



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume L

SECOND SESSION

Number 119

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Thursday

May 22, 2025

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Admit visitors.

Before we begin today, in the public gallery I would like to welcome Michael Kirby. He is the subject of a Member's statement this afternoon. Michael is joined by his wife, Sara, and his daughter, Winslowe.

Welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today we'll hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts Bonavista, Conception Bay South, Placentia West - Bellevue, Torngat Mountains and Cape St. Francis.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

Frank Lapointe is a multi-talented artist, experimenting with a variety of media, including lithography, acrylic and sculpture. Today, at his home in Trinity East, he mostly works with watercolour.

Born in Port Rexton in 1942, he graduated from the Ontario College of Art in 1966. After spending four years teaching art and visual design in Ontario, at Memorial University and the provincial craft school in our province, Frank was appointed curator of Memorial University art gallery – The Rooms – in 1972, but soon resigned to pursue his own art.

In the 1970s, Frank created one of his best-known works, the acclaimed Newfoundland Postcard Series – lithograph prints using old postcard messages. He also produced several audiovisual presentations with the late musician and composer Don Wherry and other multimedia projects which toured

nationally and internationally. His work can be found in collections throughout Canada.

Also noteworthy is that Frank has designed many of the new homes in the historic Trinity - Port Rexton area. In 2023, he was awarded the Southcott Awards lifetime achievement by the Newfoundland and Labrador Historic Trust.

I ask the Members of the 50th House of Assembly to join me in celebrating the unique talent of Frank Lapointe and his incredible impact on our art and heritage.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

The 2025 Annual Provincial Drama Festival was recently held from April 19 to 26 at the Corner Brook Arts and Culture Centre.

Theatre CBS is a vibrant performing arts community located in Conception Bay South and offers workshops and acting classes for beginners, catering to individuals with little or no acting experience. Established in early 2022, Theatre CBS has successfully produced nine plays, including: *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Hollow*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Ageless*, *Barnyard Boogie*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, *A Christmas Story*, and *Duckish: The Ghost and Fairy Stories of Tom Dawe*.

This talented group received numerous nominations at this year's Annual Provincial Drama Festival and won three awards: Best Lighting Award, John Bonnell; Best Set Design, Susan Bonnell; and best production, *Duckish: The Ghost and Fairy Stories of Tom Dawe*.

Theatre CBS is excited to announce their latest production, *Understanding Wonderland*, which will be performed on June 12. For more details, ticket purchases

and information on upcoming events, please visit theatrecbs.com or check their Facebook page.

Congratulations to Theatre CBS for their remarkable achievements. Their hard work and dedication to performing arts have truly paid off. Best wishes for continued success.

Thank you.

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 dedicated constituent in our beautiful district of Placentia West - Bellevue, Mr. Ivan Hapgood of Arnold's Cove.

Ivan has been inducted into the HockeyNL Hall of Fame and for good reason. From player to coach, administrator, league executive and general manager, Ivan has dedicated his life to hockey for more than half a century. For the last 12 years, he has served as coach and/or GM with the Clarenville Senior Caribous and is currently the GM of the Clarenville Ford Caribous as well as vice-president of the Avalon East Senior Hockey League.

Ivan has been Provincial Senior Coach of the Year and received the Charlie McCarthy Memorial Award for his managerial contributions. He has been part of four Herder championships and four runner-up finishes. In 2011, he led the Caribous to win the Allan Cup national championship, the second in Newfoundland's history.

Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Mr. Ivan Hapgood on his great accomplishment and lifetime of dedication to sport in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Today, I pay tribute to the volunteer members of Ground Search and Rescue, GSAR, of Hopedale, Nain, Natuashish, Postville, Makkovik and Rigolet who serve our communities in their darkest hours. When community members go missing, it is our darkest hour. We pray for good news which will bring the light back into our communities.

GSAR service is not easy. Even when the search ends with a successful rescue, the emotional burden weighs heavily on our volunteers and lingers long after. Sadly, our communities have all suffered loss over the years due to unforgiving seas and our harsh climate – our loved ones lost, who we spoke to just yesterday, laughed with last week, played darts with at the last tournament.

We rely on our team members to take the call, day or night, to go out on land or on sea to help, to rescue or to recover. As loved ones sit home waiting, they are reassured the greatest effort is being made by our GSAR men and women who know the land, seas and ice best.

It is you, our GSAR members, who provide the most vital service, making a difference for those who need you most.

Please join me in applauding our community heroes, Ground Search and Rescue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order, please!

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

J. WALL: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding individual from my district, Mr. Michael Kirby.

On Thursday, May 15, 2025, Michael finally achieved a feat that only three other Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have accomplished, to reach the top of Mount Everest.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: This has been a dream of Michael's since childhood, so five years ago he began his training. In 2022, he climbed Mount Rainier in Washington. In 2023, he was successful in reaching three 6,000-metre peaks in Nepal – Pokalde, Lobuche and Island Peak. In 2024, he reached the 8,000-metre summit of Manaslu in Nepal. Each climb during his training was an impressive and difficult achievement.

Speaker, planning and careful preparation was key to Michael's success in climbing Mount Everest. Over a two-month period and with the watchful eye of his Sherpa, who was also with Michael during his years of training, Michael ensured that his body and mind were ready for the climb to the peak.

As a family, his wife Sara and daughter Winslowe accompanied Michael on a portion of the Mount Everest climb – very impressive.

Speaker, I ask all Members of this 50th General Assembly to join me in congratulating Michael Kirby on his outstanding achievement. We are absolutely thrilled that your dream finally came true.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

S. STOODLEY: Thank you, Speaker.

I rise today to reaffirm our promise to revolutionize the delivery of government services to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

We are meeting residents' expectations in many areas by offering quick and easy-to-use online services.

MyGovNL now has more than 400,000 registered users, and, along with MyHealthNL, the Early Learning Gateway, and our Wildlife Information Management System, we have many more licensing and permitting functions online.

We are taking steps to plan immediate and long-term improvements for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador as we undertake government modernization.

We continue to seek ways to improve service delivery, and artificial intelligence (AI) offers the potential to help us create a more efficient and effective public sector.

We recently introduced our Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Technology Policy and AI training for all government employees, while we trial AI technologies across the government.

We need to pilot these new transformational technologies while maintaining program integrity, protecting personal information and ensuring AI is leveraged fairly and without bias.

With our investments to revitalize our information technology assets, Newfoundland and Labrador is leading the

country in services delivered online and reducing reliance on legacy systems.

Thank you to the dedicated public servants who challenge the status quo and drive change in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador every day.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

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

Speaker, while it's great to transition toward more efficient government services by embracing technology, this government has a trend of doing so irresponsibly.

Many individuals in our province lack adequate cell service. Now they are prohibited from accessing services. It's critical that the government ensure that there are options available for those without the availability to use the service online. Yet, over the years, we've heard from Members frequently that this has not been the case in a variety of digitized matters, such as availing of a waste facility. It is shocking, Speaker, that people need an email to bring garbage to a waste management facility.

In addition to online services, in-person services ought to be available. People deserve to access government services in the way that best suits them.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

While government proceeds to move more technology and advancement, they're leaving many people behind, leaving rural people behind. People on the North Coast of Labrador, who are losing connectivity, people who in rural areas don't have cell service, seniors, people with disabilities continue to be left behind in this modernization as counter services and other services continue to be moved online without any thought about those people.

So we call on government to therefore double their efforts to make sure that all individuals can actually access equally, fairly and equitably government services no matter if they have connectivity or not.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to mark Early Childhood Educators Week which takes place from May 25 to May 31.

Early childhood educators are highly skilled professionals whose dedication, knowledge and patience shape the lives of children throughout our province. This week celebrates their commitment and dedication as they support enriched early childhood experiences for children in their care.

The provincial government is committed to growing the early learning workforce and is supporting efforts to recruit and retain early childhood educators. As we work toward a future where child care is affordable, accessible, inclusive and high quality for all

families, the role of early childhood educators is essential.

We have signed on to an extension of the Canada-wide Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. This extension supports the continuation of \$10-a-day child care until 2031.

Speaker, there are currently 1,400 early childhood educators working in this province and hundreds more are enrolled in early childhood education programs.

Let us celebrate the hard work and dedication of all early childhood educators in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: CHAIR: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: I'd like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Speaker, the PC caucus is happy to mark the upcoming Early Childhood Educators Week. Every single early childhood educator in this province is vital to ensuring that our children are well taken care of and for equipping future generations with a strong foundation as they grow. Our ECEs are incredible and the work they do is extremely important.

However, this government had failed to tackle many issues in our early childhood education. Accessibility and inclusivity remain a concern for many. Red tape is restricting operations and many child care deserts still exist in the province. Our children deserve better.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

New Democrats believe that early childhood educators must be appreciated and treated like the professionals that they are. However, we're still struggling to retain them because of low pay, difficult working conditions and inadequate or non-existent benefits.

We, therefore, call on the government to show their true appreciation by providing ECEs with a defined benefit pension plan, health plans, paid sick leave to make their profession more attractive to the perspective students and increase retention.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are there any further statement by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, an ATIPP request we received in December of 2024 shows that there were 146 people in hospital waiting for other levels of care, including seniors waiting for long-term care. Yesterday, we received another shocking ATIPP showing that that number is now 327 people.

That's double, Speaker; 327 people are waiting in hospital beds, including seniors waiting for long-term care, so I ask the

Premier: Why is this number of people waiting growing?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to that question. Of course we know there have been some issues with hospital beds and availability for individuals who are in the hospital and really could and should be discharged, but we need to make sure they have somewhere to go.

That certainly came up on the West Coast of this province in the new Western Memorial hospital. We are working on solutions with NLHS to create more ALC beds for people so that we can get individuals out of the hospital and into those beds, and then use those beds for acute care. Of course, we're continuing to work on that and our at-home policy, where we want seniors to stay at home, in their homes, to be comfortable and only move to personal care homes or long-term care homes when it's necessary and, of course, the last place we want them to be is in hospitals.

There have been pilot projects here in St. John's that have worked. We'll continue to look at those pilot projects and expand them to make sure that we have available beds for our seniors in this province.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, we've gone from 146 people in December of 2024 to 327 people in May of 2025. Clearly, their plans are not working. They're not working. More seniors are waiting today than ever.

Let me quote the Seniors' Advocate who says, and these are her words: Seniors are losing functionality lying in acute-care beds.

I ask the Premier: When are you finally going to address this problem and ensure the seniors get the care they need?

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

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

What the Member opposite is referencing is certainly an issue that we've identified. We have an overcapacity of people in the hospital who are waiting for placements in alternate levels of care. They're not all seniors. There are people there who are waiting for different types of rehabilitation or that can be serviced at home.

These are issues that we're working to identify and we've done some great things to move that along, but we do realize that there are still a significant amount of people who are occupying acute-care beds and then that has a trickle-down effect in terms of admitting patients from emergency departments or bringing people in for surgeries.

So we do identify that it is a systemic issue, and we're working on solutions that'll help resolve that problem.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, I hope their plans are not the same as what they announced earlier when a former minister of Health announced that he's doubling up seniors in their rooms in order to accommodate and take them out of hospitals.

This government says one thing but the data says another. Just yesterday, this House unanimously endorsed the creation

of an independent advocate for persons with disabilities. Yet, today, the Liberal government are trying to shut the House down without following through.

So I'll ask the Premier one final time: Will you bring in legislation in this session to create an advocate for persons with disabilities now or will I have to do it when I become premier?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

J. HOGAN: Certainly, I think the public will pay attention to what the Leader of the Opposition is saying, because he says things that aren't true. The former Health minister, me, did not implement a policy to put seniors doubling up in beds. That's not what happened.

We actually looked at options to deal with the ALC issue in Corner Brook and decided not to proceed with that because it's not what individuals wanted and –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. HOGAN: – it's included in what the Seniors' Advocate asked us not to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. HOGAN: So as I've said since I became leader and since I was running for this position, I am always going to listen to what people want.

On that note, Speaker, the same goes with the disability advocate. There was a recommendation made to expand the role of the Seniors' Advocate, not to use the resources that she has, but to expand the role and include advocacy for people with complex needs. I have heard, personally,

that is not what the disability community wants.

I would like to develop a policy that works for the individuals who have disabilities and know what they want. We will develop it and implement it when –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Three different ministers, three different mandate letters all calling for an advocate for persons with disabilities. No action, and yet, a press release that talked about how they were going to double up seniors in the rooms. That's what happened.

So let's talk about another commitment. When speaking about a replacement for Her Majesty's Penitentiary, the Premier said, in 2021, "The project, for the record, remains on schedule for construction to begin in 2022 with a goal to complete it by 2024-25." Clearly, there isn't a new penitentiary. The previous Justice minister didn't even know there was money in the budget.

So I ask: What happened?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

E. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, the last time I was here I was dealing with the project of replacing the HMP. There have been strides made in terms of investment in the budget and in terms of doing temporary measures. We know that's not good enough, absolutely.

The replacement of the HMP will happen. There is ongoing planning around that. I will have more definitive answers on that in the very near future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

AN HON. MEMBER: Stay tuned.

E. LOVELESS: Yeah, I probably could say stay tuned, but this is a serious matter. There's a lot of laughing on the other side by the way. So it's a serious issue, very serious issue, and we're trying to get it done.

Unlike we've seen happen in the past in terms of Progressive Conservative governments, who tried to get a hospital done but took them 10 years. We had to get it done for them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, it's about commitment. As I said, announcing in 2021 that construction was starting in 2022 and we're all supposed to be at a ribbon cutting right now in '24-'25, yet there is nothing to cut a ribbon on – nothing. Nothing delivered.

So let me ask the Premier about his commitment to our fishery. Thanks to the Liberal government, the mackerel fishery has been shut down since 2022, the fishery that could support rural economics and people in our rural communities, put people to work in the fish plants and help harvesters make a living. We now have a new federal Minister of Fisheries from Newfoundland and Labrador.

I ask the Premier: Will you finally stand up for our harvesters and demand that Ottawa reopen the mackerel fishery?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I am delighted as only the second female, as I understand it, in 75 years to stand here as the Minister of Fisheries.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. DEMPSTER: While I might be new to the department, I'm certainly not new to the issues of fishery around this province. There are five processing facilities in my district, inshore and offshore, and a very successful company, I might add, that looks after all.

Speaker, of course we're always advocating to Ottawa. The fishery, that renewable resource, we know that it keeps the lights on in many of our rural communities. Just last week, I gave a statement in this House on the growth of lobster, a 263 per cent growth, and we're investing in the lobster fishery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. DEMPSTER: My predecessor announced a 10-point plan. We've had tremendous success with that working with FFAW and ASP. On May 7, Speaker, we wrote the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and we asked them to consider reopening the commercial fishery for mackerel. We'll continue that –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time is expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, clearly –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

T. WAKEHAM: – clearly their efforts have not worked.

We have a new federal Minister of Fisheries. We have a new provincial Minister of Fisheries. Let's turn around and – even though we don't have a separate Department of Fisheries, which I will guarantee when we form government there will be one.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: Again, I ask the minister: What will you do besides writing letters to end the moratorium on the mackerel fishery in our province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker, the Member likes to play politics. He knows that the federal government deals with quota and deals with allocation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

L. DEMPSTER: But he's a little bit late to the game because we wrote a letter on May 7, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Order, please!

I ask the Members on both sides of the House, please, I can't hear. The Minister of Fisheries has the floor.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

As I mentioned, we did write. That's the first step. We wrote on May 7. My predecessor wrote asking that they consider the reopening of a commercial fishery with a 2,000-ton total allowable catch. I have a request in to meet with the new federal minister.

We're building relationships, and we're going to be there for the harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

T. WAKEHAM: We all await eagerly because it comes down to making sure that we are the beneficiaries of our principal resources like the fishery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: And the mackerel fishery is too important. It needs to be reopened.

Speaker, last May, the Town of Cape St. George was hit by a devastating flood. Since then, they've been seeking financial support from the provincial government. On May 29 of last year, the Premier stood in this House and said: "It was a commitment made and it was a commitment that we will follow."

So I ask the Premier: When will the people of Cape St. George finally receive the support they were promised?

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

J. HAGGIE: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The issue of compensation and/or payments is one that our department has taken very seriously. We have a committee struck to look at claims. As far as I'm aware, currently, there are none outstanding.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: We know of at least one outstanding, Speaker.

Speaker, Barry Pye is a 60-year-old gentleman paralyzed from the neck down who has been denied access to 24-hour home care.

Speaker, what does the minister expect Mr. Pye to do?

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

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

While I can't speak to specific instances, I would be happy to take any information that the Member has offline and evaluate independent cases.

I can speak to the overall process. As we continue to build a plan here in Newfoundland and Labrador that supports residents in their homes and in the care settings that they prefer, then we have to build specific plans for these individuals. It's not a one size fits all for everybody.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

K. HOWELL: So the Department of Health works closely with NLHS and there are case managers who are assigned to every individual case who will assess a day-by-day needs assessment and determine the most appropriate actions of care.

In the event that somebody doesn't think their needs are being met, they can always revisit this issue with their case manager and we will be happy to work with those clients to ensure that their services are adequate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the minister knows about this person. The Premier knows about this person when they were minister. The Minister of Justice knows about this person. The current federal MP for Cape Spear knew about this person. We all know about this person. This is not news to anyone. This is email after email. I have been dealing with this person for years. Everyone knows about this person.

The disability officer is dealing with them constantly. Yet, the minister cannot discuss it. It is known issue and she knows full well about this man. He is falling through the cracks and (inaudible) –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Speaker, Mr. Pye has shared pictures of bed sores that are almost gone to the bone. He is fearful of losing his life due to lack of care.

Is this the minister's vision of aging in place?

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

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

For the record, I did not say I was not aware of the situation. I said that there cannot be discussions about people's personal health care on the floor of the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

K. HOWELL: And that is an issue that has been brought up in this House over and over again, yet the Members opposite continue to bring up those issues, knowing full well that there are privacy and confidentiality measures in place that inhibit us from talking about that.

If they think that they can form government and talk about those issues on the floor, then that is a clear indication that they are not prepared to lead this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

K. HOWELL: But there are measures in place that would indicate how we enact the most appropriate measures of care for clients who are in their home. At times when that is not adequate, then case managers can be involved to re-evaluate the situations and provide resources where they are necessary.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Mr. Speaker, we will have no problem leading this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: And we will have no problem standing up for people that need our help. That's what leadership is about is listening and helping people who are in need. Not doing this everyday in this House getting rhetoric, these people need support, and we will give them that support.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Speaker, Courtney Davis has spoken out about her near fatal experience while trying to access Patient Connect and receive appropriate care.

Speaker, will the minister order a review into why the provincial health care system almost cost this young lady her life?

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

K. HOWELL: Again, Speaker, I don't know how many times I can say that there are privacy and confidentiality measures that are in place that you have to respect in terms of people's private health care and their information.

I think it is inappropriate that over and over again the Members opposite continue to bring up people's names, asking questions that they know full well we cannot discuss here on the floor of the House of Assembly.

I, again, will speak to the process that's in place. Once there is an incident that's identified, there is certainly an investigation if there's been any type of misappropriation of resources or a policy that has been flawed. There is time and time again where NLHS, as well as the department, reviews the policies that are in place.

We're always open to discussions that will make things smoother, and we'll continue to build a plan that works to provide the best possible care for people here in the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

The minister should commit to helping Mr. Pye and Ms. Davis. That'd be the best answer she would provide the House today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: These people want their issues brought to the House of Assembly. This is

our role and this is a job we'll do and we'll do it every day we're asked.

Because Ms. Davis did not have a family doctor, she was forced to go from doctor to doctor and never had consistency. She didn't have a steady hand to help navigate the system.

Will the minister admit that this Liberal model has failed, and will you provide help to Ms. Davis?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I just want to be clear that we are committed to helping every Newfoundlander and Labradorian (inaudible) –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: The point that the minister is trying to make is that we're not going to discuss specific health care issues of individuals in this province on the House floor, which would be on *Hansard* for all eternity and a public record through video. That does not mean that we are not committing to help people with their health in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

J. HOGAN: When I was minister of Health, I responded to every email and every phone call, including ones from across the aisle, Speaker. However, when issues were brought up, specifically, about specific individuals in this province and I wrote Members and said, please, provide the details – silence.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

June is fast approaching and the residents of Torngat Mountains are anxious to have the return of their marine shipping service after a long winter with no access.

Will the minister commit that the *Kamutik W* will be returned to Labrador by June 9?

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Speaker.

There is a date that's within the contract that's with LMI in terms of that vessel returning at a certain date. We will be respectful of that, but we're in conversations with LMI in terms of the return of the *Kamutik*. As I said to the Member for Fogo, as well, over the next couple of days we will making the decision on where those vessels will be going and when.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

Last year, the ice was clear for weeks in advance when the *Kamutik* was finally returned to us. Northern Labrador communities have been all winter without access to the ferry service, again, same as last year, which is critical for daily living and personal wellness.

Lack of planning and a failure, last year, to treat us fairly is the reason why I have to ask again to make sure that the ferry will start its season on time.

So, Minister, will the *Kamutik W* arrive in Labrador to service my communities June 9?

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

E. LOVELESS: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to commit to that specific date that she's referring to.

We work in close consultation with LMI. The last time I was in this department, we used to get pat on the back, and both sides, in terms of working together. That hasn't changed. It hasn't changed for me in the past and I will do the same for that service in Labrador.

So, as I said, the –

L. EVANS: (Inaudible.)

E. LOVELESS: If she wants to listen to the answer, maybe that would be, probably, a good thing because the answer is that I will be making a decision over the next couple of days on that vessel returning to that service.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. WALL: Thank you, Speaker.

How much has been budgeted for emergency shelters during this current fiscal year?

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

J. ABBOTT: Thank you, Speaker.

It sounds like an end-of-term question and I don't have the specific answer, but I will certainly provide that to the Member.

Suffice to say that we are committed to making sure that we have the housing supports in place: shelters if needed, emergency shelters where they're required and supportive housing. We will spend what we need to spend to meet the need in the community.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. WALL: Speaker, the minister should know the answer to his budget. We've learned through Estimates that \$8.2 million was budgeted for emergency shelters, yet through an ATIPP, we know that in seven months, from '23 to '24, almost \$7 million was spent during that time.

So I ask the minister: Is he confident that \$8.2 million is enough to serve the vulnerable population of our province?

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

J. ABBOTT: Thank you, Speaker.

Well, if the Member knew the answer to the question, it begs the question why he asked the question.

That being said, I will go back to my previous answer. We will meet the needs of those needing emergency shelter, supportive housing, transitional housing, whatever is required in any community across this province. If the budget that we have is not sufficient, we will allocate and transfer more money in to meet the need. That's what we're committed to, Speaker.

Thank you.

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

J. WALL: Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer.

Speaker, the grading of shoulders in my district on Route 20 and 21 is greatly needed. There are areas within my district of a six- to eight-inch drop from the edge of

the pavement. It's damaging to vehicles and harmful for drivers.

I asked the question during petitions; I did not receive an answer, so I'll ask again today, Speaker.

When can constituents from my beautiful district expect to see grading work completed to ensure safe driving for all?

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

E. LOVELESS: I will certainly take that back to the ADM responsible for that work. I'll do my best in making sure that your district remains beautiful.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, many volunteer fire departments in Placentia West - Bellevue have contacted me because they're now regularly responding to 911 medical calls. We have been told that these volunteers receive no funding for supplies, time or resources.

Will these volunteer fire departments be compensated for these additional costs?

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

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

We're very grateful for those 40 or so, I think it is, volunteer fire departments that provide medical first response.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HAGGIE: In no particular order, the short answer to the question is yes, they can now get their supplies replaced through NLHS.

While I was in the portfolio in Health recently, that was set up – in response to previous comments.

In addition, there's also work under way – and my colleague from the Department of Health would be able to elaborate on it – for a medical first responder education program to provide them with on-the-job support.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: That's cold comfort when you have to put fuel in a vehicle to go to an emergency.

The people of Arnold's Cove and area still do not have access to a family doctor or nurse practitioner. The town has done their part to support recruitment efforts, but the Liberals have not given any final approval.

When will residents of Arnold's Cove finally have a clinic with a family doctor or nurse practitioner?

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

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm pleased to say that the RFP for clinical space in Arnold's Cove has been put out and –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

K. HOWELL: – the tender will be awarded based on successful negotiations of that contract.

However, in the meantime, residents of that area are connected to a Family Care Team in Clarendville, and if anybody has not had the opportunity to be connected then, I would encourage them to go on to Patient Connect NL and get listed, so that the next available spaces, they can be rostered.

Speaker, we've done some great work in this province to roster patients. We have almost 100,000 people now connected to Family Care Teams. We've reduced the number of people who are waiting for primary care, our Patient Connect numbers, to about 40,000 people now.

So we're looking at some of the great work that's been done. Those people do have access to Teladoc, which is a virtual care option that keeps them at bay in the meantime.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time is expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

L. PADDOCK: Speaker, in Estimates we were told that the Uniformed Services Pension Plan was only 25 per cent funded.

There are approximately 1,000 members of this pension plan. What is the plan to fully fund their pension plan?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

S. COADY: Thank you very much.

This is an important issue, and one that we're seized with. We have had discussions with our union groups and we are meeting regularly with them to reform the Uniformed Services Pension Plan, as we have reformed other pension plans that are now fully funded.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: I will allow one more quick question.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, school districts across North America have been hit with ransom demands related to this PowerSchool cyberattack on December 28. In recent media, an arrest has been made.

Can the minister confirm whether a ransom was paid and information retrieved?

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can say that we were fortunate that we have great people working in the IT sector with respect to PowerSchool, other jurisdictions have run into problems.

With respect to that, I would encourage those individuals that have been contacted that potentially have information that would have been taken with respect to or possibly available to PowerSchool to avail of the services that we've provided for the next two years, complimentary.

I will say that I'm happy that the individual that did this nefarious act has been caught. That's great. We're excited about that from our end and, hopefully, it doesn't happen any more. I know the Minister responsible for Digital Government is working very hard to ensure all our systems are safe as –

SPEAKER: The minister's time is expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, in her report on personal care homes, the Auditor General reported that there were 254 evictions between 2022 and 2024; perhaps more, we don't know due to

the lack of recordkeeping. At least 91 residents were those who had to go to emergency and then weren't accepted back by their personal care home. It's a disrespectful way to treat seniors, especially with our emergency rooms notoriously full, creating a domino effect in the health care system.

The question is, why was this inhuman practice not addressed by the Department of Health?

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

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

We do recognize that there are an amount of recommendations that are out there. We are working diligently to achieve as many of those as possible.

The Member opposite raises one issue that we will be working on. We did announce that we're working on operational standards for personal care homes. Right now, we have a consultation process that's ongoing with the stakeholders in that sphere. As soon as that is concluded, we will bring forward the recommendations and the action plan that's associated with it.

Built into the standards that we are proposing, there will certainly be measures to prevent these types of things from happening and ensuring that residents have appropriate timelines for service agreements, as we would call them. Then, any rate increases would require significant notice periods, and the provider would have to give notice to the individuals who live in those homes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Speaker, we heard earlier that there are 327 people in acute-care hospitals waiting for alternate levels of care.

There is a problem here; we don't know if some of the people who were evicted need to be at emergency or not. We know of one 84-year-old who was left at the Health Sciences emergency for 20 days with no plan. They, and their families, are placed under extreme stress trying to find a placement. This person was so greatly impacted by being left in the small room for those days that they lost the ability to walk.

Will this government amend the Residential Tenancies Act to protect seniors from this?

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

K. HOWELL: Thank you, Speaker.

What the Member opposite references is exactly the cyclical problem that we identify in the system. There are people who need to be in alternate levels of care that don't have the ability to be there. Then, then they find themselves in acute-care beds, which in turn blocks up our emergency department, and we cannot move people through the system. It's an issue that we are working to identify.

One of those measures is to continue to bolster support in our personal care homes. Those are many of the recommendations that we have heard from the AG. We are continuing to work on that. A large portion of that will be continuing to work on securing service agreements so that there are no surprises for individuals who are in these centres. We do, then, have a plan going forward on how they may be able to have terms of rent control, as we would call it, in those centres.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, residents of Labrador West are once again left disappointed by this Liberal government's lack of support on housing. There are only four units being built by NLHC, two of which are to replace units that already burned and have to be replaced, and only a meaningless statement in the budget, with no money committed on seniors' housing in Labrador West.

So I ask the minister: Will they stop waiting for the federal government to do something and start work on the 40 units for seniors this construction season?

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

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

I certainly don't accept the word "meaningless" in terms of any of the replies that we have provided. I appreciate – and I have had several conversations with the Member for Labrador West – and I hope it's part of his legacy that, in fact, we do deliver the 40-unit apartment building. We're working on design as we speak. We are committed to making sure that facility, that apartment building, is constructed.

We're, obviously, also not so much dependent on the CMHC to provide the funding, but we're anxious to get a response from them. Once we do, we will be able to move forward.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, yesterday, the minister responsible for Housing said that he believed in the private market to get houses built. Well, no rental units have been built in Labrador West since 2014. REITs own large patches of land in the community that have gone undeveloped for a decade. We even have public servants who have taken jobs in Labrador West and now find themselves unable to find housing and are forced to quit this public sector.

So I ask the minister: Will he give support and resources to the municipalities of Labrador West to get housing building up off the ground?

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

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

I think the Member certainly has a valid point for sure in terms of where the private sector is not ready and willing and able to provide any service but housing in this case. There is definitely a role for the provincial government, in this case the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. That is how we had seen Cowan Heights developed, that is how we saw Southlands developed and that's how we've seen other residential development across the province.

I've committed to working with the communities and the municipalities in Lab West to do some of the things that the Member is suggesting. If infrastructure is required, then we have to put that in the ground and that will entice the private sector to come forward. Whatever the solutions are, we're going to work towards achieving those.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you for your assistance.

Pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I'm tabling four Orders-in-Council relating to funding pre-commitment for fiscal years 2025-26 to 2030-31.

SPEAKER: Are there any further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

The background to this petition is as follows:

WHEREAS individuals, residents and municipal leaders have spoken to the deplorable road conditions in the District of Harbour Main; and

WHEREAS the district is made up of many smaller communities and towns, like Holyrood, Upper Gullies, Seal Cove, Cupids, Colliers, North River and

Makinsons, who have roads in desperate need of repair and paving, specifically Route 60 and 70; and

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

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately take the necessary steps to repair and repave these important roadways to ensure the safety of the driving public who use them on the regular basis.

Speaker, I've been bringing this petition before this hon. House since my election in 2019. I've had 22 road petitions, and five different ministers of Transportation and Infrastructure. Two of those ministers actually drove through the entire district with me, and the current Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, back in 2021, was one of those ministers who drove with me through the district. He is aware.

That was four years ago. Four years later, I can advise him that the roads have increased in terms of disrepair, and they are probably, specifically with respect to Holyrood, to Seal Cove and Upper Gullies on Route 60, it is probably the worst road in the District of Harbour Main. Yet it is the busiest road, and year after year, I've lobbied for pavement.

Now, I understand, and we are thankful to hear that according to the Roads Plan in 2025-26, that there is going to be some paving. We understand that from Route 60, Conception Bay Highway, paving sections near Topsail Beach and Holyrood, that's in the plan. However, we do not have a definitive number of kilometres, and we're concerned about that, Speaker, because we know that the worst roads have to be paved first. So we're hoping that the minister will

be able to look at the specific area and ensure that whatever the worst part of the road is gets done.

Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the minister, when he rose on the budget, he said that he's listening to the people of the province, and that implies that he's also listening to the people of the Harbour Main District. So hopefully, we are hoping that a fair process will be in play, which is impartial and objective, and that adheres to the principle that the roads that are the worst get paved first. It is time to change the outdated, antiquated system that has been in place, and I'm hoping that we're going to see that from the minister.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you.

I don't think the Member went far enough because I think she was going to say thank you, Minister, for when you visited my district, there was work done that year. So just on the record.

I understand where the Member is coming from, and I don't need to tell this House, but there's over 10,000 kilometres of roads, that we have lots of challenges, but I take a little bit of an issue in terms outdated how we determine what roads are going to be paved because that's done in consultation with the staff. You get great advice from the great staff that's in TI. The process will continue. I'm coming into the department when the roads budget has been determined for this year but, as her request is, all I can say at this point is I'll take it under advisement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

These are the reasons for this petition:

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador who urge our leaders to ensure that fair electricity rates be provided to residents in the Northern Labrador communities of Nain, Natuashish, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville and Rigolet.

The electricity rates charged to northern residents are cost prohibitive to adequately heating their houses. Poorly heated houses often result in damage, creating expensive repairs of frozen pipes, moisture damage and mould. Poorly heated houses also create social and mental health issues that can be long lasting. We strongly believe that changes to electricity rates need to be made for Northern Labrador residents of Torngat Mountains.

Speaker, I've presented this petition many times. I talk about the life block of 1,000 kilowatt hours and when it goes above that. It used to be 18.5 cents a kilowatt hour people in my district were charged, then it went up to 19.3 I think it is and, right now, we're paying 21.1 cents a kilowatt hour. That's the highest in the province.

Now, it's not only about the price of electricity because, in actual fact, I wanted to present my petition for the return of the freight boat from the Island, your district, Lewisporte, up to Northern Labrador to help with the cost of food. I also wanted to present a petition on inclusion of the rebates. In actual fact, failure to provide services and infrastructure over decades has harmed my district and now, we can't access the – it used to be \$17,000 rebate for transition off oil to electricity so you could heat your house with electricity, a cleaner burning source of energy. In my district, we were prevented. We're not allowed to

actually apply. That's \$22,000 now that would transition us to the mini splits, which are much, much more energy efficient and an easier way to heat our houses.

Speaker, for me, there are many petitions I could present but, at the end of the day, I chose the one for electricity because we are struggling to heat our houses, not only in Northern Labrador, but in rural parts of Newfoundland and Labrador because of the price of oil. In Northern Labrador, where our electricity is 21.1 cents a kilowatt hour, we really struggle.

At the end of the day, we need to make sure that the services and infrastructure that we were promised when we joined Confederation back in the '40s – what was it 1947?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: '49.

L. EVANS: I knew the answer, Speaker.

At the end of the day, we were excluded. We were excluded from services and we were excluded from infrastructure in my district when we joined Confederation.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time is expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

This petition entitled Memorial University at a Crossroads. These are the reasons for this petition:

Investment in Memorial has been severely curtailed, with funding to Memorial already having been cut by more than 50 per cent since 2013.

Focusing primarily on immediate financial concerns or administrative challenges at Memorial loses sight of the fact that Memorial University has a special mandate to improve the long-term well-being of our province.

If Memorial becomes a more focused institution as a result of these cuts, if it no longer offers a comprehensive curriculum, then we will have to send our children elsewhere to study. Our children will have to go out of province for teacher education to study math, history, political science, French, writing, religion and physics. As we know, many of them will not return.

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 work with Memorial University to ensure adequate funding to ensure the university can maintain a comprehensive curriculum.

We met with representatives of the professors and teachers, the instructional staff, at Memorial and they have expressed a deep concern, Speaker, with the funding. We know in the budget that there was a pause, I guess, in the repayment of the operating grant, but we still have that university with \$457 million deferred maintenance, a drop in the bucket that this budget has addressed. I've spoken to professors and department heads who have said they're at the stage now where any further cuts will impact the actual instruction itself. There was a fear expressed by some that the university could end up losing its accreditation at some point.

We know we've heard yesterday, or earlier this week, from students who noticed that, despite the financial assistance, that the tuition rates have increased for students yet again. We also know that once we start commodifying education in this way, students are going to choose a place where they either find an affordable education or find a place where they can be remunerated

in a way that will pay back their tuition and their loans, and also settle down. That, unfortunately, may not be Newfoundland and Labrador.

We spoke yesterday and the minister talked about the research aspect of the College of the North Atlantic. Well, university is a centre of innovation and research; this organization needs to be supported.

Thank you.

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

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for the petition and representing and talking about the flagship of education within our province, the Memorial University campus.

Anyone that's been to Memorial University understands that it's a piece of the fabric of our province. That's why this government has committed to more than \$400 million this year for the operations of Memorial University, more than 70 per cent of its operating budget comes from coffers in this here from our budget, voted on by our Members. Some voted against it, but most of the Members voted for it.

That investment is an investment in the future of our province: the students that are going to come out, the future MHAs, the future leaders in our province, the future decision-makers. That is why we're so focused on that. We've put a significant amount of money into helping with the infrastructure deficit that Memorial University finds itself in. We've committed to over \$70 million over the next 10 years to help that process that they're going through to rectify that situation. We know it's a big situation. It didn't happen overnight; it's not going to be fixed overnight.

We've also put in place \$7.8 million for a campus renewal fee so that no student in

this province is saddled with that fee that would be put on top of tuition for administration. We've also put in place a holiday on \$13.68 million in reduction for the operating funding. That's going to help them for the cost measures that are pressures that they're facing.

I can go on and on more –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker.

These are the reasons for this position:

The closing of the Canning Bridge in Marystown has had a devastating impact on residents, fire and emergency services and the local economy. The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure are well aware of the poor condition of the bridge, most recently documented in the bridge inspection report completed in January 2020 which confirmed the Canning Bridge was in poor condition.

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 immediately begin the process of replacing the Canning Bridge.

That's the wording that we had to use, I guess, back in 2023 as the signatures state here. I have people from Burin, Marystown and the most impacted is the south side obviously. We have somewhat of a commitment, I think, to do work on Marine Drive, which takes care of most people on the south side. Work is going to be going on for Farrell's Hill and stuff like that.

The reason why I'm doing the petition today is to get an answer, I guess, from the new Transportation and Infrastructure Minister, which he's aware of this file, but again, we have so much going on in the district with it being so vast. I have a couple of bridges that are acute situations, one in Arnold's Cove, one in Red Harbour West. It's all about the roads, brush cutting, ditching, shouldering and that comes down to the fact of the depot shutting down too.

I ask the minister if he can give us an update on where we're to with the Canning Bridge because we're into the Bailey Bridge currently being constructed and we're supposed to be going across that by the end of July, mid August, and I hope the minister can give us an update on that.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Gladly and very happy to respond to that, because I think in the petition the words say "urgently respond." Well, I can let the Member know – and he's quite aware of this – when we found out that the bridge needed to be replaced, immediately the Premier and I called the mayor, because the mayor was looking for answers. We called him immediately.

There was no negotiation whether we we're going to do a temporary fix or whatever. We said it will be replaced, just moments after we knew that it needed to be replaced. So the commitment was there then; it's there now.

In terms of the timelines, I think, is what the Member opposite is concerned about, nothing has changed in terms of the timelines. I will ensure as minister that the timelines are followed and pushing it to make sure that the people of Marystown are

happy with the end result in having a new bridge.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Residents on Route 350, 351A, 352 in the Exploits District are concerned of road conditions on these routes causing safety issues and damages to vehicles.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately have roadwork done to upgrade and improve conditions of these routes.

Speaker, I brought this petition to the House many a times, Route 350 especially. That's the main route right through the district. There are other Routes 350, 351, but in the fall I was asked for some areas, which I did put in – and I thank the minister; I really do. We are getting a portion of that done, which I appreciate that.

It will be certainly welcome in the district, but there were also two more portions of that district, and I did put in for those sections to be done as well which would calculate, I think, for 12 kilometres in the district. I'm only getting 4.5 kilometres. In the Roads Plan, there are lots more areas that are getting probably 20 kilometres and that sort of stuff, so I'd like some attention to be placed on those couple of areas.

Not only for those extra couple of areas there, if there was more planned work – which I did receive a response from the department saying there was some planned work there – but I'd like for the minister to confirm that this planned work will be done in this construction season, so that not only can people have the safety issues fixed, but even the department for regular maintenance.

If this maintenance was done, regular roadwork was done, then at the end of the season or other times of the year then the crews in the area – which they do a good job with what they have and the amount of staff that they have to work with, but they can rely on doing other parts of their maintenance work rather than continuously having to fix up those areas.

So while the crews are in doing this 4.5 kilometres, why don't we just get something else done? They're only a matter of a few kilometres apart. While the crews are there, why doesn't the minister have those crews fix those roads and cure the maintenance on those roads?

I'd like the minister to respond to that, please.

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

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's a set-up. They just want to hear me speak today. That's the feeling I'm getting over there.

I'm happy to say that when I was in Transportation and Infrastructure before, there was a record investment in roads in this province by – and thankfully she's sitting in front of me – the Minister of Finance who agreed to invest, the government agreed to invest and it was the highest investment ever in roads in our province, and it's a good thing.

Also, when I was there, as the Member references maintenance, there was also a \$15-million pot of funding that would be not just the regular amount of money that was being invested in our roads but focused on repairs and maintenance. So that was an additional – I'm proud to say it's still there. I hear what the Member is saying, but in terms of I can't tell him that it's point eight of a kilometre or one point. There are mechanisms, as I shared with him online,

and staff members as well that can confirm what kilometres will be done for sure.

Asking me to make sure that the work gets done? Well, first of all, people have to bid on the work, contractors have to get the work done. My commitment is to make sure that the money is there, and it has been there, it will continue to be there because this government is committed to all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

L. PADDOCK: Speaker, this is my second time presenting this petition, and this is related to Route 392, so maybe we can get the minister back on his feet again.

This is related to the communities of St. Patricks, Coffee Cove, Little Bay and Beachside, approximately 28 kilometres in length. This road is littered with potholes, eroding shoulders, and requires more than hot patch and filling potholes.

Residents, over a number of years, have written letters to the Premier, minister and former Members, outlining their concerns regarding accidents, vehicle damage, school bus safety, and this road is their only access to these communities, in and out.

Now, the thing with this is not just about what's very important with their daily commute and about passenger safety, it's also important with regard to tourism for this area as well. Residents are very concerned when they see tourists highlight a tremendous place to visit, but I urge you not to given the condition of the road.

We have to have a plan for our secondary routes. This is reflected not only in Route 392, but 391, 381, on the Baie Verte Peninsula with Routes 411, 413, 417, 418 and 419. Minister, we need a plan for our secondary routes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

E. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, I don't disagree with that. But to remind the hon. Member that I know around the mining community, when I was in TI before, I sat down with the mining company there and they wanted to seek consistency in terms of paving of the road to La Scie.

I did make a commitment, and after year one, in the second year, the mining company wrote me a letter, and I also met with them, to thank me for giving my word, delivering on my word because it made a difference for them in terms of their investors in mining. They were pleased with that and, overall, they were pleased with this government in terms of the commitment made in that district.

More to be done? Absolutely, but in terms of worse roads or whatever, I think you might want to talk to your colleague from Harbour Main to determine if you've got the worst roads or if she got the worst roads.

SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, third reading of Bill 99, and that is seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 99, An Act to Amend the United Church of Canada Act, be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK (Hawley George): A bill, An Act to Amend the United Church of Canada Act. (Bill 99)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the United Church of Canada Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 99)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Order 3, third reading of Bill 108, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 8. That is seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 108, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 8, be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 8. (Bill 108)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 8," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 108)

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, the following:

Be it resolved by the House of Assembly as follows:

WHEREAS section 3(2), of the *Citizens' Representative Act* provides that the Citizens' Representative is to be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on a resolution of the House of Assembly; and

WHEREAS section 5 of the act states that a commissioner may be reappointed; and

WHEREAS the appointment of the current commissioner, Bradley Moss, expired on April 30; and

WHEREAS it is proposed that Bradley Moss be reappointed as the commissioner for a term of six years.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Bradley Moss be appointed as the Citizens' Representative for a term of six years.

Speaker, I'll just take a couple of minutes to talk about the Office of the Citizens'

Representative, what they do and say a couple of things about the individual.

The Officer of the Citizens' Representative provides a province-wide ombudsman service. It was opened in 2002 and is an independent office of the House of Assembly. The primary work of the Citizens' Representative is to accept complaints from citizens who feel that they have been treated unfairly with respect to their contact with government offices and agencies. A very important role, Speaker, in our province.

The Citizens' Representative and his staff will attempt to mediate citizens' complaints and if this is not possible, will undertake an impartial and unbiased investigation. If the complaint cannot be resolved through the investigation, an investigation report is generated and recommendations can be made to the House of Assembly. The Office of the Citizens' Representative can also undertake complaints that study how government policies, procedures and actions can affect a large number of people. Those, Speaker, are called systemic complaints and can result in recommendations that have a much broader impact than those flowing from the individual complaints.

Just a couple of points on who they can investigate, the Citizen's Representative has the authority to investigate complaints from individuals who believe they have been treated unfairly by provincial public employees or officials. The office cannot investigate the House of Assembly or a committee thereof, the Cabinet, the Executive Council or a committee thereof, a court judge or Justice of the Peace, an arbitrator appointed under the *Arbitration Act*, any decision where the citizen has a right to appeal to a court or tribunal but has not yet done so at the time or the time of doing so has not expired, a decision by the Access to Information Commissioner and, lastly, a problem that the Child and Youth Advocate has to the power to deal with.

Speaker, I think it's important to note that the Citizen's Representative cannot deal with complaints of unfairness that may arise from a citizen's dealings with the federal or municipal governments. As well, the actions of private companies, agencies and individuals are beyond a review by this office.

The Citizen's Representative can investigate complaints of unfairness filed against provincial government departments and agencies. If you were to take a look at their website, they provide a comprehensive list that is quite substantive. For individuals who may want more information on the Office of the Citizen's Representative, I would certainly encourage folks to peruse the website.

A couple of things about the reappointment of this individual; Bradley Moss was appointed as the Citizens' Representative of Newfoundland and Labrador on a unanimous resolution of the House of Assembly and was sworn in for a term of six years on May 1, 2019. Mr. Moss entered the public service in 2002 as the first staff investigator hired by the Office of the Citizens' Representative. He progressively assumed responsibilities within the office, becoming a senior investigator in 2006, and then serving for over a decade as Deputy Citizens' Representative.

He is active in the pan-Canadian ombudsman community, including the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman, where he has served as a conference chair and presenter; and as an instructor as Osgoode Hall's essentials for ombuds course at York University.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Moss has served as an external ombudsman evaluator and has represented the province on a number of ad hoc working groups set up by the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman and the federal, provincial and territorial protected disclosure offices. So I think you're getting the picture.

He's coming with a wide breadth of experience and knowledge over the last couple of decades.

Mr. Moss holds a bachelor's and master's degree in political science from Memorial University, where his graduate work centred on governmental accountability structures and the ombudsman concept in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Moss has done great work over the last six years as the Citizens' Representative and I feel he has the necessary skill set to continue in that role. I know I can speak on behalf of my colleagues here, Speaker, that we will be wholeheartedly supporting Mr. Moss's reappointment.

Pending a successful vote on this resolution, we do want to take a moment to wish our best to Mr. Moss as he continues in this very, very important role as the Citizens' Representative for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador for another six-year term.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

It's my pleasure, as well, to speak on this resolution for Mr. Bradley Moss being reappointed Citizens' Representative. The Government House Leader just pointed out, and rightly so, there was a unanimous vote in the Management Commission to reappoint Mr. Moss, which is the premise of this resolution.

I think we all see the value of having a Citizens' Representative. The intention is for the general public to have that avenue to go to somebody, because we all know government is very intimidating. To everyone on the outside, it's intimidating. For a lot of us on the inside it's intimidating,

because I, myself, have been around here for a lot of years and I still struggle with where I have to go.

If you have concerns, and we look at the whistle-blower legislation piece and all that encompasses, people are uncomfortable. People need to know that there's a place there, there's an office, there's a person there that will listen to their concerns and without any fear of repercussion or any intimidation. It's meant to be that way because there are a lot of things that happen in life unfortunately, inside and outside of government communities, that people need to have an avenue to talk to somebody.

That's growing more and more over the last number of years. In today's society, it's a very important feature of our society but it's also very important that the powers of this office let the person be untouched. It affects the integrity of the office if we do so. The Citizens' Representative needs to operate within their own parameters but they need to have unfettered authority in that role.

I believe that the same thing applies for all of our offices of the House. It's about the people's House. It's about those statutory offices. They have an integral role in our society.

Mr. Moss, the Citizens' Rep, and any other statutory office of the House are equally important. They're a very important part of our society, our function, our democracy, but they're a very important avenue for the people of this province to be able to come in and any areas they have concern, or people within government, any areas they have concern, to speak of them in a non-threatening matter and feel comfortable that their concerns are being heard. Because, Speaker, of all my years and my time, and I spent different times adjudicating or on boards and whatnot, a lot of times people just want to be heard. People want to know that someone cares.

I've said that here in the House many times. I don't think there's anything truer than the Citizens' Rep office. When people come in and they have issues and no one seems to be listening to them or they don't know where to go to talk to them – they're fearful of discussing it. So that office is a very important feature.

We, as the Opposition on this side of the House, do support Mr. Moss. We think he's done good work, and like I said, as the Management Commission –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: – we were part of the Management Commission, me and my colleague from Bonavista. So we do support this resolution, and I do, on behalf of my caucus and the Opposition, wish Mr. Moss all the best in this six-year term and thank him for his service.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

I, too, echo the sentiment to thank Mr. Moss for his continued service to the province and in his role as the Citizens' Rep and this resolution to reappoint him for another term. It's a very vital role in this province, to have your Citizens' Rep, to be able to look at things from his perspective.

Like my hon. colleague said, government can be intimidating when it comes to dealing with it, especially if you have an issue and you're looking for something, a resolution or something like that. It's important to have this kind of role as a statutory office of the House.

So once again, we support the resolution to reappoint him for an extra term, thank him for his service and I thank him for his continued service to this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak.

I just want to say, first of all, speaking to the individual, Mr. Moss, that I've had some dealings with Mr. Moss, as Members of this House of Assembly would know, and I've always found Mr. Moss to be nothing but co-operative, passionate about what he does. I've always found him to have great integrity, and I have no problem whatsoever in supporting Mr. Moss based on his educational background, his experience, and I believe he's an honourable person.

Not only does he show great integrity in his job and have the qualifications, but even outside that. I was recently actually at the Mount Pearl Lions Club Charter Night, and he's actually the district governor for the Lions. He's done a lot of humanitarian work, and his whole family has, actually. His wife is involved and so on, as well.

They're good people, and he is a good person. I have no problem endorsing Bradley Moss to continue on as the Citizens' Rep in terms of I feel he's a good person. However – and everybody knew there was a but coming, I'm sure – I do have a concern about the current set-up, the current system, the current legislation and the way that the Citizens' Rep's office is set up, some of the legislation that applies to the Citizens' Rep, the looseness of it, and how our system works in terms of the Citizens' Rep, in terms of work that he does, reports that he would produce, who it goes to, what happens to it, what happens when matters go to the House of Assembly Management Commission that, for one reason or another, never makes it to the House of Assembly for debate and so on, of

which independent Members are not even a part of I would add.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I'm going to ask the Member to stay relevant to – this is regarding the appointment of the position, nothing to do with his roles and activities. It's the appointment of the position.

P. LANE: Mr. Speaker, I would ask for a little bit of flexibility in that. When the minister just presented that bill, she went through the whole résumé of the things that he is responsible for doing. The Member here just brought up whistleblower reports; I didn't.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member discussed things of his roles, not the legislation and not –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: I'm speaking to the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands. So I ask the Member to stay relevant to the bill.

P. LANE: Yes, Sir, and I will speak to the roles. I am going to speak to the roles of the Citizens' Representative that the minister talked about – about the role of the Citizens' Rep to do investigations. If people have concerns about government, about interactions with government, then they have the right to bring it to the Citizens' Rep. That's part of the role that Mr. Moss would take on. That's part of the role he would take on.

My concern is not with Mr. Moss, but I want to say for the record as one Member of this House of Assembly, that I do currently, as things currently stand with legislation that governs Mr. Moss, that governs the Office of the Citizens' Representative, of how it interacts with this House of Assembly, how reports and so on get to this House of Assembly or don't get to this House of

Assembly, I have concerns, and rightfully so, and so do all the whistleblowers that we dealt with here a couple of years ago.

I would say that Mr. Moss as the Citizens' Representative –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Again, I remind the Member we are discussing the appointment of the position.

P. LANE: Yes.

SPEAKER: We're not discussing the roles and responsibilities. We're discussing the appointment of the position.

P. LANE: It has become quite obvious, as usual, we just want to shut down the discussion when it comes to this, but I get it – I get it.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

If the Member doesn't want to speak to the actual resolution, we'll move on to the next speaker.

I'm not trying to shut down debate. I'm trying to stay relevant to the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's right. He's doing his job.

P. LANE: Yes, he's doing his job.

Anyway, Mr. Moss, I'm sure, before he would accept this position, that he or whoever would be in that position would want to be able to do so in a fair, unbiased way, as the minister referenced, without fear of any political interference or repercussion in order to do the job that we are appointing Mr. Moss to do.

We need to ensure that, for the protection of Mr. Moss, for the integrity of the system and for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, that we need to look at how Mr. Moss is going to be interacting with this

Legislature, how he's going to be interacting with the Management Commission, the legislation governing how that's done and I think this House of Assembly needs to review all that and ensure that everything is tightened up to ensure that he can do his job in an unbiased manner.

We had Mr. Moss, in the past, he did his job and then he was under investigation. He was under investigation.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

This is the last time. If you don't want to speak relevant to the bill —

E. JOYCE: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: I'm not speaking to the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands. I'm speaking to the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

We'll move on to another speaker if you're not going to say relevant to the bill.

We're not discussing other reports and other things here.

P. LANE: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I guess if I'm going to be that limited and we're going to have no flexibility, obviously, for obvious reasons, then I would simply say I wish Mr. Moss the very best to do the job that he's tasked to do. I hope, in the future, that we would have learned from the past and we would make sure that, as the House of Assembly, we're going to allow this man to do his job, to do it properly in an unbiased way with no interference whatsoever so that he can do the job that he's supposed to do.

If Mr. Moss, or anyone else for that matter, any Officer of this House, if they're not going to be able to go and do their job without fear of any kind of repercussion or being under investigation, then it's just as well to appoint a dog from down to the SPCA and put them in the chair because they're not going to be able to do the job. That's all I'm saying.

There's nothing wrong with Mr. Moss, great guy and so on, but I know and we all know that there are issues when it comes to the interaction with that office and this Legislature and how it works. I'm suggesting, for the record, that we need change.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Seeing no other speakers, if the Government House Leader speaks now, she will close the debate.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I want to thank the Opposition House Leader and the Third Party House Leader and the independent Member for their comments. We want to wish Mr. Moss very well in his next term and I'm sure he'll play an important role and do good for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

All those in favour of the motion, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 2.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Government House Leader, the following motion:

WHEREAS section 6(3) of the *Independent Appointments Commission Act* provides that members of the Independent Appointments Commission are to be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on a resolution of the House of Assembly; and

WHEREAS section 7(1) of the act states that a commissioner may be reappointed; and

WHEREAS the appointment of the following commissioner expired on May 20, 2025: Karen McCarthy, Chairperson; and

WHEREAS the appointment of the following commissioners expires on May 25, 2025: William Mahoney, Brendan Mitchell, Jamie Schwartz; and

WHEREAS it is proposed that the said commissioners be reappointed as commissioners for a term of three years from the date of the expiry of their terms; and

WHEREAS the appointment of the following commissioner expired on May 3, 2025, and is not eligible for reappointment: Cathy Duke; and

WHEREAS the appointment of the following commissioners expires on June 25, 2025, and are not eligible for appointment: Peggy Bartlett and Gerald Anderson.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following persons be appointed or reappointed as members of the Independent Appointments Commission for a term of three years: Karen McCarthy, Chairperson; William Mahoney, Brendan Mitchell, Jamie Schwartz, Karen Skinner, Nancy Ruth Healey and Rex A. Goudie.

Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this motion. I'm very pleased to highlight the individuals for appointment and

reappointment to the Independent Appointments Commission.

Speaker, the Independent Appointments Commission was our government's inaugural legislation in 2016. Through this act, our province has the most open and accessible appointments process for agencies, boards and commissions in the country. The Independent Appointments Commission is an independent, non-partisan body that has the responsibility to apply a merit-based process to recommend qualified individuals for appointments.

Three members, as we heard, Gerald Anderson, Cathy Duke and Peggy Bartlett, are not eligible for reappointment, given that they have already served two consecutive terms in accordance with the IAC Act. We certainly thank those outgoing members for their commitment to the Independent Appointments Commission over the last six years. Their volunteer service, time, knowledge and guidance have been helpful to building our province. It's certainly something that we would thank them for, for their diligence and their efforts.

In accordance with section 7(1) of the IAC Act, four members are eligible for reappointment and we're very pleased to have their continuing advice and appreciate their commitment. Mr. Mahoney, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Schwartz and Ms. McCarthy have all agreed to accept reappointment in their current roles. I thank them for their dedication, and allow me to tell you a little bit about their professional experience.

Karen McCarthy is chair of the Independent Appointments Commission and remember, Speaker, she was appointed three years ago. She's continuing in that role. She is vice-president of Communications and Government Relations with Fortis Inc., a very well-respected corporation. She has been with Fortis Inc. since 2016 and she was appointed to her current role in 2023. She was previously a president of an Atlantic Canadian public affairs consulting

firm for seven years and, prior to that, spent 15 years with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador with the provincial public service in senior roles in Communications and Cabinet Secretariat, as well as energy and intergovernmental affairs.

Bill Mahoney – William Mahoney – is the owner of a group of companies in Newfoundland and Labrador related to the real estate and tourism sectors. He served 27 years in the Royal Canadian Air Force, holding a number of staff and command positions, retiring in 2004. He is regional director of the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association and the national vice-chair of the Canadian Forces Liaison Council. He is a former chair of the board of Commissionaires for Newfoundland and Labrador, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Historical Society, the St. John's International Airport Authority and the St. John's Downtown Development Commission.

Brendan Mitchell held the distinction of Chief of the Qalipu First Nation for many years and is now Newfoundland and Labrador's first Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. He worked with Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited for 27 years and has extensive work experience in the areas of project management, materials management, transportation and procurement management. His organizational involvements are many, having served on boards and committees locally, provincially and nationally, including chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador marine advisory board for five years and chair of the Corner Brook Economic Development Corporation.

Jamie Schwartz retired as president and CEO of the Deer Lake Regional Airport Authority after having served 20 years with the organization. He is currently a member of the 2025 Canada Summer Games Host Society Board of Directors. He served as president and chair of the Atlantic Canada

Airports Association from 2014 to 2016 and was a director of the Canadian Airports Council for four years. He also chaired Marble Mountain Development Corporation for three years.

These are outstanding candidates.

As mentioned, there are new members that are required to replace outgoing members of the Independent Appointments Commission who have served a maximum of the two consecutive terms. Here's the process we followed for choosing these new members. The expiry of three members was identified and the requesting authority, as Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission, I made a request to the Independent Appointments Commission to generate recommendations to fill the vacancies in question. As secretariat to the Independent Appointments Commission, the Public Service Commission then supported that process in the development of a profile that was reflective of the competencies and qualifications required.

One of the things that I did ask for, Speaker, that I think is important for everyone in this House, is geographic acknowledgements so that we have people from around the province. You heard several of those reappointments, of course, were from the West Coast. There are several from other jurisdictions as well. The Public Service Commission advertised and promoted the opportunities and encouraged applications from the general public considering a variety of demographics, including regional representation.

The Public Service Commission facilitated an assessment process with the Independent Appointments Commission for their review. The Commission then generated a recommendation of those most qualified candidates for a review by the minister and the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The nominees are Rex A. Goudie, Nancy Healey and Karen Skinner. They possess an outstanding combination of

skills and abilities to serve as IAC commissioners. Allow me to tell you a little bit about them.

Mr. Goudie provides strategic direction and oversight of operations in his current role as Chief Executive Officer of the Goose Bay Airport Corporation. His previous experiences include executive leadership roles as a manager of field operations with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agencies, and assistant deputy minister with the department of Labrador and aboriginal affairs. Mr. Goudie holds a Bachelor of Arts and economics from Memorial University and a Bachelor of Commerce from Dalhousie.

He was born and raised in L'Anse au Clair and has taken an active role in supporting community-based organizations in Labrador through his role as chair of the Grenfell Foundation and participation in the Labrador Winter Games board of directors. Mr. Goudie possess more than 30 years of progressively responsible experience supporting socio-economic opportunities for Labrador, including the oversight of government policies, facilitation of integral provincial programs and services and coordinated a comprehensive Labrador agreement.

Nancy Healey is an executive with 20 years experience in leadership and advocacy. Previously, as chief executive officer of the St. John's Board of Trade, Ms. Healey supported the success of business through meaningful work at all levels of government; similarly, in her previous role as executive director of an association devoted to enhancing and elevating the province's hospitality and tourism industry. Ms. Healey completed the director's education program from the Rotman School of Management in Toronto, receiving her ICD.D designation.

She's been recognized for her success and contributions having been named the 2018 Executive of the Year as a past-president of the Chamber of Commerce Executives of

Canada. She's currently serving and sharing her expertise with the St. John's Rotary Club, she is Commissioner for Employers at the Employment Insurance Commission and on the Ruah Counselling Centre board of directors.

Karen Skinner, is an executive leader and board director with over 32 years of relevant experience. Karen previously held the role as vice-president of the Newfoundland and Labrador region of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. Ms. Skinner holds a Master of Business Administration from Dalhousie and a Bachelor of Commerce – co-op program – from Memorial University. Ms. Skinner's senior leadership experience encompasses work related to economic development, public policy, program design and delivery.

As an individual devoted to giving back to her community, she serves on several boards such as the Janeway Children's Hospital Foundation and the Dr. Jack Hand Legacy Foundation. With a commitment to advancing arts and culture in the province, she sits on additional boards including Business and Arts NL, Bonavista Biennale, Lady Cove Women's Choir – she's a busy lady – and she's also a member of the Board of Management for the Canada Revenue Agency.

Speaker, I believe all the Members of the House of Assembly will agree that these are outstanding candidates with excellent qualifications for the roles that they will undertake. We are very pleased that they have agreed to volunteer to further contribute to their province. I ask everyone in this House to support these new, additional members and responsibilities for the Independent Appointments Commission.

Thank you.

SPEAKER (Trimper): Thank you, Minister.

I now recognize the Member for Terra Nova.

L. PARROTT: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, impressive indeed when you listen to the resumes. I know many and I've even had the opportunity to serve with one of them, so very fine list of people.

This was the inaugural bill for the Liberal government back in 2015, which you would think would put a whole lot of weight on it and I believe it does in certain circumstances. We, the Progressive Conservative Party, has no issue with the appointees. What I will stress is that we have seen examples over the last couple of years where the process has, I guess, been somewhat circumvented when it was the second or third pick or we didn't get all the information required to make a decision.

Listen, nobody highlighted how important it is to listen to the recommendations any more than the Deputy Premier could have just done. When she listed out all the qualifications of the people that sit on this IAC, then we should never doubt what they put forward, and that is the reality. There is a system put forward that we should utilize and pay attention to all the time. Unfortunately, we've seen examples where we have not done that and the only thing I can say negative about the appointments or anything is the process.

Clearly, this is an important bill as it was their first bill back in 2015. We support these appointments, but I urge government to pay attention to the individuals that work on this board and to put forward the best candidates for the position in this province to serve the people here. We need to make sure that we always hire the right person.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Speaker.

First thing I'll have to say, it's good to see a Labradorian appointed. I'll always say that. It's good to have representation from across the province, and that's a very important thing. When you do pick individuals for the IAC or whoever the IAC is going forward to pick for other boards, agencies and commissions, make sure that we have equal representation across this province. We are a vast province, we are a large province and we have very diverse needs and very diverse perspectives, but also, we're just a very diverse people.

So that is good, to see Mr. Goudie be appointed. I've had the pleasure of meeting him many times. It's great to see him here to help give that Labrador perspective. We're comfortable with the selection of the IAC. We understand its importance and how it operates. Once again, I'll echo what my colleague said though, make sure that the process is always followed time in and time out, time again and time again.

I'm going to say that we need to make sure that we appoint good people to these boards, these agencies, these commissions. This is backbone; this is stuff that runs. Not a lot of people know what a lot of these boards and commissions do in the background, but it's very important work. They don't get the credit that they deserve a lot of the time for the things, important roles and responsibilities, that they have. We see the day-to-day ones like hydro and all of these but there are the background ones. These smaller boards and commissions do work that's very important but they don't get the recognition that they deserve.

I want to make sure also, that people who want to serve on these boards and commissions check out the site. Put your name forward; it's rewarding work and it's very important. I want to also say that.

I do want to echo what my colleague said, just make sure the process is followed, time in, time out, and make sure that these very qualified individuals, that we've just listed

here, that their recommendations and stuff are taken very seriously and the people that they put forward are highly considered. Make sure that they do get these positions because we want to make sure we have the best going forward but also, these boards, agencies and commissions provide valuable advice to government. That needs to be looked at and make sure that their recommendations are adhered to.

So once again, thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

I now recognize the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll certainly try to be relevant this time, as relevant as everybody else.

First thing I just want to say, as I did the last time, I have no problem with the individuals. They're all very qualified. I don't know any of them; seen the résumés, listened to the minister and no issue with the people whatsoever.

I will say, though, that I do have a concern, for the record, that the people who will be tasked to do this work bring forward three names and, under the current legislation, the minister can take those three names – not saying they do it, but they can – run it through the shredder and appoint whoever they want and nobody in this House of Assembly would know. If we're going to do this and put people there on the board, qualified people, good people, we need a system in place to make sure the integrity of that decision.

There was a commissioner's report that came out a year ago now, with –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I'll remind the Member just to stay relevant, following the lead of the Speaker. You made your point, Sir.

Thank you.

P. LANE: Thank you, Speaker.

It's amazing how the Opposition is talking about stuff, and the NDP, outside of the names of the people and they're relevant and I'm not.

Anyway –

SPEAKER: I'd watch the fine line, Sir.

If you have anything further to say about the appointments, I'd love to hear them.

P. LANE: Anyway –

AN HON. MEMBER: Yeah, come on now. You challenge everything here.

P. LANE: Why don't you say something? Why don't you open your mouth and say something instead of me?

SPEAKER: Sir, (inaudible).

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. LANE: Are you the Speaker?

SPEAKER: I'll ask the Member to address the Chair, please.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Please continue your remarks on whether or not these appointments are valid. Otherwise, thank you very much.

The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Speaker.

As I said, I have no problem with the individuals but the bottom line is that there's a recommendation there. If someone is not picked off that list of three, then we should know. If we're not going to do that, the

legislation that governs this is not worth the paper it's written on.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

Seeing no further speakers, I now call on the Deputy Premier to close debate on this resolution.

S. COADY: Thank you very much.

I appreciate –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: I said order, please!

There's one person identified to speak: the Deputy Premier.

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

I do appreciate the comments by the Member for Terra Nova and the Member for Labrador West and the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands to this. I agree, wholeheartedly, these are exceptionally qualified candidates and I'm very pleased to see this.

I will say the only time that I recognized any process had been – I utilized it once for the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation when I wanted to ensure that there was a Labradorian on the board and there were no recommendations that came forward. I went forward and said, I will not appoint a board that has no representation from Labrador, so I actually went out and recruited someone.

So that would be extraordinary circumstances, but I think that the Opposition would support me in that because I thought it was very important that

we have somebody from Newfoundland and Labrador to represent Labrador on the board of the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation. Allow me to also say that 378 appointments have been made through the Independent Appointments Commission since it came into being, and I'm very happy to say that near 50 per cent are female.

So, Speaker, with that I'll take my seat. I appreciate the support of this House for those outstanding candidates.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Is the House ready for the question?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

We're going to take a five-minute recess. The Chief Justice is here but we just need to take a five-minute recess to get the Chamber ready.

Recess

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Administrator has arrived.

SPEAKER: Admit Her Honour the Administrator.

(Her Honour the Administrator takes the Chair.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It's the wish of Her Honour the Administrator for all to be seated.

SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the province has in the present session passed certain bills, to which, in the name and on behalf of the

General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

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

A bill, "An Act to Amend the Revenue Administration Act No. 8." (Bill 108)

HER HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR

(Chief Justice Deborah Fry): In His Majesty's name, I give assent to these bills.

Before I go, I would just like to say how much I appreciate the opportunity to enter the House of Assembly as the Administrator for the Lieutenant Governor. I'd like to thank all Members of the House for your diligence and dedication to the important work of the Legislature on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(Her Honour the Administrator leaves the Chamber. The Speaker returns to the Chair.)

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Please be seated.

Before we actually get into the messages, something I omitted to do a little bit earlier. It's regarding the point of order raised by the Member for Terra Nova on May 20, 2025.

In accordance with Standing Order 49 – I know I could leave it, but I think it's important to read it into the record – the Member stated that the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, in response to a question from the Member for Topsail - Paradise during Question Period, referenced a vote of this hon. House, contrary to Standing Order 49.

The matter was taken under advisement at the time and I've had the opportunity to review *Hansard*. I've also reviewed the video recorded of the exchange in the House at that time and I note that the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune stated the following: He didn't even vote for the budget. He didn't even vote to support that school.

Standing Order 49 states that no Member may reflect upon a vote of the House, except for the purpose of moving such vote to be rescinded.

In considering the point of order, I've considered the context of the statement of the Member and whether a reference to a vote of the Member equates to reflecting on the vote of the House, contrary to Standing Order 49.

The fifth edition of *Parliamentary Practice in British Columbia* provides guidance as to what constitutes reflection upon a vote. Chapter 7.3.6 states the following: "The rule serves to prevent repetition of past debates, and reflection on a passed vote may be tantamount to a reflection on the majority, and thus on the Legislative Assembly itself. This also speaks to the well-established practice that a question, once put and decided in the affirmative or negative, cannot be questioned or debated again in the same Session."

Thus, a general reference to a vote by a particular Member does not mean that a Member is reflecting upon the vote of the House in accordance with Standing Order 49. The reflection on a vote of the House would involve questioning the outcome of a vote or repeating the substance of the debate to which the vote led to.

I note that during this General Assembly it has been common for Members on both sides of the House to use language referring to a vote in a manner similar to the usage during Question Period on May 20, 2025. In these circumstances, Members

refer to the results of a vote, whether the bill or motion was carried or defeated and what happened when the vote of the House was conducted. Where Division was called by the House for a vote, the vote of each individual Member forms part of the public record and is accessible through *Hansard*.

In this case, the Member stated that another Member didn't vote for the budget. There was no repetition of the debate on the budget and no question or challenge to the vote itself. A mere reference to a vote by a Member does not constitute a reflection of the vote of the House and therefore I find there's no point of order.

We'll now move into closing comments.

I call upon the Leader of the Official Opposition.

T. WAKEHAM: Thank you, Speaker.

Just like this session of the House, my comments will be brief.

This is an opportunity to thank people and the first one I want to thank or the first group of people I want to thank are the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who elected all of us –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: – to come into this House of Assembly and represent them in all of the 40 districts all over Newfoundland and Labrador. While we go back and forth in debate on policy and debate and talk about what we would do and what hasn't been done, that's a part of the democratic process. I'm so pleased that we have a democratic process in this province of ours and, in fact, our country.

While we talk about and often remember November 11 and July 1, I think there's another opportunity for people of Newfoundland and Labrador to reflect on the sacrifices that all of our soldiers made

and that is the day you go to vote. Because you would not have that right to vote if it wasn't for the sacrifices of so many people –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: – and I say that because we all know that there will be a coming election. I want to encourage all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to get out and vote and to exercise that democratic right that so many people gave their lives for. I just wanted to say that.

I want to also say a thank you to my caucus, to all 13 Members here who have stood in this hon. House and represented their districts and our province and have asked the tough questions. Questions the people of the province have asked us to bring forward and sometimes we get criticized for that, but we won't stop that. That's part of our responsibility.

When people reach out to us, as elected MHAs, it's our responsibility to bring their concerns to the House of Assembly and to make sure we reflect on them. That's something we should never fail to do, so I want to thank all of my caucus.

To the Table Officers, who have to in some ways – quote – put up with us, because I'm sure there are days when they would rather be somewhere else and they question, why did I ever want this job? But to all of you, I want to say thank you on behalf of my entire caucus.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: To the Commissionaires who provide the security and make sure that our quorum is kept, and are there all the time, I want to say thank you to all of them. To our Pages, future potential MHAs, and to all of you who come here, sit quietly, and go about your work professionally and make sure that everything we need, you take care of it.

To the Legislative Library, the people in the Legislative Library who do the work behind the scenes, these are people in key positions that we rely on and we need, and I want to say a big thank you to all of them.

And, of course, to Hansard, the people in Hansard who record all of the information and all of the conversations that go on here in the House of Assembly, again, very important information.

And to you, Speaker, for allowing us to stand sometimes and perhaps speak longer than we should, perhaps speak a little off topic every now and then, and I know you remind us every now and then if we're not following the road as clear as we should, but we'll continue to stretch that road out a little bit every now and then, and I want to say thank you.

I also want to give a thank you to our fill-in J. J., Sergeant-at-Arms –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: – and in closing I want a shout-out to Robert. Robert Escott, if you're watching and you're home, we're all with you (inaudible) –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

T. WAKEHAM: – and I look forward to next time I'm back in the House of Assembly, sitting on that side of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I, too, wish to join in with the gratitude and thanks.

I'll start off, I think, Mr. Speaker, with the fact of thanking my family: my wife, my children, my grandchildren. I don't think any

of us in the House of Assembly could do the work without the support of family, and certainly we've heard some very poignant stories about what family means and the sacrifice that comes with it, and especially to those who travel distances to get here. You're making the greater sacrifice in many ways. So thank you to my family and the families who support us..

To the constituents of my district who elected me, who've supported me, who've provided confidence in me, who call with the constructive criticism and sometimes praise and who engage in discussions and to the people of the province, again, who participated in that election.

I will join in with the Leader of the Opposition – it's important to get out and vote. We see, in countries around us, where the lack of voter participation is probably of a greater concern.

As I would tell people when I would go around to the door, never say to a politician that you don't vote because it means that I don't have to pay attention to you as we'll. Always remember that we're going to you for a job interview. I think it's important for people to participate.

To the staff and I'm looking at the security, the Table Officers, the Pages, the Commissionaires, the Clerk, the people in the Broadcast Centre, the Hansard, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Legislative Library and the Speaker – all the people who make it possible for us to do our work here.

I will have to give compliments to Robert Escott for, sometimes, the abuse he puts up with from me and my brother. You haven't been here long enough but, given time, and you will be critiqued on your turn and the way in which you relay it. Stick around long enough and we'll see.

These people are what makes this House of Assembly work and get the information out and, more importantly I think, brings

awareness or the transparency to the people who are watching.

To our caucus staff and I speak about our caucus staff and, certainly, the research that they do in making sure that we're prepared to speak in the House, add to or correct us on any assumptions we might have. I would say that's the same for all of us here, that we have an awful lot of hard-working people who may not be seeking the limelight and seeking the recognition but nevertheless make it possible for us to do our jobs.

Certainly, I want to thank my colleagues in the House of Assembly for the debate. Regardless of the point of view we have, I think it's in that that we find clarity in our own assertions and our own understanding and sometimes we're able to reach a compromise and to find amendments that make legislation work, regardless of whether we agree or not.

I want to thank and acknowledge colleagues who are leaving, who have chosen not to run and thank you for your service. I know it couldn't have been an easy decision to retire from a job like this. I know I've left as a teacher and NLTA president and so on and so forth, it's hard each time, that transition. Transitions begin with a door closing and end with a door opening. So I know that whatever the transition will be, that it's going to result in something positive.

I especially want to thank my junior-in-years colleague, Jordan Brown.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: You might remember that when Jordan was first elected – and I'll use his name because this is going to be his last time – he won by two votes – two votes. If there's ever an indication of why it's important to vote, that will be it. But at that time, there were three of us and we came from such diverse backgrounds. We entered as MHAs; we became colleagues. I'll have

to say that Jordan and I have become good friends.

I've had the opportunity to visit him on more than one occasion, welcomed into his family by his family. I've been out on snowmobile expeditions. I don't think they'll let me have the snowmobile too many more times. The hospitality has been fantastic. I felt at home there. Part of that district almost. He still owes me a fishing trip to his cabin. But I will say for him, the one thing is he is fiercely dedicated to his district. His people love him.

He has, I would say, an encyclopedic brain for facts, and I don't know where they come from. But on just about any topic, he can call up information. I don't know whether it's true; nevertheless, the fact that he presents it in such a way that it sounds like it's irrefutable. He's most of all grounded, and he's got a fantastic family who have given him the support, and now he's going to get to spend so much needed time with them.

So on that personal level of going out, I do want to thank Jordan very much because he has been certainly a person who has been my wingman, and hopefully I've been his wingman as well.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll just echo the comments. It's obviously an incredible honour to stand here as Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: The opportunity to address the House of Assembly in the closing of the session, I just want to take a minute to send my condolences to the family of hon. Justice Don Burrage. Don Burrage passed away, I

believe, this week. I send my condolences to his wife Lorraine of 45 years, his children, his grandchildren, his family and friends. For those that don't know My Lord, I would call him, I met him when I was practicing law and he was a judge, hon. Don Burrage.

He was a former deputy minister of Justice here in government and I just know the time he spent here, and from talking to colleagues when I was in Justice, he was very well liked and well respected and he brought the province through some very big files. The province owes him a debt of gratitude for all that work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: As a judge, appearing before him, he was always very fair. He listened to both sides and, you know, he could crack a joke and have a smile and never took everything too seriously. He took his files very seriously, but he was just a real good guy.

I just want to send my condolences to his family and friends.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: Speaker, we're in this House day in, day out and have the opportunity to debate. It is a real honour to bring our concerns of our constituents to the House. I know the Members opposite are very vocal and very passionate about the issues they raise and I know that they do ask the questions on behalf of those constituents, and I hope that they understand that we answer on behalf of the government with the best ability that we can to provide those answers.

I want to just give a little special shout-out to my Opposition critics over the past four years, the Member for Harbour Main and the Member for CBS. I'm sure they can agree that I answered every question succinctly and accurately and they never had to follow up at any time. So I do

appreciate there is a bit of back-and-forth. The Member for CBS has a chuckle too because, despite what people see in the House, we do have a pretty good relationship behind the scenes here. We've worked pretty good together over the last couple years as House Leaders so I want to thank him for that. I want to thank the Member for Harbour Main, as well.

Just to highlight a little bit of what we've talked about here in terms of the budget over the last few weeks, there has been significant investment in affordability, education, housing and health care. I mean, those are the priorities of this government and it's the priorities of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Speaker, \$20 million to increase teaching services, \$24 million to expand school food programming, continued increased investments in health care, \$35 million for Family Care Teams, \$10 million for recruitment and retention efforts, over \$8 million for emergency medevac services.

Despite that, no new taxes and no new increases across the board. We continue to provide a 50 per cent reduction on the provincial fuel tax. We've indexed Seniors' Benefit eligibility threshold to the consumer price index and, just in case, we've added \$200 million in contingency to address any potential impacts associated with the uncertainty of the US tariffs and the associated trade wars that are potentially to come. We've also committed to affordability and health care in our seniors in this province by eliminating the sugar tax and providing the shingles vaccine for all seniors in the province over 50 years of age, Speaker.

I do stand here today and think back to April of 2021, I believe, when I became a Member, certainly when I became a minister on that date. I think the election was a little bit beforehand. We are closing, not only the session of this House, but the 50th General Assembly. I sat back there somewhere on day one, not really knowing what this was

going to look like or what this role was going to be. I've moved from role to role over the past four years and every day has been just an honour of a lifetime to be able to be here.

I followed politics since I was a little kid and never planned to be here. I never planned to run; never thought anyone would elect me, but I said on day one that life comes at you pretty fast. It really does, and you have to take the opportunities that come. Everyone here took that opportunity at one point in time over the last number of years to put their name on a ballot and hopefully everyone here does that again with the exception of the couple of Members who've already announced. I appreciate all the time I spent here in this 50th General Assembly with all the Members on both sides of the House.

We have had a couple of big moments here over the last little while, including the Churchill Falls debate. That was a precedent-setting debate and very important for the province, and I think very important for this Legislature. For whatever comes in the future, that opportunity will always be there to look back at that debate, how it was structured and the opportunities to bring people in here to answer questions about, really, what is potentially the most important deal in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I want to thank everyone who's involved in the sitting of this Legislature, Speaker: you and everyone in your office; the staff here at the House of Assembly; our permanent Clerk, Kim Hawley George, and staff in the Clerk's office; Table Officers; the Sergeant-at-Arms – certainly best wishes to Rob Escott. We do miss him but thank you for standing in. The first time I met you was not here; it was on the golf course. You came up to me and said you wanted to talk politics. He did. So funny enough that now we're both here today and maybe I'll see you at Bally Haly; probably a little less than I like, but it's great to have you here filling in for Robert Escott.

Thanks to the Legislative Library, Hansard, the Broadcast team and our Pages, of course. As the Member opposite said, I look forward to you being here sitting in the House of Assembly, potentially not in the far distant future. The security guards and commissionaires and all the public service, the political staff on both sides of the House that work here and throughout the district and, finally, I want to thank the Members who are not seeking re-election.

I'm going to start with the Member for Lake Melville. As I sat in the House for the past four years, Speaker, I always try to pick up on who's speaking and what they're good at. Everybody has a certain set of skills. I tried to get better over the last four years; there's still a ways to go but slowly and surely I'll be as good as some of the better speakers here in this House of Assembly. I think when we hear the Member for Lake Melville he's one of, if not the most, eloquent speakers in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: He presents his case. He presents his facts. He makes his position known based on those facts. It's very evidence based and very thoughtful. I'll miss that in the House of Assembly, and Newfoundland and Labrador will miss that in the House of Assembly as well.

To the Member, I know he very much misses Caroline. We all miss her. I'll say to the Member, we'll miss you as well as you move on, but we'll always be here for you. Reach out any time and we hope to see you back in the House of Assembly as a guest. As I said to him a couple of hours ago, you still have three months to change your mind, but I respect his decision and want to thank him on behalf of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for his work.

To the Member for Lab West: What I take away from you when you spoke, and your Leader said it, I think, pretty succinctly, you really spoke on behalf of the issues facing

the residents in your district, and that's the job. You did an excellent job at that. I go to sleep at night and hear you talking about housing in Lab West and power in Lab West consistently. So your message has been heard. I know I read some quotes you said to the media, missing things with your children, and so I know you've made the right decision – we'll miss you here in the House – to spend time with your kids because they're only young once.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. HOGAN: I will just share a text we had back and forth; I hope you don't mind. You said: We have more in common than people probably think. I think that not only goes for you and I, but everybody in the House of Assembly.

There are some other Members that are not here as well that were elected when we all got here back in 2021: Andrew Parsons, Brian Warr, Tom Osborne, David Brazil; of course, Premier Andrew Furey and, very sadly, Derrick Bragg. Rest in peace, Minister Bragg. No doubt, Speaker, when we all come back or some of us come back or most of us come back, clearly this House will look different. I think we can all look back and know that we accomplished a lot together over the last four or 4½ years.

I just think back to a specific piece of legislation that I worked on, changing the *Limitations Act* with regard to people who had suffered physical abuse in this province. We very much did work together on that piece of legislation and I think proved to the province that we can all work together. Members from the Progressive Conservatives, the NDP and independents were in the office with me on the fourth floor of the Department of Justice and Public Safety to provide input into that piece of legislation, which of course passed unanimously.

I think we'll all go back to our districts; we will get ready for the election whenever that

election comes but keep in mind that, at the end of the day, it's important for us all to work together for all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Thank you.

I guess as this session concludes, and I guess the last session for this Assembly, I just wanted to say some thank yous to the people that make this operation run so smoothly. This may be my last opportunity to address you as Speaker and probably the last time, I guess, I'll have the last say, because I'll be going back to my own home, and I don't always get the last say there. But here I do have the last final words at the conclusion of every day.

I'd just like to, first of all, reiterate what all the Members said. I thank the people from the House of Assembly, our Corporate & Members' Services Division that do so much work to make sure that everything runs so smoothly with regard to the payroll and all the Members' expenses and things like that there.

Our Legislative Library and Information Services, they've done a fantastic job and are constantly evolving to make sure that resources and library materials are available to Members at any time they want it, and I commend them for the work they've been doing.

To our Hansard and Broadcast team, thank you guys for all the great work you do. As many of you are aware, we have went through some major upgrades to our broadcast system before this actual sitting started, and like I say, we only have a very small team there and I have to commend them for what they've done in that.

I'd also like to commend Members for their patience. We all remember when we first

put the system live and that, there were some delays and some issues with it. So we worked through all those bugs and I do thank the Members for their co-operation and patience.

I will remind Members that return, when you come back, the clocks will be changed so that your speaking time will be where the time of day is now, back to where it used to be.

But I'd also like to do a special acknowledgement to our Broadcast services team, which is Darren Churchill, Calvin Tobin, Dan Warren and Sean Dawe for their hard work and dedication.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: They're the ones who were here day and night with the contractors to make sure that the system was integrated properly and everything ran smoothly after. So I commend them for their work.

To the team of Transportation and Infrastructure, thank you for your co-operation. Any time we ever run into any issues, want to move a desk, want to move a mic, anything happens, they're always there to help and support us and they've been very, very supportive of us as we transition to make this Assembly much more accessible to persons with disabilities and that. So thank you very much.

Also to my staff, Sabrina Barnes at the Office of the Clerk, for the day-to-day things you do to make sure that information is passed out to the Members and everything is in order so that when we start our days, everything runs so smoothly.

In the Chamber, not present today, but as mentioned, Robert Escott, our Sergeant-at-Arms who is, to my understanding, healing quite well and we long for him to have a speedy and full recovery.

To our Pages, thank you very much, and to the ones not here today, thank you. You guys done a fantastic job and we commend you. You've got busy schedules too, studying in university, but you make time to do this here. I wish you all the best.

To our Commissionaires and to the RNC officers that are present for our security and that, thank you for all that you do.

Thank you, John MacPherson, who is acting in temporary Sergeant-at-Arms role and also Paul Hawley, the head of Commissionaires, for stepping up in Robert's absence.

To my Table Officers, all I can say, what a great team I've got there. I'm going to be honest with you –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: – those last four years I've had the honour to sit in this role as Speaker and I'm sure MHA Trimper and MHA Reid can speak, they are a fantastic team, always very professional, never partisan, always there to give the best advice they can. Any person in the Speaker's role, that's all you ask of them, is that you be fair and you be equal to every Member of the House of Assembly and that you get the best information that you can. I commend each and every one of them.

Kim Hawley George, congratulations on your role as Clerk. It is very well deserved. You've put the work into it and you deserve it. To our Law Clerk, Gerrie Smith, thank you very much.

Bobbi Russell, we spent a lot of time together in the office but when we went on the Mace tour, you really get an opportunity to get to know people much more. We spent 12 days together and I've got to say thank you for everything you do, Bobbi.

I'll share one little story. They would never call me by my first name and my birth

certificate says, Derek. It has never said Speaker on it. It says Derek. We were up on a hike one day. We had a couple of hours before we were going on the next event and Bobbi was there, yes, Speaker, yes, Speaker. I said: Bobbi, for God's sake, call me Derek. She said: No, I can't. I said: Please. She said: Okay, Derek. We walked about 10 steps and she said, Speaker. So it's embedded in them.

Also Kim Hammond who is not at the table right now, Mark Jerrett, Evan Beazley and Jenny Peckham that has just joined us this year, thank you, guys, for all you do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I'd also like to take a quick moment to acknowledge all of our statutory Officers and the staff at their offices that do such a great job. I congratulate Bradley on his reappointment this year.

To my former Deputy Speaker, now Minister Gambin-Walsh, thank you very much for all the work you have done over the last year in helping to help this session run smoothly.

To the Deputy Chair of Committees, MHA Trimper, thank you very much, you've done a fantastic job. You've been a great mentor to me, especially starting out in this role. It's a steep, steep learning curve. I thank you for all your advice and direction and also for your friendship, too. Thank you.

To my CA back in – as everybody knows, our CAs are so valuable, especially when we're in session. To Pam Foss, for the great work she's doing back in the district.

To my EA, Kala Noel, for all the work she's been doing, thank you very much.

Also, as previously mentioned, our family and our constituents are the ones that support us in our endeavour in this here. I've been in this role for 10 years, and I have to say, I've had great support from my family and from the people of the

Lewisporte - Twillingate District. It's been a great honour to serve them, to work with each person in my district that I've worked for, but most importantly, the friendships and the acquaintances that you've made over the last 10 years. I truly cherish it, and I look forward to continuing to serve them into the future.

Last, but not least, to the House Leaders, thank you very much for your co-operation. This is always very fluent and that, and sometimes things happen on the spur that we're not really prepared for in the Speaker's Chair or at the Table, but we always work together and get through it and that. So I thank House Leaders for that there.

To all Members, thank you very much for your co-operation. Sometimes it is challenging there, but there's nothing wrong with a good challenge either, and that's what keeps this job interesting. You never know what the next day is going to bring and what the next challenge is going to bring, but overall, I think we've all had a good working relationship, and I look at all of you as friends and that. Not only just colleagues, but friends. And I wish everybody all the best into the summer.

For those that are not returning, thank you for your years of service, and to those that may not get re-elected, thank you. To those that will be back, I hope to see you all again.

So again, have a great summer – one thing I did do, I just want to remind Members to please clean out your desks before you leave.

As a role, the Speaker, like I said, it's been a great honour to have this role. I did start a tradition when I first started, that's the singing of the Odes, but two other little things that we've done in the last year, year and a half, and I hope that if I'm not Speaker, that whoever takes over the role does continue it, and that is the Mace tour and the Teachers Institute. Very, very

important, and it's something we need to continue to educate people in the public of the role of this House of Assembly.

So, without further ado, I will call upon the Minister of Health and Community Services and the Minister of Rural Economic Development to lead us in the "Ode to Labrador" first.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Dear land of mountains, woods and snow,
Labrador, our Labrador.
God's noble gift to us below,
Labrador, our Labrador.

Thy proud resources waiting still,
Their splendid task will soon fulfill,
Obedient to thy Maker's will,
Labrador, our Labrador.

We love to climb thy mountains steep,
Labrador, our Labrador.
And paddle on thy waters deep,
Labrador, our Labrador.

Our snowshoes scar thy trackless plains,
We seek no city streets nor lanes,
We are thy sons while life remains,
Labrador, our Labrador.

(Members proceed to sing "Ode to Newfoundland.)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: When sunrays crown thy pine-clad hills,
And summer spreads her hand,
When silvern voices tune thy rills,
We love thee, smiling land.

We love thee, we love thee,
We love thee, smiling land.

As loved our fathers, so we love,
Where once they stood, we stand,
Their prayer we raise to Heaven above,
God guard thee, Newfoundland.

God guard thee, God guard thee,
God guard thee, Newfoundland.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm going to try to keep it to 90 seconds. But before I do adjourn, I too want to say thank you to all Members of the House.

June will be 12 years since I was elected to represent the people of Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, and I do want to give a really big shout-out and thank them. As you take on more roles in government, they don't see you as often, but I do try very hard to get back and to always be there for them.

In March, I became the Government House Leader, and I want to thank the Opposition House Leader. I was new and he was more seasoned. But we got through not a lot of legislation, but budget sitting and supply and there were lots there to keep track of.

Having served for 12 years in this House, my colleagues know that I know lot of quotes and one that I say, the only thing constant is change. It's certainly true of my time here. I've seen a lot of people come and go. We're here for a window in time. It's like we're in a relay race and we get passed the baton and we try to make a difference for the term and the time that we serve here, Speaker.

For those not returning, I want to wish them really well. My two Labrador colleagues, who I cherish the friendship of both of them, I will certainly miss them here in this hon. House but I know that we'll stay in touch and that the friendship will continue for both of them long after, Speaker.

I just want to say, again, as people head out into the summer and on the campaign trails and back to their communities, lots of driving, late nights, I want to wish everybody well. The House will look different when we sit again, and I just want to remind everyone of what a tremendous privilege it is to serve.

The high point for me, perhaps, in this sitting, was I got to take 10 Indigenous students on the Trail of the Caribou last July. So now when we sing the Odes, it strikes me a little bit different. When we see the sacrifices that we have made of more than 100,000 of our own buried in foreign soil, I hope that that will continue, that we'll continue to pass the torch of remembrance on and that we'll continue to appreciate and have tremendous respect for the price that was paid and the privilege that we have here and how our democracy functions.

Having said that, I will now move, seconded by the Premier – I'm so proud of him. I'm so proud to serve under this new Premier, elected just a very short time ago. I'm not at all surprised that he ended up where he did. He has certainly got a great team around him. We'll be working hard over the next few months, those of us that plan on coming back and sitting on this side of the House.

I move, seconded by the Premier, that this House do now stand adjourned to the call of the Chair.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

This House do stand adjourned until the call of the Chair.

On motion, the House adjourned to the call of the Chair.