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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 visitors.

Before we begin this afternoon, I'd like to welcome members from the St. Teresa's Chorus. They are visiting this afternoon for a Member's statement.

Welcome.

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

### Statements by Members

**SPEAKER:** Today we'll hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Lake Melville, Mount Pearl - Southlands, Mount Pearl North, Placentia West - Bellevue and St. John's Centre.

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

**P. TRIMPER:** Speaker, with the spring sitting of the Legislature winding down, so too is my own political career. I have treasured every day in this special place. It is an honour to serve the people of Lake Melville and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

While I could stand here for a long time thanking those whom I've worked with, there are some that I need to acknowledge in particular: the House of Assembly staff, from present to past Speakers, Clerks and other capable staff; the civil service at all levels who care about this province and are working hard to make a difference; the late Larry Weatherbie, who accompanied me on the historic trip to Gallipoli, Türkiye; three premiers and all the MHAs over the last 10 years, who have done their best to represent their constituents; Dianne Randell, Cyril Parsons and Jim Locke, in particular, and others in the Government Members' Office; and Bonnie Learning, my super awesome constituency assistant, who

has done much more than just run the office.

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

**P. TRIMPER:** I know this will sink in when the fall session begins and I become one of those many viewers instead of a legislator.

A final thank you goes to my wife, Caroline Hong, who was an amazing partner on this adventure, that I miss very much.

Adieu.

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

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

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

I recently had the honour to join Premier Furey to present one of the greatest community volunteers I've ever known, Mr. Gerald Coombs, with a King Charles III Coronation Medal.

Gerald's volunteerism has impacted people far beyond our borders. Through various outreach programs, he has aided people as far away as Haiti, Uganda, Syria and Ukraine.

For 53 years, Gerald has been a member of the Mount Pearl Lions Club serving as treasurer, secretary and president. In that time, he has been involved with numerous initiatives such as the Mount Pearl Youth Opportunity Fund Foundation, the Lions Club Santa Claus Parade, the Frosty Festival and the Used Eyeglass Collection Program, just to name a few. In the last 10 years, he has collected 40,000 pairs of glasses, providing the gift of sight to those in need.

Gerald has received the VOCM Cares Volunteer of the Year Award, the Mount Pearl Citizen of the Year Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award. He is also a

recipient of the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award, the highest honour to be bestowed on any Lion, and is this year's Mount Pearl Lion of the Year.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in thanking Gerald for his commitment to community and passion for helping others.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**L. STOYLES:** Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to attend this year's Focus on Youth Awards for the City of Mount Pearl. What amazing talent we have in our community.

This year's award winners are: Youth of the Year, Emma Neville and Falon McLoughlan; Sports Team of the Year, the Mount Pearl-Paradise Skating Club; Athlete of the Year, Jordan Flynn and Falon McLoughlan; STEM Award, Ian Cole; Youth Visual Arts Award, Varvara Korotnytska; Literacy Arts Award, Rachel Spurrell; Performing Arts Recognition Award – group – the cast and crew of the play *Cinderella*; Performing Arts Award – individual – Alex Taylor; Youth Group of the Year, the Mount Pearl Senior High Student Council; Youth In-Service Award, Alex Taylor; and Youth Volunteer of the Year Award, Alex Taylor.

Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in saying congratulations to all who have been selected.

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

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

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

Speaker, today I rise in this hon. House to recognize a riding club dedicated to

fundraising in our beautiful District of Placentia West - Bellevue.

The Islanders Riding Club are a group with a passion for motorcycles and assisting people in need. Their dozen members support many charities through rides and events across our province. They've had great successes with their own events including the TIRC Toy Drive, where they've sponsored local families and donated over \$8,000 in toys to the Arnold's Cove Salvation Army for those in need at Christmastime; supported a young man and his family get outfitted for the school season; and a Christmas fundraiser for The Gathering Place in which they were able to purchase and donate \$10,000 worth of clothing and essentials.

This summer, they will be having their second annual Dayle Penney Memorial Ride. This event is in Dayle's memory and the proceeds will support his young family and mental health awareness. They will also be hosting the Clarendville Bike Night in which the proceeds will assist other local charities.

Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me showing appreciation to this club's great fundraising accomplishments and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

Speaker, Edgar Winter said, "Music is very spiritual, it has the power to bring people together." That's what St. Teresa's Chorus, directed by Noreen Greene Fraize, is doing.

St. Teresa's Chorus, composed primarily of seniors, has been invited by the Parish of St. Joseph and St. Benildus in Waterford

City, Ireland, to sing with their choir. This is particularly poignant since St. John's is twinned with Waterford City and many Newfoundland and Labradorians have roots in this area. The two choirs will collaborate on repertoire and interpretation and, in return, the St. Joseph and St. Benildus choir will visit Newfoundland and Labrador to experience our beautiful province and our shared musical heritage.

Since receiving the Waterford City invitation, St. Teresa's Chorus has been invited to perform and present at parishes in Limerick and Dublin. The choir will also present From the Rock to the Emerald Isle, a program of Newfoundland and Irish songs and stories, to local schools and the general public from Cork to Galway.

Speaker, in a world where many forces divide us, these choirs will strengthen the ties between our province and Ireland through their love of their traditional music and song.

Please join me in wishing them every success.

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

**SPEAKER:** Statements by Ministers.

### **Statements by Ministers**

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

**J. KORAB:** Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to highlight the Newfoundland and Labrador Disability Benefit, which will help work toward a basic income for persons with disabilities.

Our government is committed to an inclusive and accessible province. Through the implementation of the Newfoundland and Labrador Disability Benefit, we are strengthening financial supports for persons with disabilities living with low income. The

benefit includes up to \$400 per month and \$1,200 annually contributed to a person's Registered Disability Savings Plan to those who qualify. Combined, this benefit provides significant improvements to the financial security for persons with disabilities on low income.

To help people better understand how they can avail of this benefit, the Department of Families and Affordability recently offered five virtual information sessions which were very well attended and well received. To broaden that reach, we are planning a series of in-person information sessions to ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receive first-hand information. Offered in collaboration with government and community organizations, these sessions provide one-on-one navigation support to help people access these benefits.

Speaker, we have and we will continue to take action and make investments that will contribute to building a province that is inclusive, accessible and equitable.

Thank you.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Today, we acknowledge the introduction of the Newfoundland and Labrador Disability Benefit, which was announced almost one year ago, as a positive step towards improving financial support for individuals with disabilities; however, we must recognize the significant barriers that individuals face in accessing these benefits.

Many disability advocates, including those from local organizations, have expressed concern about the application process being tied to the federal Disability Tax Credit,

leaving some eligible individuals without access to the vital \$400 monthly benefit. Furthermore, the requirement for medical documentation can create additional barriers for those already facing challenges.

It is essential to ensure that the process is inclusive and accessible for all individuals with disabilities, who represent over 30 per cent of our province's population. It is crucial that the government follow through on providing additional support for our disability community and eliminate the systemic issues they face.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of this statement.

Once again, we have the kernel of a great program, only for this government to fumble the implementation. The application process is cumbersome and the rules for qualifying are too restrictive, so many are left out of the programs.

We, therefore, urge the government to revisit how it provides the benefit so it reaches more of the people it is actually meant to help.

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, I've been written recently by a group of parents of children with autism who outline the failure of the Liberal government to early diagnosis and treatment. These parents tell me their children are waiting an excess of 2½ years to be diagnosed, which means they get no intervention at the critical early developmental period.

Speaker, why is this acceptable?

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

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

An important issue that – we do recognize that there are some challenges in getting children assessed, but I would remind everybody that an assessment or a diagnosis does not determine the early intervention that is required.

We do have policies in place that once a challenge is identified that there can be measures implemented. This can happen through our early childhood windows, in some of our early childhood centres or it can happen in our school system. If a teacher or support person identifies that a child has a particular need, then supports can be put in place immediately.

So no one is waiting for a specific diagnosis to offer supports to our children.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, these parents, unfortunately, are not getting that support. They're not feeling that support. They're

talking about 2½ years. They're not making this up. They're living it and it's too late to wait until school starts.

Speaker, the Canadian Paediatric Society recommends a three-to-six-month diagnostic window.

Again, I ask: Why is 2½ years acceptable to the minister?

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

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

The Member opposite and I agree that a 2½-year wait for a diagnosis is certainly not an acceptable time frame. That's why we're making every effort to improve the capacity to test and to have these resources available, as well as a central intake.

So, in the coming days, there is a plan that is under way here between the Department of Education, Department of Health and the Department of Families that we're working on and we've talked about it before. It's our Child and Youth Community Health Services Model.

It is a wraparound support model that we will be introducing that will provide access points for children along the continuum of their growth and development, and children will be able to enter in some of their earlier stages or if, in the event that they had been further along their developmental journey, they can enter the system at that point.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Ten years, Speaker, this Liberal government has been in power. Ten years we've been talking about doing things and here we are in the tenth year still talking about what they plan on doing. Meanwhile, these children have been waiting for more

than 2½ years in order to get the services they need.

Speaker, the parents say speech-language therapy and occupational therapy have an 18-to-24 month wait time. Speaker, without therapy, children with autism cannot communicate and build those social connections.

I ask the minister: How is this inclusion?

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

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

As I said in my previous answer, we do recognize that there are challenges in getting access for some of these specialized services. So that's a very important piece of our recruitment and retention plan.

I know we often talk a lot about our nurses and our doctors but there are also other allied health professionals who are very, very integral to the implementation of the plan of supports for children.

So, as part of recruitment and retention, we're focusing on those areas as well. As I said, when we look at a model that addresses the whole spectrum of children from their early years right into their teenage years, these are services that we are implementing through a child health model where you won't have to rely on a doctor's visit or a specific visit to a clinic in order to provide those services but they'll be available in wraparound supports throughout different access points in the community.

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

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

**T. WAKEHAM:** Speaker, again I say, 10 years of Liberal government and now they

finally recognize that there is an issue. After 10 years they recognize the issue.

Speaker, according to these parents who are living this every day, the Child Care Inclusion Program and the Autism Action Plan are not meeting the needs of children with autism. Five years after the plan was launched – five years – we are not meeting national standards and there is no public accountability and performance monitoring.

Many of the plans of the Autism Action Plan have not been implemented, are we waiting for another human rights complaint? When will we actually meet national standards?

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

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

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

I recognize the Member opposite has brought up an issue of inclusion and supports. In my previous role, I had the opportunity to hear those stories first-hand and, certainly, had many conversations with the support staff who provide those services to children day in and day out. We recognize that there has to be an infusion in the system of increased supports, which is why this budget does just that. In our classroom settings, we have an additional 400 resources now that will be allocated to provide additional support.

We also recognize that there are broader challenges. We're looking at how we can address those. We know that the composition of our classrooms presents challenges in appropriate resources for our children so we've committed to looking at our classroom composition, as well as our inclusion policies, to make sure that we have the right fit here in our province.

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

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

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

Speaker, while hundreds of millions of dollars have been paid out to private agency travel nurses – the Liberal government has stopped tracking the actual amount – an ATIPP post asking for the amount spent in March 2025 says – quote – the amount has not been calculated at this time due to other priorities within the relevant department.

Speaker, why is the minister giving agency nurses another blank cheque?

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

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

I would like to correct the Member opposite that we have not stopped tracking. We might not have had the number at the moment that he was looking for, but we are certainly monitoring the use of agency nurses here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We do know that the reliance on agency nurses has decreased. We've been able to fill a lot of our vacancies. I believe the number is less than 300 vacancies now here in Newfoundland and Labrador, down from about 700 a number of months ago, but we do recognize that we still need to use travel nurses in some of those settings.

So to that end, we've standardized our contracts and made sure that the amounts that are being paid out are more reasonable and appropriate to ensure that the services are available in places where otherwise we would have to reduce the services and close hospitals, waiting rooms or clinics.

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The minister's time is expired.

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

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

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

Minister, it's pretty simple. If you're tracking those numbers, why weren't they available in March? That's a pretty simple question.

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

**B. PETTEN:** I never asked the question, someone else did, but it's a fair point. They asked and they were told they're not going to provide it. So if you're tracking it, that should be easily accessible.

Speaker, if you don't know how bad the problem is, how are you ever going to fix it? Agency nurses have gotten \$300 an hour, free taxis, coffee and air fryers under this government, which is being investigated right now by the Auditor General.

Why has government eliminated any monitoring or accountability for private or profit agency nurses?

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

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

As I said, we do acknowledge that there were some challenges with the agency nursing and the contracts that were being awarded but we've since standardized that process. We now have a more firmed up plan in place. The payments and reimbursements are more appropriate and we do recognize that there is a decrease in the use of travel nurses.

As to why or why not the number might not have been available, I don't have the answer for that. I can certainly get it for the Member opposite and give the most up-to-date numbers on what our reliance on travel nurses looks like and the amount that has been expended but, in terms of accountability, there are regular meetings of

health transformation tables who are responsible for different aspects of the health care system, and travel nursing is one of them. They report routinely on the numbers and the funding that has been allocated for that particular part of the system.

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

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

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

I'd like to remind everyone that all of this started with travel agency nurses in the province with a call to the Premier's office. Now we have tens of millions a month being paid out, yet the minister has no idea of the exact figure and doesn't even measure it anymore, even though I'm to be told they're going to try to find it. That's what was told to this ATIPP, which that, to me, is where the department is to right now. They're not tracking it.

Speaker, when did the minister cancel her government's commitment to eliminate travel nurses?

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

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

For the record, travel nursing didn't start with a call to the Premier's office. It started when the Leader of the Official Opposition was the CEO of Labrador-Grenfell Health. If we'd like to go down that road then I can certainly open up a storybook that would tell the tales of what operations in Labrador-Grenfell Health looked like under the leadership of the member Opposite, but I don't have time for that today.

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

**K. HOWELL:** What I would like to address is the fact that we are decreasing our

reliance on travel nurses. We have made a public commitment that we are going to continue recruitment and retention efforts so that we can, where possible, eliminate the use of travel nurses.

I, for one, will not be responsible for closing a clinic because we don't have appropriate resources if a travel nurse is available. We still have to provide services to the people of this province but we will do so in a manner that is accountable and that is responsible.

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

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

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

Speaker, my office is receiving calls from families trying to access 911 services in rural parts of our province. Callers to 911 are repeatedly asked to give a postal code which has led responders to wrong addresses because multiple small communities share the same postal code.

Speaker, why is integrated ambulance services failing rural Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

**J. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

Speaker, 911 is an older system and is currently in the process of being rebooted with the next generation. The issue of the geolocation and civic addresses has been an active one for some years and 911 and my department are quite happy to work through Municipal Affairs to deal with the issue of locations of premises and properties in a way that gets around the need for postal codes.

As soon as that's done, we will put it up live.

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

**L. PARROTT:** Speaker, the minister might be happy to work through it but the people waiting for ambulances aren't happy; I can guarantee you that.

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

**L. PARROTT:** Speaker, in my district, emergency responders were dispatched to an address in Deep Bight; they went to the same address in Hillview. Unfortunately, 911 repeatedly asked for the postal code which led them to the wrong house.

Will the minister order a review of the use of postal codes at Central dispatch?

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

**J. HAGGIE:** To carry on with my previous answer, the short answer is we accept postal codes and civic addresses do not work in Newfoundland and Labrador. The department of emergency services is working with 911 to get a solution to that. As soon as that is available, we will put it in place.

Our prime aim is to get the resources to the people as fast as we can. We need the help of all parties involved, including municipalities.

Thank you.

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

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

**L. PARROTT:** Speaker, this system is failing. Another policy implemented with no foresight whatsoever. A stroke victim in my area waited over an extra half an hour of what it should have taken the ambulance to get there because of this type of mistake.

Let me give the minister another example. This time an accident occurred on the Trans-Canada Highway in Terra Nova National Park. Once again, the dispatcher continually demanded that a postal code was provided on a Trans-Canada Highway in the middle of nowhere.

Speaker, precious seconds are being lost because land marks and specific directions are not good enough. Will the minister order a review?

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

**J. HAGGIE:** The answer to this question is the same as the previous one, Speaker.

The facts are we acknowledge that postal codes and civic addresses do not work in rural Newfoundland and Labrador the same way they would in, say, Gander or St. John's or Grand Falls. We are in the process of finding a solution to that problem and we expect we will have a system at the end of it which is better.

Thank you.

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

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

**L. PARROTT:** If he wants to talk about facts, the facts are this is not working. A few years ago, when JRCC closed, this government lobbied to get it reopened because people would have local knowledge of where they had to go. This plan is failing.

Will the minister order a review?

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

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

**J. HAGGIE:** The answer, again – he keeps on asking the same question; I'm going to keep on giving him the same answer – JRCC, just for his reference and he should know it, is actually a federal responsibility. The issue of postal codes and civic addresses does not work in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We have identified that and we are working on a solution.

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

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Speaker, time is of the essence when somebody is in an accident; that's for sure.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Speaker, residents across the Eastern region have been turned away from the waste recovery facilities because they don't have an access card, and some have been waiting months to receive one.

Why does the Minister of Environment support a system that serves as a barrier for people from cleaning up their properties and communities?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**S. REID:** I'll take the Member's question under advisement and get back to the House.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Seriously, Speaker, we got different ministers in here over the last few years. It's time for somebody to get down to business at this point.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Speaker, with growing confusion among residents, especially seniors, and long delays in processing, how can the minister stand behind the card-based system that restricts access to waste sites?

Will the minister direct the Eastern Regional Service Board to scrap the card-based system?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**S. REID:** As I said, I'll take the question under advisement and report back to the House.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Speaker, as I can tell, this is garbage answers, because that's terrible what's going on here.

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

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Speaker, this access card system relies on printers, scanners, emails and uploading documents but many seniors and rural residents simply don't have access to the technology.

At the time when Newfoundland and Labrador are already ranked worst in the country for red tape – yes, I'll say red tape – why is the Liberal government supporting a system that adds even more barriers to those in rural communities?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Government Modernization and Service Delivery.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

What the Member described sounds like an important issue. As I'm responsible for Government Modernization, I look forward to speaking with the Member opposite to

see how we can improve that for the people of the province.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Following the seizure of a shocking amount of fentanyl, advocates are looking for more strategies to prevent overdose-related deaths.

Since this seizure, in September, has the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, together with the Minister of Health, developed a strategy to prevent overdose-related deaths?

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

**J. HAGGIE:** The issue of overdose, and in actual fact, poisoning because a lot of these people are not aware they're taking fentanyl, is one that has been very prominent in my role right through government from 2015 onwards.

Very rapidly, we introduced measures to mitigate the number of overdoses that were fatal, starting with naloxone kits. That has been a very successful program, and I'm sure my colleague in Health would be able to deliver more accurate statistics than I.

We have also emphasized the role of treatment and we now have more people on opioid withdrawal and opioid dependence treatment than we have had in our history. The numbers continue to rise because of the success of our outreach efforts.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Speaker, there is no aggressive strategy in place, but there is a crisis here which threatens the safety and well-being of everyone.

Speaker, we know that an increase in drug use correlates to an increase in drug-related crime, a serious issue, especially in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

So I ask the minister: Why did the Liberal government ignore the recommendations of the National Police Federation for 25 more RCMP officers for rural communities?

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

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

**J. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

We have not ignored anybody on the front lines of law enforcement in this province. We have another 19 police officers coming into the system over the course of the next year. We have a task force developed between the RNC and the RCMP, which has had great success.

Indeed, the Member's initial question was based on the results of that task force's work with record hauls of contraband and illicit drugs.

The system is working. It is under stress, but we are continuing to resource it and we'll continue to do so.

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

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Speaker, drugs are destroying our communities. The drug crisis in our province is spiralling out of control. The RNC says that the charges laid by the drug enforcement unit has also risen

seven-fold in two years to 181 charges. That was back in 2023.

What is the Minister of Justice going to do to prevent drugs from entering this province?

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

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

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

Those increase in numbers are a sign of success. The task force that the Member referenced with her initial question is a sign of the success of these measures.

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

**J. HAGGIE:** We are one piece of a massive national – and, I would argue, continental – issue with fentanyl. It is not going to be solved by any one agency, be it Justice and Public Safety. You can't police your way out of this, you can't rely solely on education to deal with the risk of addiction, and you can't rely solely on prevention.

We have to all work together and each of those elements of harm reduction will ultimately result in success. And we're seeing that with those change in numbers.

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

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

**J. MCKENNA:** Speaker, several letters have been sent to the Premier and minister about the ferry service to Fogo Island and Change Islands. With tourism season underway there are concerns visitors will cancel plans as service is unreliable. Placing the *MV Veteran* and the *Astron W* on the run would add capacity issues.

Will the minister commit to returning the *MV Veteran* once the *Kamutik W* goes back to Labrador?

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

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

I understand; I have had some outreach from the mayor. I haven't had an opportunity to get to him yet, the Mayor of Fogo, and will do that, and the Ferry Users Committee. I will certainly be open to a meeting as I've done before in the past because these are important issues. I understand the transportation of fish products from the island is very important at this point in time, but the final decisions haven't been made yet. They will be coming within the next week or so.

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

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

**J. MCKENNA:** Well, it's not only fish products, but that's important. Tourism is a big one as well. We're in the height of our fishery, as well, and that's going to place more stress on the capacity.

Speaker, the *Kamutik W* is days away from returning to Labrador and residents still don't know the summer ferry plan. Last night it left Farewell with two vehicles left behind due to high traffic. Two decks were at full capacity. The *Astron W* holds just 18 cars.

Will the minister bring the *MV Veteran* back to the Fogo Island - Change Islands run this summer?

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

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

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

I understand those challenges. Those challenges have been there for years upon years upon years. It's the reality of ferries

and those communities, no doubt about it, but, again, in terms of that decision, it will be coming soon.

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

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

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

Speaker, residents of Kenmount Terrace are hearing rumours that their long-promised school will be delayed again. The school has been re-announced several times with a committed opening date of September 2026.

I ask the minister: Will the school open as promised for September 2026?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Government Modernization and Service Delivery.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

I promise no one wants this school to open more than I do. It is what I do every day, all day, Speaker.

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** You voted for the budget.

**S. STOODLEY:** And, yes, I voted for the budget, which puts a significant amount of money forward for the new school in Kenmount Terrace so we have an announcement imminent. I know the public servants within government have been busy. It's very, very, very, very imminent.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

Speaker, no fewer than three ministers attended a meeting last June in Kenmount Terrace –

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

**P. DINN:** – and all three committed to this school opening in September 2026. In fact, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure said it will be a pre-designed package which can be turned around quickly.

When will the Liberals come clean with the residents on the progress of Kenmount Terrace school and the date of full completion?

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

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

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

I know my colleague has advocated this for a long time and it's an important project, no doubt about it, but let me be clear for people that are listening. The Member opposite gets up and talks about how important this is, he didn't even vote for the budget, he didn't even vote for support of that school.

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

**E. LOVELESS:** So that's the essence of it but I can guarantee you that ground will be moving very soon for that new school in Paradise.

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

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

**P. DINN:** I'm glad the Member is listening because I've stood in this house and mentioned many times why that budget wasn't going to pass – many times.

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

**P. DINN:** Speaker, there are ongoing issues at the current Larkhall Academy, which was supposed to close years ago. Many, many promises were made on upgrades; much like the budget, many promises. Parents have reported furnace problems and a persistent oil smell. In fact, the school is closed today.

Has the government conducted any air quality testing to ensure the safety of students and staff?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Government Modernization and Service Delivery.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an important question. I've been working with the parents at Larkhall Academy for just over a year now. We have a big, long list of improvements and fixes. I believe, Speaker, most of them were resolved.

We did a tour with the Minister of Education before the school opened. I'm not aware of an issue today but will certainly take that away. Obviously, school infrastructure and student safety is, like, the most important thing, obviously, Speaker, and our solution to that is a new school in Kenmount Terrace, which ground is going to move imminently.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

**P. DINN:** Hi Speaker, I have to tell you this now. We had this meeting a year ago and there were many, many promises made about changes and upgrades to these schools, Larkhall and Leary's Brook. Last month, they were still complaining about those not being done.

Speaker, a new high school for Paradise announced in March 2024 still lacks a clear time frame for the plan. Can the minister tell this House exactly when that school will open?

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

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

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

I do thank the hon. Member for the question; it's an important one.

Anytime we talk about building infrastructure, which we've built many pieces of infrastructure for not only schools in this province, but hospitals – significant infrastructure – when we make a commitment, it will be delivered on. I know there's a significant amount of infrastructure in the queue that's being built, both in the health care setting as well as schools. We're going to continue that because we see the need in that area, just like Kenmount Terrace.

I can't wait to say the words that my hon. colleague says all the time, stay tuned.

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

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

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

On May 16, *allNewfoundlandLabrador* reported that an unidentified buyer, through a slew of new Ontario holding companies, is spending almost \$33 million to purchase already existing apartment buildings, some of them seniors' apartments. Speaker, this government continually speaks about the need for private investors in housing, yet none of these purchases will increase housing capacity, keep rents affordable, the

tenants housed or ensure that money stays in the province.

I ask the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation to explain how this type of secretive property ownership of existing apartment buildings will help resolve the housing shortage?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

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

I'm not quite sure where the Member is coming from in terms of his question. The private market is quite well in terms of a company or individual able and willing to purchase a property. So we have no role in that process.

What we do have a role in is to make sure that seniors and other low-income families have a place to call home, that we provide either the home itself, provide support to contractors to build homes for seniors or to provide rental assistance. That's what we are doing.

What government is responsible for, we're doing quite effectively and we will continue to expand. What the private sector is doing, it's the role of the private sector.

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

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

**J. DINN:** I think the minister actually needs to talk to people who are renting at some of these REITs and financialized landlords.

Speaker, the fact is that the MO of large financial landlords like REITs and holding companies is to buy up existing apartment buildings cheaply and jack up rents year over year to maximize profits for their

investors. It is not about keeping rents affordable.

They know their tenants have nowhere else to go so I ask the Minister: What steps will he take to ensure that rents and apartments owned by large, financialized landlords remain affordable?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

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

I know the Member has a particular challenge against REITs, which are an instrument to allow multiple housing units to be built across this country. Teachers' pension plans actually invest in REITs, so that's how the private market works in that instance.

What I'm focused on, both as minister responsible for Housing, and Seniors, is to make sure the seniors, low-income families, low-income seniors have a place to call home and that we are investing in housing, which we did and announced just in Pouch Cove. We had the Member for Cape St. Francis join me the other day.

So we will continue to invest. At the same time, we are seeing expansion in home construction across this province for both low-income families and for seniors, and we will continue to support that.

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

The hon. minister's time has expired.

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

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

**J. DINN:** Speaker, REITs and large financial landlords are failing people looking for affordable rent.

Speaker, many seniors on pensions and people on fixed incomes are afraid they will be unable to pay the increasing rents and will be rendered homeless. The people we've spoke to are facing monthly rent increases anywhere from \$50 to \$160 and have had increases in rent every year for the past five years or longer.

I ask the minister: Will he bring in rent and vacancy control on REITs and other large financial landlords to ease the anxiety of renters, or will he simply stand by and let the predatory gouging continue?

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Government Modernization and Service Delivery.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

So the landlord-tenant and the residential tenancies area of government falls within my mandate, Speaker. I have looked extensively at rent controls as a policy objective and whether that works. When we look across the country, the provinces that have rent stabilization measures actually see much higher rental increases than what we have in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We look at the data very closely. I can talk about this all day. I've chatted with the Member and I'm happy to chat further but, in Canada, we've seen that that does not work in terms of keeping rates stable.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** The time for Oral Questions has expired.

**L. PARROTT:** Speaker, point of order.

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Terra Nova, on a point of order.

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

Speaker, during Question Period, the Member for Topsail - Paradise asked a question and the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune stood on his feet and referenced a vote.

Now, Standing Order 49 clearly says, last sentence: "No Member may reflect upon any vote of the House except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded."

So I kindly ask the Member to apologize and rescind that remark.

**SPEAKER:** I'm going to take the Member's point of order under advisement and report back.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

### **Notices of Motion**

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

**H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER:** Moved by the Member for Harbour Main, seconded by the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, I move the following private Member's resolution:

WHEREAS persons who have disabilities far too often face barriers in the community; and

WHEREAS persons who have disabilities have a right to equal access to services and community spaces, including health care, employment, transportation, housing, and education, and a stand-alone statutory office of the advocate for persons with disabilities would play a vital role in ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador are properly respected; and

WHEREAS according to Statistics Canada, over 30 per cent of the residents of this province live with a disability; and

WHEREAS people, both those who have a disability and those who do not, have consistently been calling for a disability advocate for many years; and

WHEREAS the 2021 mandate letter for the then minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development reads: "Please continue to work to establish an Advocate for Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador"; and

WHEREAS the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities, Newfoundland and Labrador, have said that they are very much opposed to adding the role and responsibilities of an advocate for persons with disabilities to the role of the Seniors' Advocate; and

WHEREAS the Seniors' Advocate has publicly stated that her statutory office does not have the resources to take on the role and responsibilities of an advocate for persons with disabilities and represent the disabilities community well;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House calls on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately create a dedicated advocate for persons with disabilities, who, as a stand-alone statutory Officer of this hon. House, will investigate and make recommendations based on the principle of: nothing about us without us.

Thank you.

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

**SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

**B. PETTEN:** That resolution that my colleague from Harbour Main just read in will be the private Member's resolution we'll

debate tomorrow as part of Private Members' Day.

Thank you.

**SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Any further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

WHEREAS there have not been any improvements in Wi-Fi and cell service through the District of Placentia West - Bellevue for over 10 years.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to formulate a plan to improve Wi-Fi and cell service issues throughout the District of Placentia West - Bellevue affecting fire and emergency services, tourism, business, medical services and personal use that does not meet today's standards and expectations.

Speaker, this petition is signed by people in English Harbour East and, actually, somebody from CBS as well. The thing is, while I bring this forward on behalf of the people of Placentia West - Bellevue, I think that what we need to do is really focus on the five towers that I mentioned in my petition, and that's fire and emergency services. There are so many dead areas that sometimes we don't even know if anybody is responding or anything like that,

but also, if somebody goes off the road in one of these dead areas, their chances of getting those fire and emergency services are very unlikely. Therefore, that alone should give us the impetus to make sure that there are no dead areas anywhere.

You have tourism. We have some of the most beautiful implements, yet there's no way to connect with people, like let's say, if you're on the Chance Cove trail. Then we have business and industry. We have a lot of industry in my district. Nobody wants to come here from outside the province doing business and not be able to be on their phones or computer on their way to – granted, they have a driver. Once they get into some of these smaller communities, they want to be able to connect with their company and be able to report back in real-time. That's really a barrier for us doing business the same as the rest of the world.

Medical services is a real stickler for me because we talk about all the virtual care and all that kind of stuff, but if people don't have Wi-Fi and cell service, it's not a service that we can say that we can even roster them on or we can even provide to them. It's just not available because of the Wi-Fi and cell service.

Then, of course, personal use, I always tell the story about a lady in Brookside. She has to go in a certain part of her window in the front room of her house so she can download a picture of her grandkids. I think we're well beyond that. This is 2025. What we need to do is really go to the service providers and make sure that we understand there's a robust plan by them to make investment so that it's not just about the urban areas, it's about the rural areas too.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

Speaker, the residents of Stoneville over the last two years have seen a continued increase in crime and vandalism in their community. Residents now live in fear with heightened anxiety that they will be next.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to increase police presence in the community and reinstate closed RCMP detachments in the region to ensure less crime and safer communities.

Speaker, I talked about this in the House before. I met with the community of Stoneville, the Local Service District there, and they have sent numerous letters to the minister and the Premier on this issue and are not getting anywhere with it to this point. Crime is increasing almost on a daily basis down there. There's a young man there that's causing this crime. They asked that he be removed from the community and put into an institution where he can get the right medical attention.

They take him, arrest him and bring him to the judge, slap on the wrist and back again; that's not working. This young man needs medical attention to take care of this problem. We also have this crime taking place in surrounding communities as well and I have met with the town of Carmanville, where the detachment was closed – I met with the RCMP and the town council of Carmanville – and we need that detachment in full force again in order to take care of these situations.

We had another situation over the weekend, I just found out about it today, of another person in another community not too far away who deliberately burned down a house and two sheds – deliberately. That person is in custody right now but probably will be out on the street again tomorrow.

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:

Route 10 on the Southern Avalon forms a large section of the Irish Loop. This is a significant piece of infrastructure and is the main highway along the Irish Loop. This highway plays a major role in the residential and commercial growth of our region.

Therefore, we petition the House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that immediate brush cutting is required on Route 10 of the Southern Shore Highway, as large sections of brush along this highway are a significant safety hazard for the high volume of travelling motorists who travel this highway daily. This work is essential in the prevention of moose-vehicle accidents along the roadway.

Speaker, I've done this many times over the last four or five years for sure on brush cutting. I asked the minister today and I wrote the office a couple of times, the Minister of TI, about when the brush cutting is coming back. They were up there earlier the year, then they left. They were supposed to come back two weeks ago; they haven't been there. They were supposed to come back last week; they haven't been there. Hopefully they're there today. I'll have to drive up to find out.

I haven't gotten notified when they're coming. but I did have somebody say to me: Is there any word on brush cutting? I had to hit the brakes 100 feet, 6 a.m. this morning, where an excavator stopped brush cutting. It needs to be done. If I had to hit a moose there, I would have to wait for another car to

pass by for help because there's no cell phone coverage in the area. So there are two issues dealing with this.

Mainly, the first part was brush cutting. I've repeatedly asked – last year it was supposed to happen in October, didn't happen – the former minister. They were supposed to come in December; they didn't come in December, they didn't come in January and now they got up there, they brought up a small excavator and done a little bit of work, which was good, but right where they stopped – this is moose season they're out on the roads. Right out through the guardrails the brush cutting needs to be done. There are alders right out on the road and this needs to be done.

It's a safety time of the year. This time of the year, it's safety. People are driving. I've seen many moose driving back the last few days, back and forth, and I'm not even up in that area of the country where there's brush cutting that needs to be done. There are certain areas where I'm driving that needs to be done, but that area is right on the road. If you want to go up there on a wet night and drive down when it's foggy and try to see where the moose are coming out on the roads, it's near impossible.

I know people have to slow down but I ask the minister: When are they coming back into the district to finish the brush cutting?

Thank you.

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

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

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The road to Tickle Cove, Open Hall and Red Cliff within the District of Bonavista is in very poor condition and has destructive potholes. Residents are perplexed why

these destructive potholes would not be addressed in a timely manner and the road not being maintained and repaired to an acceptable standard.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to address the deplorable road conditions on this route to Tickle Cove where vehicles are damaged and schoolchildren are badly shaken in their trips to and from school. With ingenuity and an improved master plan, we feel there ought to be no destructive potholes remaining on our roads and maintenance performed to repair this deplorable road in a timely manner.

This is a 7.8-kilometre stretch from Route 235 down to Tickle Cove on the side of Bonavista Bay. It's one of the most scenic and beautiful areas in the province. The original host of *Land and Sea*, Dave Quinton, he spent all his summers in Red Cliff – fishery strong, tourist strong and resident strong. The residents in the district fully realize that the major thoroughfares ought to get the priority, Routes 230, 235 and 233, but we've got a serious lack of attention to the trunk lines. Many of these trunk lines are tourist attractions.

What is consistent in these areas, all these trunk lines, is that there's only a small portion that is really ultra-deplorable. A small portion, like the road to Tickle Cove. It's 7.8 kilometres, 2½ to three kilometres are brutal; the rest can be managed. The road to Bonaventure, Route 239, 17 kilometres and 1½ to three kilometres are brutal. The rest of it is perfect. Route 232 to the plane crash site in Burgoyne's Cove, two kilometres of the 17 are most brutal, or the one kilometre in Spillars Cove to the UNESCO site. There are eight kilometres to Sweet Bay, but there are 1½ kilometres that is the most brutal.

What we'd like to see is a different approach. Let's have a plan to tackle those

really deplorable sections on these very important trunk lines in our district.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

**Orders of the Day**

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

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

I'll ask the Minister of Transportation and the Member for Ferryland, please.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order!

Member for Ferryland, order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 7, second reading of Bill 99, An Act to Amend The United Church of Canada Act, seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

**SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

**J. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

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

**SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**J. HAGGIE:** Thank you for the protection from the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, I appreciate it.

Speaker, 99 years ago there was a bill passed in the Legislature of the Colony of Newfoundland to incorporate the United Church of Canada.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** The Dominion?

**J. HAGGIE:** It says the colony.

This was part of a move at the time, and a fashion, I think, in legislation, whereby religious foundations would use a private bill of the House in their jurisdiction to establish themselves on a legislative footing. It's kind of like, but not quite like, the orders of incorporation, but this is a bill that pertains only and solely to what is now the United Church of Canada. The United bit was it was the Methodist congregations of the various churches within the colony of the day.

It is interesting to read all on its own because the language is absolutely fascinating to someone who has looked at the evolution of the English language. It really is quite an amazing piece of literature.

The reason it has to come to an amendment, however, is that over time, these institutions change and want to adapt and evolve. There comes a point where they come up against a legislative footing, and the only way to change that is – they don't have access to bylaws in the sense that some of the organizations that we deal with here would, and the act is very prescriptive in the way the organization is established, its governance, its ability to hold property and its ability to buy and sell property.

Previous amendments to the act, the last of which I think was in 1982, there was one in 1961 and one in 1982, they were to allow the United Church, as it had become, to deal with some property transactions and some changes of title. Because of the fact these were legislated in a bill, then passed, these actually had to come back to the House to be reworked.

It was not unusual for religious institutions to do this. In actual fact, this particular amendment here has been introduced successively in jurisdictions across Canada, and it's kind of our turn now. This is done solely at the request of what were the Methodist congregations, what are now the United Church of Canada, and the idea is that they wish to change their governance structure.

The bill that was passed in 1926 originally had 25 sections and two Schedules in the last section. The first Schedule is a fascinating insight into the theology of the day and it's essentially a creed for the United Church. It's a theological document. I shudder to think what would happen from an optics point of view as well as a reality point of view, should they ever decide that they wish to change some of that in the light of more modern ecumenical and theological thinking. Because we, in this House, or whoever sits here at the time would, actually, then be involved in theological discussion which I think would be quite unusual, if not unique, in the history of this Legislature.

The second Schedule, however, makes reference to governance and the whole effect of this act is to lock the church into old-style language and the church, basically, wants to change it. The need for it is solely one from within the Methodist congregations as they were the United Church as they now are.

Similarly, in actual fact, the Anglican Church in Canada is established on a private bill. In actual fact, the trend, I think, was set in what you might call the Mother Country back in the day when the Church of England it then was, was actually legally created as the established church of the State. It is a State religion. It's one of the few countries that actually does have a State religion and the Queen, as was, and the King, as is, is the titular head of the church as well as the State.

The result of some interesting history for those of you who may want to read about it involving gunpowder on the Houses of Parliament and various public executions over the course of centuries; not a process I would recommend for changing governance structures and, hence, we're here today to discuss this. If passed, it contains provisions specific only to the United Church. So one of the questions that I am usually asked in Committee is around who was consulted. The answer is their lawyers and our lawyers were the sole arbiters of what this is because it affects nobody else at all. It is the duty and responsibility of the UCC, should they wish to change anything, to actually make that request.

The language changes that are in there – and I've stood in this House on several occasions with older bills and we have worked through changes in language that reflect more modern legislative process. Their lawyers were very keen that we tinker only with what we changed because, again, it is their bill and it is their act.

The principal changes here are around language because the term "presbyteries," which is what is used in the original bill and the original act is now going to be replaced with the term "regional council." It doesn't actually alter, however, the powers and entitlements that are otherwise legislated in the bill and it is down to simply a change in language, a change in title. It will allow them to do exactly what the presbyteries do at the moment, but they wish to have them renamed.

We have looked at the legislation that the UCC has had in other jurisdictions, and everyone actually has a unanimous almost consensus on the point of the language.

One of the suggestions is this bill was so short was that given the fact it took a microfilm, a microfiche reader and some fancy optics to actually print out this, was one of the ways of digitizing it, might be actually to read the whole thing into the

record. I think, as I only have 59 minutes and 59 seconds to do that, even my speed reading would be taxed to get that done in the time available. Much as I enjoy standing and speaking, like all of us do here, we kind of like to do that, otherwise we wouldn't be here, I'm really running out of energy to try and get this to last much longer.

At the risk of being bumped again by the Government House Leader, I'm going to take my seat after beseeching the Members of this House to actually vote in favour of this amendment.

**SPEAKER:** Before I move to the next speaker, I just want to confirm who the mover and seconder to this Bill 99 was?

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

**SPEAKER:** Government House Leader and seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

We'll move on to other speakers.

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

**L. PADDOCK:** Speaker, I first want to highlight how I was selected for this. I grew up three houses down from the United Church in Robert's Arm and, as a young lad, I helped build the manse. I'm not sure if manse is recorded in the act anywhere but the manse is the local habitat for the Reverend.

This is part of our history, as was highlighted, and I know in my own family, it's a significant part that goes back 200 years, and the minister highlighted it was just the Methodist Church. The Methodist was indeed the largest congregation that came together to form the United Church, but it was also a collection of other congregations and churches at that time as well. That included the Congregationalist and the Presbyterian; actually, in some

provinces, we still see the Presbyterian faith very active churches.

*The United Church Act of Canada* is a specific type of act, referred to as a local personal and private act. As the minister highlighted, this is about, really, what the United Church wants to do with their own governance. These private acts are designed to apply to a specific individual group or corporation or to enshrine specific powers of governance to a person or organization, as compared to the public act. In this case here, that organization is the United Church of Canada and their entity in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As was highlighted, yes, 99 years. Next year, the church will celebrate its 100 years in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**L. PADDOCK:** I believe that is a significant milestone for the United Church community in our province. In fact, we have a number of actual churches that were erected by the Methodists and then turned over to the United Church that are beyond that 100 year celebration.

Like was noted, it was amended in 1982 to enshrine the structure and governance of the United Church of Canada in our province. The Newfoundland arm of the United Church of Canada has requested these changes, and this is all part of that separation of Church and State to bring their legislation up-to-date with their governance structure and terminology.

The minister highlighted with regard to how some changes were tried in the past in England. I would encourage him, on November 5, to come and visit some of the communities in rural Newfoundland where that attempted change with the Gunpower Plot is still celebrated quite clearly in a number of communities across the province. That is referred to for many rural

Newfoundland communities as Bonfire Night.

These substitutions to change the language will also encompass certain sub-organizations of the United Church in Canada. I will note, with these changes, it kind of struck me, because in the last few weeks with the election of the new Pope – really a celebration of ecumenical history – some of the changes that are being leveraged with this new act are a regression from some of the older, ecclesiastic terminology that was being used, like Presbytery and replacing that with Region Council.

Our Christian heritage here in this province, that's how we were built. I say to a number of the students when I see them out in my district: Your forefathers and mothers first built tilts, then they built churches and then, in some cases, those churches then also served as schools, and afterwards they built schools. I think that's a reflection as to what we see written above the Speaker's Chair, Quaerite prime Regnum Dei.

Given that the church has specifically requested these changes to the act and this act is specifically for the United Church here in the province, we recommend and we will be voting in favour of these amendments.

Thank you so much.

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

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Government Modernization and Service Delivery.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you, Speaker.

I know the Minister of Justice and Public Safety gave us a fulsome overview of the legislation. It's like a nuance, I guess, that we're bringing this in the House today. We don't usually do this type of thing.

I just wanted to spend a few minutes and talk generally about the United Church of Canada. Interesting, I was looking it up in advance of speaking today, and the amendments proposed by the United Church of Canada to this act were actually voted on in their 2015 General Council which was in Corner Brook in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's full circle, and I know that other provinces are enacting similar legislation as well. I notice the United Church of Canada is the largest Protestant Christian Denomination in Canada and it's the second largest Canadian Christian Denomination after the Catholic Church of Canada.

I, Speaker, I would say, am a full member of the United Church of Canada. I was baptized and confirmed at the Memorial United Church in Grand Falls-Windsor. I also attend St. James United Church on Elizabeth Avenue sometimes.

I want to take the opportunity, I know that members of our religious congregations in Newfoundland and Labrador do a lot for our community, a lot of public service. I know, for example, one of the reasons why I'm content and happy to be a member of the United Church of Canada, they officially support same-sex marriages. I know St. James United on Elizabeth Avenue have a space for Quadrangle, the organization in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I think that's an incredible outreach activity that they perform as well, Speaker.

I know that the religious organizations and institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador, do a lot for newcomers. In my former role in Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, I learned a lot about the role that they play for newcomers. They took a significant role with the Ukrainian population when they came here, as well as just newcomers in general. I had the privilege of attending a multiculturalism day at Bethesda Pentecostal Church in St. John's, and I would say it's the most fun I've had in a long time. Everyone was dancing and it was

great welcoming environment for Christian populations living in St. John's. It was a great time, Speaker.

I also, as an MHA, had the privilege of awarding two 75th Confederation medals to two members of the congregation at St. James United, primarily based on their efforts for newcomers in assisting them, going above and beyond to help them integrate in our community, helping to secure and coordinate things that they needed. I know that other congregations of all kinds of churches around Newfoundland and Labrador help newcomers. I just want to thank them for what they do.

In conclusion, I support the legislation and thank the Minister of Justice and Public Safety for bringing it forward.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

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

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

As some of the other Members who've spoken so far to this bill, Bill 99, there's some personal attachment. I think since I can remember, and long before I can remember, I have been attending the United Church of Canada. It has been a part of my life since that time and continues today. It's very much a part of the community I live in, in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and a very important part of that community.

It's interesting, in 1993 I was married in the Gower Street United Church by Reverend Marion Pardy, who has become a very important friend. My wife and I were married there, with great support at that time and thereafter. So there's a lot of personal attachment and appreciation for that support. It's interesting that Marion became the 37th moderator of the United Church of Canada. An amazing accomplishment,

someone right from this province who's done very well on the national stage and represented her church and this province very, very well. One that we should be very proud of.

It's also interesting that in just a few days in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, we're going to join in the 100th anniversary of the creation of this church. As some other Members have spoken and as the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi indicated, the minister, it was at that time, when we were a Dominion, when we first recognized this church. Here we are 100 years later, and this weekend the Very Reverend Marion Pardy will be in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. I'll be very pleased to join her in a potluck on Saturday night and, on Sunday, I've been asked to help participate in that service, which I do on occasion just to get a little practice and also to support the church and the community. So all very interesting.

Marion also just recently received some special recognition. She received the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her leadership in interfaith and community service, so somebody who's very prominent on the United Church of Canada scene in this province and continues to be an advocate.

I've also met with her in previous lives, I think some of my colleagues as well. She's been a very determined person looking at various ways to support people with a living wage – various strategies. We are often hearing from her and various issues, and she deserves a tremendous amount of appreciation for her advocacy.

I just wanted to add a few words about what this bill is all about. The minister introduced some interesting elements to the aspect of a theological debate in this legislature. I would add the word humour, Sir. I think it would also be quite interesting to see us debate that; in addition to the other adjectives that you used to describe how such a debate might ensue.

I did want to say the structure is important. The church has evolved. I think, as the Member for –

**S. STOODLEY:** Mount Scio.

**P. TRIMPER:** Mount Scio. I should know that. I like to take that route through there when I go back and forth.

As the Member for Mount Scio indicated, this is a church that recognizes and is very much a promoter of equal rights, inclusivity, welcoming of new Canadians, and one that I've been very much a part of as a volunteer and very much applaud. The structure that's in this act, we are perhaps one of the last jurisdictions to actually implement it across the country.

That was first passed at a Regional Council meeting in 2019. This will help streamline governance. It will reduce volunteer needs. It'll simplify the decision-making. It will address a big problem plaguing a lot of churches in our country, and that's financial constraints.

The United Church of Canada will now comprise 16 regional councils, replacing some 88 presbyteries and 13 conferences. It's going to make that organization's life much more easy to deal with. I'm one that, along with my colleagues, is very proud to be on my feet and a close association throughout my life with this church. I'm very proud to support here today.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

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

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

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

I hadn't intended to get up and speak on this. It's a pretty straightforward piece of legislation to amend, *The United Church of Canada Act*. In listening to some of my

colleagues speak about the United Church, I am not a member but, I can guarantee you, they welcome me as if I was one.

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

**P. DINN:** I frequent Topsail United Church, the little church on a hill in Topsail. I can't say anything but good words on them. What a fantastic, fantastic community group. They have a men's club; they have a women's club. It was only last week I was at a flipper dinner out there. I can guarantee you, for \$25, you won't get that feed anywhere else. They were fantastic.

They have pancake breakfasts. They have flea markets. They have afternoon tea. I just can't say enough about the Topsail United group and, in listening to some of my colleagues talking about this piece of legislation, how it would make it a little easier in terms of volunteering and in terms of other activities. If this is going to make them better up in Topsail United, I don't know where they're going because they are top notch now. What they do for the community, what they do for everyone around, I just don't have the words for it.

I just want to take this opportunity to say, we're supporting this legislation and just wish the Topsail United Church all the best in the future. I'll be there for the next feed.

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

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

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

I'm just going to take a couple of minutes to speak to the bill. I'm going to say I was a little surprised to be honest, Speaker, because I never realized there would be actual legislation that would, I guess, tie into the governance of any churches. I mean, obviously they are stand-alone entities, but I didn't realize the provincial government would have any kind of legislation

associated to it. I'm not sure if the United Church is unique or if there is similar legislation for other religions as well? Is there a Salvation Army act or a Roman Catholic act or a Pentecostal Church act or an Anglican Church act? I don't know; there's, obviously, a United Church Act which I didn't even know existed.

Anyway, apparently, it's just to make some changes in the legislation to coincide with changes with the church itself, the modernization of the church and some of the structure of the church and how it operates and so on to reflect what the church is actually doing themselves. With that said, there would be no reason, I would say, why we would not support that. They know, obviously, what's best for them and what's going to work for them. If there are going to be changes in structure and terminology and so on that the parishioners all agree to and it does require a change to this piece of legislation, then I will certainly support it.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, along the same vein as a couple of my colleagues, we do have a United Church in Mount Pearl as well, the First United Church. We have numerous churches, actually, in Mount Pearl. We have Our Lady, Queen of Families, which is a Catholic Church, and Park Avenue Pentecostal Church. We have a First United Church. We have two Anglican churches, the Parish of the Ascension and Church of the Good Shepherd. Our Catholic Church is Our Lady, Queen of Families. It used to be St. Peter's Parish and Mary Queen of the World; of course, Mary Queen of the World got sold as part of that lawsuit associated to clergy abuse and so on.

So we now have Our Lady, Queen of Families. The old Mary Queen of the World Church is now a Baptist Church, Calvary Baptist Church. It's a real neat little partnership there because Calvary Church bought the church but, when it was Mary Queen of the World, they had a food bank,

the St. Vincent de Paul, and Calvary Baptist Church allowed St. Vincent de Paul to continue to operate out of the basement of that church even though it's different church, different religion and so on.

We also have a Solid Rock Wesleyan Church. We have Baptists. We have Seven Day Adventist. We've pretty much got every Christian religion represented in terms of churches in Mount Pearl, First United being part of it, and the great thing is that they really work together and there's actually an association in Mount Pearl of all the churches.

They will get together and do different community initiatives. During the Mount Pearl Frosty Festival, they have an ecumenical church service, and they do take turns every year having it in various churches and then the various ministers or priests or pastors, whatever you want to call them depending on the religion of course, they will all take different parts, different roles in that service.

They also work together with the Community Supper program we have in Mount Pearl, and that's providing 250 meals for people in our community that are in need. While the kitchen that they actually use is at the Church of the Good Shepherd on Richard Nolan Drive, the First United Church and all the other churches take turns in sponsoring the supper each time and actually work in the kitchen along with Scott Hillyer with Coffee Matters. They make the meals and different people deliver them for people who are unable to pick it up. As I say, the First United Church is part of that.

Now I would say that the First United Church, no different than all the other churches of course, have been challenged over the years because numbers are down. A lot of cases, you go to church, of course, we all know its either grey hair or no hair that tends to be the trend, not as many young people anymore. It does make it

challenging for all the churches to keep going, to raise money and so on, but they all manage.

First United, like my colleague said about the Topsail United, same thing. They're always having suppers and afternoon tea and they have concerts in the church, different groups come in, Ennis Sisters or different entertainers. They have concerts and so on to raise money and they do a lot of good work in the community, helping the poor and the needy and, as I say, working together.

Certainly, I've had a longstanding relationship with the First United Church, and all the churches for that matter. Interestingly, I'm Salvation Army by birth I guess, but married in the Catholic Church. I like to consider myself ecumenical because there's not a church in Mount Pearl that I'm not in on a regular basis for one reason or another and First United being one of those.

I'll support this piece of legislation. It's my understanding that this is the only piece of legislation we're going to be debating today. I think tomorrow there's going to be one more, but I would say I am a little disappointed as I look at the Order Paper. We have bills here for second reading ranging from Order 3 to Order 14, covering a lot of different departments and so on. It is disappointing that we're going to be shutting down on Thursday and we're not going to be debating all this legislation and it's going to die on the Order Paper.

I'm not really sure why that is the case, but I would be remiss if I didn't raise that as a point of all the legislation that will die on the Order Paper. With that said, that's not my decision to make. I will support this particular bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Seniors and Minister Responsible for the

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

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

I just want to, likewise, add a few comments to the debate here this afternoon on the bill. Obviously, the comments made about the United Church and its presence.

In the District of St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, we have the iconic Gower Street United Church as a building, as a facility and as a congregation. For those who know downtown St. John's, it's the orange or red brick building right in the centre of Queen's Road and Gower Street. It's been there in many forms over more than 100 years. It was a Methodist church before that in the late 1800s. It suffered fires and those kinds of things and has been rebuilt.

One of the things I just wanted to read here, literally for the record, is the self-description of the Gower Street United Church and its congregation. They say, "The people of Gower Street United Church are committed to doing right by Jesus' teachings: loving, serving, giving generously in our local, regional, and global communities. We envision a vibrant and evolving community where tradition is honoured, change is embraced, and injustice is challenged. We are dedicated to being welcoming and affirming, engaging participation of all, including people of any age, colour, race, ethnicity, faith, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, marital status, family composition, and social or economic circumstances."

Then it goes on to talk about its core values. For my engagement with the Gower Street United Church and the congregation and really all members of the United Church, whether it's provincially or nationally, I think espouse those elements and I think it speaks to their congregation that they live that faith.

One example of that, and the Member for Lake Melville spoke very highly and glowingly about Marion Pardy, she is a friend and colleague I've gotten to know over the past number of years. As a deacon in the church at one point, then the moderator of the United Church of Canada which is a very exalted position in the United Church, she has demonstrated those attributes in, certainly, her professional life as a minister and then as an individual working on social policy issues here both nationally and provincially.

I attended the celebration when she was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal and the attributes accorded to her at that time were, again, quite glowing and were consistent with what I just read out in terms of what the congregation of Gower Street United Church espouse. She said in her receiving the award that – one of her awards I should say – she is humbly proud to be a recipient because of my multi-faith and leadership advocacy. She's received many awards, both provincially and nationally, for her work as a member of the United Church and being a proud leader of her faith and of her congregation.

The bill, as the Minister of Justice and Public Safety read out, is an administrative piece of work, but it bodes well for the church that is now celebrating its 100th anniversary. The Gower Street United Church on the evening of May 27 is holding a public celebration, and people are certainly invited to attend that event as well.

Speaker, with that, I'll just indicate I will also be supporting the bill.

Thank you.

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

**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.

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

It's been great and heartwarming to hear stories from all sides of the House about the role of the United Church in our broader community. I'm pleased with the support I've got.

A couple of things did come up. One, whilst the original bill did say "colony," my colleague behind was correct, at the time we were known as the Dominion, in case there was any doubt about that. To reference my colleague from Mount Pearl - Southlands, those other churches that are incorporated in acts would include the Anglican Church; the Church of England; the Colonial and Continental Church Society; the Congregational Church Trusts; the Moravian Church; Presbyterian Church, eastern section; Queen's Road Presbyterian Church; Seventh-day Adventist; Presbyterian Church trust board; the bishop of Grand Falls; the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Central; the Roman Catholic bishop of Harbour Grace, bishop of St. George's and St. John's; the RCEC of Grand Falls and the RCEC of St. John's. That's according to the House of Assembly website as of the latest link.

I am delighted with the support that my colleagues have provided. I will take my seat and look forward to questions in Committee.

**SPEAKER:** Is the House read for the question?

The motion is that Bill 99 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 (Hawley George):** A bill, An Act to Amend The United Church of Canada Act. (Bill 99)

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

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

**L. DEMPSTER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend The United Church of Canada Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 99)

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

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

I move that this House do now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 99, An Act to Amend The United Church of Canada Act.

**SPEAKER:** A seconder for that, please.

**L. DEMPSTER:** Seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

**SPEAKER:** Thank you.

It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to debate Bill 99.

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 in the Committee of the Whole, Bill 99, An Act to Amend The United Church of Canada Act.

A bill, "An Act to Amend The United Church of Canada Act." (Bill 99)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

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

**L. PADDOCK:** I guess these are, what, quasi-questions, observations. This is really about an intersection of governance, since really what was given to us is from the United Church of Canada.

My first observation – and I got two – is with regard to the changing ecumenical worship patterns. What we're seeing then, in some cases, where over periods of time, you have churches themselves, the physical building, becoming available. Meaning no longer of use to that greater religious organization.

I have a case in one of my communities, communities that I represent, where such a church structure exists, and it's on Crown land. I was hoping actually that the minister then responsible for Crown land would expedite that turnover of that asset and land to the community.

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

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

I think all I can say is that this bill is not concerned with that, directly. Certainly, if the Member opposite has an issue with Crown lands, I'm sure if he were to supply, if that's not already been the case, the relevant data to the minister responsible, who sits to my right, that she would be happy to see what can be done to expedite it.

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

**L. PADDOCK:** Yes, and like I said, the reason I raised it is because we're dealing here with overall governance. This is part of this intersection of governance between church and state and, like I said, it's cases that we're dealing with in some of the rural communities where this type of changing ecumenical worship patterns, and we're seeing it.

The other one – again, this is an observation, and I was promoted to raised this by something I saw in the last week on NTV and that was the search for Padre Nangle's gravesite. In particular, I look now in Tilt Cove, that community is about to be abandoned. We'll have a number of graveyards there. In my own district, I think we have somewhere between 30 to 40 abandoned communities, all of which have various sizes of graveyards and some with some notable former residents of the province.

We're seeing people now come looking to be able to be taken to some of those gravesites. I guess this would be more for looking at it both from a tourist side, this is an opportunity for genealogical tourism which is now growing and is something, like I said, that intersection between governance, church and state that the province could potentially look at with

regard to leveraging and expanding tourism market for genealogical tourism.

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

**J. HAGGIE:** Thank you.

It's interesting because Gander District has a heritage of aviation crash sites; some of which are actually still active graveyards. Sabena site, for example, not that far from Gander, is a well-known tourist attraction in actual fact. There are groups from the town that go up there and maintain the site. I think they call it St. Martin-in-the-fields, if I'm not much mistaken, and once they've got at it, that place is really quite beautiful.

There is also the Czech crash site just off the railway. I think these are all things that generate interest. I don't know whether or not there is enough research done to be able to say whether or not we have the genealogy that would be a significant, but I'm sure my colleague behind me would be able to access research on that subject. Certainly, I know from discussions with him and his predecessor – more so his predecessor – that anything new that will bring travellers to the province is something that they're keen to look at.

But again, the intersection of church and State for the purpose of this act is simply to facilitate and to enable. It is a slightly cumbersome but very well-documented route to establish a church and other entities through legislation rather than any other route.

That's the best I can suggest at the moment. Again, the Member raises some interesting, useful points.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Seeing no further questions, shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** 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 Amend The United Church of Canada Act. (Bill 99)

**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 99 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 Government House Leader.

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

I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 99 carried without amendment.

**CHAIR:** It is moved and seconded that this Committee of the Whole rise and report Bill 99 carried without amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the Committee to adopt that motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have directed me to report that we have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that Bill 99 has been carried forward 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 99 been carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**L. DEMPSTER:** Now.

**SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

**L. DEMPSTER:** Tomorrow.

**SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Premier, that this House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

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.