach.

Once regulated, they would work side by side with other regulated health care professionals and mental health service providers in the province. They would work in a variety of settings, including psychiatric facilities such as the new adult mental health and addictions facility, in hospitals, crisis services, community mental health programs, primary care, correctional facilities and long-term care facilities. They will add to the workforce and assist registered nurses to perform other roles in the health care system.

Without these amendments, we can't use these skills. It's as simple as that. There is no place to put them otherwise.

Just for further clarity, it's important to distinguish between Bill 84, this one, which is amending the *Registered Nurses Act, 2008*, and Bill 87, which is An Act Respecting Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses and Nurse Practitioners, which is yet to be debated. This is solely concerned with bringing and introducing registered psychiatric nurses into the province. The other act is actually to consolidate the College of Registered Nurses and the College of Licensed Practical Nurses into one regulatory body.

We've done it this way round – it's an operational thing – for a smooth and organized consolidation. This act needs to come first. We need to bring the new discipline in, get them on board, then the work of amalgamating the two colleges – if this House concurs – can proceed. Without this piece of legislation, there is a skill gap, one could argue, when we compare ourselves with other jurisdictions.

This is a resource that we could use that we cannot, at the moment. In addition, as always with amendments to acts, we'll update some definitions and some terminology. Things change rapidly, particularly in health care, so we're going to provide a new definition in the act of the practice of nursing and the practice of psychiatric nursing and, again, the bill is old enough that it requires a redo for gender-neutral language. Also, the college said there was no longer a need to reference honorary members of the college, so we've removed this authority.

In summary, this bill is to facilitate the registration and licensure of new discipline, registered psychiatric nurses. It thus increases the potential labour pool and the number of health professionals in the province and frees up generalist trained registered nurses to work in other areas, should they choose to.

Together, I'm sure that this will improve health care services in the province, not just mental health and addictions. I would love the House to support this bill and ask them to do that when the time comes to vote.

With that, Speaker, I'll take my seat and watch the debate.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I don't have a whole lot to add to this, Speaker. We're in the second week now and a lot of this legislation is, I would think, pretty routine. It's not contentious. I don't think we're going to hold up the House and debate to allow the creation of psychiatric nurses in the province. Any addition or any new grouping that's going to improve the health care delivery in the province, we're not going to get in the way of.

The psychiatric nurses, hopefully, offers some help or supports in our delivery of mental health in the province because we can build all the new hospitals, you can bring in all these so-called specialties and you can have your *Towards Recovery*, you can have your All-Party Committee that we're going through now that a couple of my colleagues are sitting on, the results were seen in this province for mental health and addictions, we need psychiatric nurses, obviously, but we need a lot more than psychiatric nurses. We need a lot of attention. The situation is not getting any better. If anything, it's getting worse.

I can go on about that issue for a while, but you're going to call me out for relevance. So I'm going to be polite and not go too long on it. I'm going to wrap up there now. I'm not going to belabour the point on this legislation. It's a pretty straightforward piece of legislation that we have nothing further to say. We have a few questions for Committee, at which time when Committee comes we'll ask those.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

I won't hold it up either. I do have questions for Committee, but by the looks of this, we're the only one in Atlantic Canada or Eastern Canada that will have this designation. It doesn't look like Ontario or Quebec or any of our Atlantic cousins do this separately as well. So by the looks of this, we're going to be the first ones to do it, which is interesting.

But as the Member from CBS said there, I'm not going to hold up the House. This is something that is needed. It's not a new field but it does need to be regulated properly.

Other than that, I'll say I'll take my seat and wait for questions.

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I think we'll certainly be supporting this bill. I have to say, it must be two, maybe 2½ years ago, I had at least two parents call me and both had daughters who had completed psychiatric nursing. I think Winnipeg is the closest place on this side of Canada that does it. So they both had done psychiatric nursing in Winnipeg, and both wanted to come home and practise. There was absolutely nothing in legislation that would allow them to do so.

So to see this finally come through is a good thing. As the minister said, it would free up nurses to do their daily jobs and allow registered psychiatric nurses to provide input and help out with those who need it. As we know, we've talked about it in this House many times around mental health, and talked about the need for it, talked about how it's so prevalent in the younger generation and in high schools and how individuals cannot get long-term continuity of care when it comes to mental health and addictions.

We have a shortage of nurses, period, but the more we can do to ensure that there are nurses that are specialized in this area, the more we're going to be able to help residents out there who are in need of this. If you know of anyone – and we all have mental health. It's just how many of us are dealing with mental illness, and that comes in a broad range. It could be from simple anxiety to schizophrenia to whatever.

But having these resources here and having them in our province and registered and certified and ready to go, can only be a good thing and we should be doing more of this. The only unfortunate thing here is that

we tend to be slow to act. This is not a new issue; this is something that's been here.

So I'm really glad to see that we're moving forward with this legislation. As was said by someone who suffered mental health and addictions – and I quote – they said: Mental health and addictions issues do not do well on wait-lists. When you think about that, someone who's suffering from a crisis in mental health or addictions, you can't put them on a wait-list. You have to have trained individuals and professionals here that can help jump in and deal with that right away.

This is a good thing. I'm very happy that we'll be supporting it and hopefully we can be a little bit more expeditious with future legislation.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, will be supporting Bill 84. I'm not going to belabour it. There's not a whole lot there in the bill. I think the main crux of it there is the psychiatric nurse.

As others have said, there's no doubt about it, we have a lot of people in this province who are suffering from mental health and addictions. I hear from them all the time. I'm sure I'm not alone. I'm sure other Members are also hearing from, whether they be constituents or not, people reaching out, people in very desperate situations when it comes to mental health and addictions.

I will acknowledge, as I have in the past, when government does good things. There's no doubt that there has been progress made over the last number of years as it relates to mental health and addictions. A lot of it came through the All-

Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions and the government have adopted a lot of the recommendations over the years that have been brought forward. Of course, they have a new Committee, again, now that are looking at these issues and I'm sure making recommendations. I hope that we're going to continue to see progress on that front.

Like the Member for Topsail - Paradise, I also had – I'm not sure if it was the same people; it may not have been, but I've had one or two for sure, who've reached out to me. I had one lady reach out and she actually was a psychiatric nurse. She had worked in Western Canada. I can't remember, to be honest with you, if it was Manitoba or if it was in the Alberta, Calgary area, but it was somewhere out in Western Canada anyway where she told me that was like a normal discipline to have psychiatric nurses. I had never heard of a psychiatric nurse until that point, per se. I was thinking it was like an RN with a specialty, as the minister talked about, as opposed to a psychiatric nurse as a designation onto itself.

She educated me a little bit about in some of the provinces out West that that is a discipline they have. That they have a lot of people in that discipline. They're utilized a lot in health care when it comes to mental health and addictions. So it certainly seemed to me to be a good idea.

The problem, of course, was the legislation which we're dealing with now did not allow her to practise. So here we are crying out for health care professionals, having all kinds of issues in this province with mental health and addictions and here we have a person who's trained from an educational point of view, had tons of experience, wanted to work in our health care system but was unable to do so because of the legislation did not recognize that as a discipline.

I know I did forward and speak to the former minister of Health, the former Member for Waterford Valley; that minister of Health – he's busy milking cows these days. When he was the minister of Health, I have got to say, he was really approachable and I do remember bringing that to his attention and he said he was going to look into it. Obviously, he or somebody did, which is a good thing, and that brings us to today and the fact that we're going to make this change.

So I think it's a very positive change. I hope it's not going to take too long to implement so that if we have people like the lady who reached out to me, people like who reached out to the Member for Topsail - Paradise, hopefully, if those people exist in the province, or there are Newfoundlanders who want to come home, that we can get them back and fill positions that definitely need to be filled.

I do, sort of, wonder as an aside, and I guess maybe it'd be best asked in Committee of the Whole, but I'm kind of wondering, now that we're going to be recognizing this as a discipline, are there any thoughts about actually having a program here in Newfoundland and Labrador where somebody could be educated in that discipline in Newfoundland so that we can have our own homegrown psychiatric nurses.

I don't think we have them now. So if we're going to allow it, if it's going to be a new thing, if we're going to utilize people in that discipline, then it would only make sense to me that we would be looking at our educational institutions and looking at actually making it an option for our students where they could go to become a psychiatric nurse and do the training right here in Newfoundland. Of course, we know the more people we recruit from this province, with ties to this province, with family in this province, the much more likelihood that they're going to actually stay and live and work here.

I just throw that out as an aside. The minister can comment if he like, or he doesn't have to. It is up to him. I would think that if we're going to have this discipline, then we should be looking at providing that training so that we can have more of them, homegrown here in Newfoundland.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Seeing no other speakers, if the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs speaks now, we'll close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

It's great to see what looks like a consensus across the floor of this august body. The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands raises a very interesting point. I think we've got to walk before we can run. You would need a core of established registered psychiatric nurses in the province before you could look to recruiting a faculty or training group from within their ranks.

What I will say is when the hub-and-spoke system based around the new adult mental health facility comes online, you are going to have a magnet facility there. Nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists and physicians with an interest in mental health and addictions are going to be attracted to a place like that because that's kind of the nature of the thing. It's a spectacular place and I think that would provide the nexus, the focal point, to start such a program.

Certainly, it's not something we could do in very short order, but, I think quite frankly, it would be daft of us not to be thinking of that for some time down the line. So that's a long-winded way of saying yes to the

Member opposite's questions but with a caveat it would take some time to do that.

How long depends on how rapidly people want to come back to the province to work. We're going to have to recruit from those areas, as the Member for Topsail - Paradise said, we don't train our own, at the moment. So we're going to have to kind of poach or repatriate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who, of course, I'm sure in the fullness of time would be eligible for those kind of bonuses that we give for nurses and nurse practitioners to come home again.

So with that, I'd be happy to sit down and look forward to Committee.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that Bill 84 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 Registered Nurses Act, 2008. (Bill 84)

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

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

L. DEMPSTER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act, 2008," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 84)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 8, I do now move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that this House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 89, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No.5.

Speaker, I further move that this House do resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 84, An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act, 2008, and that is seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

Just doing two the one time, Speaker.

SPEAKER: The motion is I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 89 and Bill 84.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Trimper): Order, please!

We are, first of all, going to consider Bill 89, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act, No. 5.

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act, No. 5." (Bill 89)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

L. PADDOCK: As we discussed on Thursday, the last day of the House, this amendment is really financial housekeeping. So that got me thinking as I was driving back in here: How often is the *Revenue Administration Act* revised or looked at to be revised? Is it only on a required basis or is there a program for review of the *Revenue Administration Act*?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

S. COADY: Thank you very much for the question.

This is, as the Member opposite rightly termed it, to ensure that there would be an unintended tax consequence on the Canadian Dental Care Plan.

You're going to see the *Revenue Administration Act* come before this House on multiple occasions, as things arise, as changes are required, as there are differing tax interpretations or different changes in the environment. The *Revenue Administration Act* is constantly under review and, to be honest, I can see even in this session alone, it may be coming forward again because there are always tax changes taking place.

So to answer the Member's question, as tax changes take place, as experiences in the implementation of a tax, as you gain knowledge in that implementation stage, we make changes and come back.

I would say I've probably been in this House multiple, multiple times on the *Revenue Administration Act* and I fully expect to be here again.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

L. PADDOCK: As I indicated, this is mere financial housekeeping, which we support, but I was curious: Do we foresee any other impact from the federal dental program on any other bills?

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

S. COADY: I can tell you there was an impact on the *Revenue Administration Act*. I can't tell you if there will be an impact on other legislation in other departments. To be quite frank with you, I can't tell you that because I'm not in those departments.

I can say that we will look to the federal government as they implement the Canadian Dental Care Plan. I think I mentioned on Thursday, about 52,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have had access to that plan or approved applicants to that plan. It's a significant number of people so we may have some changes, for example, as to what the impacts to Newfoundland and Labrador Treasury might be, but those we don't see and they're not realized at this point in time.

As you will know in this House of Assembly, any availability of funds could be easily used in health care.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

L. PADDOCK: Finally, when will this bill come into effect?

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

S. COADY: Thank you.

It's upon proclamation, but it's also, I think, backdated to the beginning of the plan.

CHAIR: Further questions?

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Are there any other private businesses that provide social services that are currently affected by this situation, or is it only this company with regard to the Canadian Dental program? Is there anything else that would possibly come up or that is possibly in a similar situation that has not been looked at?

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

S. COADY: I'm sorry, I'm not quite understanding the gist of your question. Did you say: Are there other instances in the *Revenue Administration Act*?

Well, there are and, as I said, we're constantly reviewing the *Revenue Administration Act* as things come up in either legislation in our nation's capital or when we review our tax administration, there are things that arise, so that's why it's constantly under review.

I can also say, as part of this discussion, the federal government oftentimes does come to the department, as they did in this instance, to say this is going to be an impact – they said it to all finance departments across this country. They didn't want any unintended consequences so they alert us when things are happening.

I can tell you the *Revenue Administration Act*, we are constantly reviewing it. There are things that I am telling you right today that will be coming before this House again, but nothing imminent. I didn't make a motion today, for example, but there are things that will be arising.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

Given this is a one-off change for one particular program, was there any consideration given to making a broader change to allow for other federal government programs that could possibly come into effect later and to make sure that they would just roll into it instead of doing one-offs every time?

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

S. COADY: Thank you.

First of all, we didn't do an omnibus bill. Normally, you will see four, five or six things. We wanted to address this one because it does impact the Canadian Dental Care Plan. I know that you're passionate about that; I think all of us in this House are passionate about that program.

We don't want to have unintended consequences the other way either and create a tax loophole. So we do an as required or as-needed basis and we do that review at that time. No others have been requested at this time.

CHAIR: Seeing no further speakers, 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: Clause 2.

CHAIR: Shall clause 2 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 carried.

CLERK: 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 the Revenue Administration Act, No. 5. (Bill 89)

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The title is carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 89 carried without amendment?

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

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: I will now proceed with Bill 84, An Act To Amend the Registered Nurses Act, 2008..

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act, 2008." (Bill 84)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just have a few questions.

What education is currently available in the province for students of psychiatric nursing?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you.

The nurses who engage in mental health nursing at the moment are, as I said earlier on, registered nurses who have additional training in psychiatry. The formalized program is non-existent; it's experiential.

These are nurses who would go to a psychiatric unit in the same way that a nurse out of nursing school would go to a surgical unit or a medical unit and then gather extra experience. There is a core curriculum in the BN syllabus which covers mental health and mental health and addictions, but beyond that, the rest simply experiential. This is why something like this has some merit.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

B. PETTEN: Minister, how many psychiatric nurses are currently employed in this province?

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

J. HAGGIE: I don't know how many registered nurses who practise psychiatry are employed in the province at the moment. I can get that number.

There are no registered psychiatric nurses because they're not licensed as such. If there are registered psychiatric nurses practising in the province, it will be because they are also cross-licensed, or cross-trained rather, as Bachelor of Nursing.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

B. PETTEN: Is there an estimate for how many are going to be needed?

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

J. HAGGIE: Again, it's one of those things where you bring in a new role. They will, to a certain extent, find their niche.

I could see significant numbers, for example, working in certain community sectors, crisis response and the new adult mental health facility, but at the moment, those posts are either non-existent – haven't been created – or alternatively, are filled by other health care providers.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

B. PETTEN: What other provinces have given their nursing college or regulator the ability to regulate psychiatric nurses?

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

J. HAGGIE: I knew you would ask that question and I have a list here.

With your permission, it is British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, PEI and Yukon.

CHAIR: Are there any further speakers to Bill 84?

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Chair.

When drafting this legislation, did the government consult with unions and other health care provider groups?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you.

Sorry, I'm keen to answer. My apologies, Chair.

Yes, this was a joint discussion with the college and the input of the RNU was sought.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Did the department do a judicial scan across the province to find the best practices?

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

J. HAGGIE: Yes.

CHAIR: We have a yes.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: What jurisdictions did they consult with?

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

J. HAGGIE: We are in the process at the moment, working through with the college, a process to develop regulation. Quite frankly, it's a bit premature to invest a huge amount of work until we actually know we're going to be able to do it.

NLHS, the college and the department have all been engaged and, obviously, the development of regulations and scope of practice is a nursing practice professional development piece, and we would be guided by the college and best practices that they bring in from elsewhere.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Minister.

I notice when amending the act, there was no considerations given to increasing the fines under section 17. They haven't been updated since 2008.

Why was there no consideration for increasing the fines as a deterrent, given, due to inflation, it seemed pretty low for this kind of work – so I was just wondering if there was any consideration given or is that something that's being worked on later?

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

J. HAGGIE: I think there is a focus of this bill which is about getting registered psychiatric nurses into the province. There is a different piece which would – if approved by the House – amalgamate the College of Licensed Practical Nurses with the College of Registered Nurses, and it would be at that stage you would want to look at fines.

Again, the punishment has got to fit the crime, and if it's financial, then it has to take into account the fact that different skill levels

and different subsets within nursing would have different earning capabilities.

You're right; they haven't been updated in a while. This would be an opportunity to either do that in the act, or alternatively, to allow the college to set a degree of punishment, for want of a better word.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: I thank the minister for his foreshadowing – interesting.

Under section 29, are there any cases where the practice of a nurse may be carried out by someone under another provincial statute? There's a subsection under section 29 in there.

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

J. HAGGIE: I will consult section 29.

So is that 29 in the old act? Right, here we go, it's 29 in the amendment. Okay.

Conflicting legislation: "Nothing in this Act affects or applies to the practice of nursing or the practice of psychiatric nursing permitted to be carried out by a person under another statute of the province."

It's trying to address overlapping scopes. So counselling, for example, is a role of a registered psychiatric nurse and a nurse, but it is also overlaps with LPNs, with physicians, with social workers and pharmacists or medical administration. So we're trying not to tread on those toes and that's kind of what that is there for.

CHAIR: Seeing no further speakers, 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 46 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 46 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 46 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 Registered Nurses Act, 2008. (Bill 84)

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report Bill 84 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On 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 84, An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act, 2008, without amendment, and I further move that the Committee rise and report Bill 89, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act, without amendment.

CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded that the Committee rise and report Bills 84 and 89, both carried without amendment.

We require a seconder, Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: There's an eager one beside you.

L. DEMPSTER: For Bill 84, the seconder is the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, and for Bill 89 the official seconder is the Minister of Finance.

CHAIR: Thank you very much.

To go back, it has been moved and seconded that the Committee rise and report Bills 84 and 89, both carried without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Thank you.

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

SPEAKER (Bennett): The hon. the Member for Lake Melville and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

P. TRIMPER: Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have been busy.

We are pleased to report that Bills 84 and 89 have both been carried without amendment.

SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and directed him to report that Bills 84 and 89 carried without amendment.

When shall the reports be received?

L. DEMPSTER: Now.

SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bills be read a third time?

L. DEMPSTER: Tomorrow.

SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, reports received and adopted. Bills 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 Member for Labrador West, that this House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

This House do stand adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 10 a.m.