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Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will be hearing members' statements from the members representing the Districts of Port de Grave, Labrador West, Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, The Straits – White Bay North, St. John's East, and Bonavista North.

The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to congratulate the Ascension Astros male baseball team on winning the provincial high school baseball championship held last week.

Baseball continues to grow in Conception Bay North through programs like the Conception Bay North Bulldogs Minor Baseball system and this was very evident in the Astros win. The Astros competed against teams from Holy Heart, Queen Elizabeth, Holy Spirit, Mount Pearl Senior High, and Holy Trinity. They went undefeated throughout the tournament going 5-0 on the weekend.

Mr. Speaker, winning never comes easy. Leading 8-2 going into the final inning the Astros needed some heroics to preserve the win and the title. The Holy Heart team would not go away without a fight, and after already scoring three runs with two out had the tying run to the plate when Ben Murphy hit a ball into the gap scoring one run and probably the second. A great throw by outfielder Nick Parsons to Bradley Adams who then relayed to catcher Mark Barrett just in time to apply the tag and end the Holy Heart comeback.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Ascension Astros Provincial Baseball Champions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand in this hon. House today to congratulate the Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps 2977 on their annual inspection and awards banquet.

Last Saturday afternoon the cadets performed a first-class display at their annual inspection. After the drill inspection and colour parade, the cadets demonstrated many of the exercises they have been training in. That evening I was very pleased to join them at the awards banquet.

Lieutenant Corporal Karley Sheppard was best first year cadet, as well as the Inspecting Officer's Choice Award; Master Corporal Makenzie Hunt was best second year cadet; Master Corporal Alexander Carroll was best third year cadet; and Sergeant Michael Hann was best fourth year cadet.

Master Warrant Officer Randy Pynn received several awards: Lieutenant Stuart Williamson Award, Best Dressed Cadet Award, Royal Canadian Legion Medal of Excellence, and the Army Cadet Service Medal.

Master Corporal Nicholas Travers received the Margaret Williamson Award; Lieutenant Corporal Bianca Penney received the Espirit de Corps Award; Warrant Officer Christopher Tulk Parry received the Community Spirit Award, as well as the Master Warrant Officer Chad Ethridge Award.

The Town of Labrador City Recreation Department was recognized with the Ed Stanley Award.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps 2977 on a very successful year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It is with great pleasure that I rise to salute a constituent of mine who recently received one of the highest honours Memorial University can bestow.

Pioneer filmmaker Barbara Doran was awarded an honorary doctorate of laws degree at the Grenfell Campus, Memorial University graduation ceremony May 8 at the Corner Brook Arts and Culture.

Barb is best known for her impeccable work on films like 2013's award-winning box office hit *The Grand Seduction*. Her two latest projects, which I and countless others are eagerly anticipating, are *Away from Everywhere* and *Newfoundland at Armageddon*, both bringing work to our thriving film community this year.

Many of us also have a deep appreciation for Barb's work as a social activist. She was a founder of the Women's Centre here in St. John's, and of Transition House.

Here is something Barb said to *The Western Star*, which typifies her, "You are making the feature film of your life," she said of the young graduates. "It matters to some extent what deck of cards you're handed, but nobody tells you what game you have to play. You take what you have and work like a dog to make the best of it."

Congratulations, Barb.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate The Iceberg Festival currently in full swing on the Great Northern Peninsula. Attending the opening ceremonies, I was delighted to speak with locals and visitors from many Canadian provinces, the United States, and Germany. They all joined in by dancing, singing with the Growlers, and debuting their expertise on ugly sticks. A major

highlight was chainsaw ice sculpting by Shawn Rumbolt.

The ten-day festival offers daily boat tours, iceberg doughnuts, painting, interpretive tours, wine tasting, glass art, and many other cultural activities, bringing together communities, business, and the local talents showcasing our region. This year's festival brings events from Bird Cove and Port aux Choix, displaying the calibre of its growth and success extending the tourism season.

Grenfell Historical Society opened their Grand Exhibit of Janet Cox's hooked rug collection of the Quebec North Shore. The Flavors of Vinland will feature a celebrity chef mastering local cuisine, local restaurants offer daily treats, and our locals lead it all with their smiles.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating committee members Natasha Hynes, Glenda Noble, Thresa Burden, Cynthia Randell, Paul Alcock, Kara Snow, Kier Knudsen, and Coordinator Ryan Pittman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a week ago, I had the great pleasure of witnessing 107 Grade 6 students take an important pledge that will have a very positive impact on their lives. The Grade 6 students at Mary Queen of Peace were graduating from the DARE program.

Mr. Speaker, the Drug Abuse Resistance program is offered by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary to all Grade 6 students in their jurisdiction. Police officers come to the school and tell the kids in no uncertain terms the health, legal, and social problems they could face if they choose, later in life, to get involved with drugs.

DARE also gives the students the skills they need to take a stand against the illegal use of drugs and the ability to make healthy and wise choices when they come up against the inevitable peer pressure and exposure to substances.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot name them all – as I said, there were 107 graduates at Mary Queen of Peace this year – but I can tell you that the program is entertaining as well as inspiring.

Congratulations to these Grade 6 students who have completed the DARE program, and thank you to the RNC, their teachers, parents, and grandparents for their unmitigated support.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to reflect on one of the oldest icons in Bonavista North. The community, Pool's Island, records settlement around 1810, with names such as Dyke, Sheppard, Starkes, Hoyles, Kean, and Spurrell. The population increased with at least thirty marriages listed between 1845 and 1860. The time had come for a new church: St. James.

Master builder Stephen White of Greenspond was contracted at four shillings eight pence per day (approximately \$1.02) to lead a local force of volunteer labour. The timber for the foundation and the truss framing were pulled from the woods on hand slides and every piece shaped manually.

The first service was conducted by the Reverend William J. Milner on September 15, 1865, and St. James was consecrated on September 24, by the Right Bishop Edward Field. Ninety-seven years later electric lighting was first used in 1962.

On a lighter note, Mr. Speaker; our Minister of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture was baptized at St. James Anglican Church on Pool's Island.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: In September, the congregation of St. James will be celebrating their 150th

anniversary of worship and again will use the old foot pump organ to provide the melody for the first hymn. With a total cost of 303 pounds, St. James Church was constructed as a building as firm as their faith. Mr. Speaker, 150 years and still rejoicing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize National Blood Donor Week and the valuable work of Canadian Blood Services. This week is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the incredible generosity of blood donors across the country and here in Newfoundland and Labrador for their lifesaving contributions.

National Blood Donor Week is also a time to remind everybody about the ongoing need for new donors. Approximately 420,000 Canadians rolled up their sleeves to donate blood last year. To meet demand, Canadian Blood Services regularly collects about 17,000 units of blood per week. As demand increases, close to 1,600 new donors are needed each week to ensure patients can be helped now and into the future.

Mr. Speaker, all of us likely know someone who has been impacted by the need for blood components like red blood cells, platelets, and plasma, or blood products such as Immune Globulin for immune deficiencies, or factor concentrates for bleeding disorders. The theme for this year is Share More. By donating, you are sharing what truly matters most – the gift of life. These donations ensure that many patients are given the chance to live and share more time with family, friends, and loved ones.

I want to applaud the hard work and efforts of Canadian Blood Services, the organization which is responsible for the supply of blood and blood products in all provinces and territories

outside of Quebec. The organization operates forty-one permanent collection sites and more than 21,000 donor clinics annually. Our government provides Canadian Blood Services with approximately \$22.5 million annually to help manage and provide blood components and blood products to patients in Newfoundland and Labrador hospitals and treatment programs.

To schedule a donation, individuals can contact Canadian Blood Services toll-free at 1-800-2-DONATE, visit the blood.ca website or download the GiveBlood app. As Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we are known for our generosity. I call on my hon. colleagues and all residents who are able to donate blood to do so. After all, it's in you to give.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Canadian Blood Services is a national, not-for-profit organization that manages the supply of blood products across the country as well as in our own Province. There is no other organization that provides blood products to the people of this Province – blood being most often used in emergencies, surgeries, and in procedures involving leukemia patients. Transfusions of blood and blood components have become an essential part of health care today. We all have a responsibility to increase awareness, encourage others to give blood, and remember to give blood. I am a blood donor. I can assure you it is simple, it is safe, and it is painless.

I would be remiss if I did not express my disappointment as a resident of the West Coast knowing that the centre on the West Coast is closed. I think that is a disappointment to everybody in this room. It is not just the loss of jobs, but it is the loss of the ability of people all along the West Coast, and especially in rural areas, to give blood and to donate. Hopefully, we can see a change in that someday. I think I

echo everybody in this room when we say we would like to see more opportunity to give blood and not less.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, we encourage everyone to take an hour of your time to give blood. It is important and it does save lives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister of the advance copy of his statement. The management of blood products is a service our health care system could not do without. Canadian Blood Services has proven itself worthy of the job.

It is probably a good news story that medical advances are allowing hospitals to reduce their demand for blood products every year, so much so that sadly they are closing the clinic on the West Coast. However, Canadian Blood Services loses 49 per cent of its donor base each year. Summer is a challenging time when donors are away and not giving blood. Last fall the supply hit a six-year low.

I encourage people to step up and become new donors so our blood supply will be there when people need it. Maybe they will find out they do need the West Coast, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, I stand in this hon. House today to provide an update on the continued maintenance, enhancements, and construction of bridges across Newfoundland and Labrador. I am pleased to report that through significant investments, over the past three years alone twenty-three bridges have been

replaced and repairs have been made to forty other bridges throughout the Province.

A number of bridge projects are currently underway. For example, construction continues on the \$40.6 million Placentia Lift Bridge which is scheduled to be completed in 2016. The bridge represents a major investment by our government in regional infrastructure.

Another major investment in rural infrastructure by our government is being made in the replacement of the Sir Robert Bond Bridge.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Just last week, we awarded a tender for construction of the new Bond Bridge, which is the only east-west highway link that crosses the Exploits. Budget 2015 allocates \$5.3 million for this construction, with subsequent allocations over the next two years, and an anticipated total cost of the project to be approximately \$22.4 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BRAZIL: Other notable bridge projects currently underway include: \$530,000 contract awarded last week for upgrades to the bridge at Coal Brook; \$1 million replacement of the Northeast Trepassey Bridge; bridge replacement at Gull Island in Conception Bay North; and new O'Donnell's Bridge in St. Mary's Bay, which is anticipated to be completed by the fall, and represents a \$2.9 million investment.

Also of note, Mr. Speaker, a tender for the construction of a six-lane bridge at Topsail Road on the Team Gushue Highway will be called this summer.

Mr. Speaker, more than \$660 million is being invested this year in roads, schools, health care facilities, and municipal infrastructure projects – an investment that supports the rural areas of our Province and contributes to economic development. The bridge projects underway are an important part of the activities and we will continue to make the necessary investments to replace and revitalize them throughout the Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of the statement. Nobody can dispute that these bridges are needed; in fact, they have been needed for some time now. The Auditor General has determined that government has failed to carry out the bridge repairs that they promised. Government made a commitment to an eight-year bridge repair strategy and they failed at that miserably. They have made lots of promises, Mr. Speaker, that they have backed out of.

We are dealing with a government that has become better at burning bridges than rebuilding them. Now, Mr. Speaker, we are into an election year and we can expect to hear lots of promises and lots of announcements out of the crowd opposite. They are desperate, Mr. Speaker – they are desperate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: Heck, after government's very own we are going to make the tough decisions Budget did not pan out for them the way they wanted, I would not be surprised to hear announcements of bridges being built in places where there aren't even rivers.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you this. While you cannot count on that crowd opposite, there is one thing you can count on: People will not be bought with their own money.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. The minister stands to tell us

what they have done, but here is what they have not done – and the proof is in the pudding here. When it comes to the Team Gushue Highway, I think this is year seven. It may be not the longest stretch of road but certainly in the running to be the longest one to be done in this Province. Mr. Speaker, how about \$900 million worth of culvert and bridge work in the Auditor General's report last year – unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, last year we tabled a private member's motion asking for an advanced transportation strategy for roads and ferry users in this Province. It still has not been done. We ask government again: Where is the plan for roads and bridges, Minister?

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Truth and Reconciliation report on residential schools contains ninety-four recommendations in its Calls to Action document. Twenty-eight of these recommendations require participation and action from the provinces and the territories.

I ask the Premier: What is your government's official position on addressing these recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Less than one-third of the recommendations in the Calls to Action are under the purview of the

provincial government. Several, at this particular point in time, are already underway by various initiatives through government. It is going to take some time to have a complete analysis of the report. Many of those calls to action will involve multiple departments, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Aboriginals who attended five residential schools in this Province have a lawsuit against the federal government as a result of being excluded from an earlier compensation package. The lawsuit alleges that the Canadian government had responsibility for those victims from 1949 until the schools closed in 1979. They were also excluded from the official Government of Canada's apology in 2008.

I ask the Premier: Does your government support the Aboriginal victims of the residential schools in this Province in their quest for justice?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question and I will talk about the twenty-ninth call to action which specifies that the federal government does indeed deal with those people who were excluded. That is our message from this side of the House, very clear to Ottawa, is that those people who were excluded have to be dealt with. We need the liability issues to be dealt with first and foremost in the courts, and we will stand by the people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In December 2012, Premier Kathy Dunderdale appointed Ross Reid to work on the Population Growth Strategy. At the time, Premier Dunderdale said our aging demographics are scary. Two-and-a-half years later our population is continuing to decrease and the government has not released this long-promised plan.

I ask the Premier: Two-and-a-half years later, why is this plan still not completed?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the department has carried out very much robust consultation over the past two years. That now has been compiled into a document, and I am going to tell the member get us out of this House and he will see the rollout of our Population Growth Strategy within a very short time after that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister or former ministers suggested and said that this report would be released on Canada Day 2014. This was a commitment that was made by this government in 2011. Canada Day 2014 – then they missed that date. Then they said we will announce it at the end of the year in 2014. Now they want to wait to get out of this House in June of 2015.

What does the exit from this House have to do with a Population Growth Strategy for this government?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have a date selected and I am hoping the House is going to be closed on that particular date. If not, there will be a rollout.

We have a plan, Mr. Speaker, that has been developed around four components in population growth. I expect that the people of the Province will be very impressed with what we are going to roll out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I am not so sure how the minister would know when the House is going to close. Secondly, I would like to know why doesn't he just share the date with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, with industry leaders in our Province who have been waiting for this document for a long, long time?

A 2011 commitment, now we are into 2015. What is the date?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, the Population Growth Strategy has been a comprehensive piece of work that has been underway for a long time. It has been underway, as the member opposite has referenced. It has been a very comprehensive piece of work, and all departments across government have had input in it. We have been working on it.

It has been working through all departments. All ministers in government have been engaged in it, Mr. Speaker – a much bigger, comprehensive plan that we are going to roll out in the very near future. It is much bigger than I have ever anticipated, but as the minister had

indicated, our staff and officials in the department are working towards a date to make this announcement, to wrap this up, to finalize it and to make this announcement.

That is our target. We are working there. When we are in a position to confirm that date, we will certainly do that, but I tell you it is going to be a great strategy, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well in all due respect, Premier, your minister, who you have disagreed with in the past few weeks, once again you are disagreeing with here today. The minister says he has a date, the Premier says he is working towards a date.

So I ask the minister: What is your date? Will you please let the Premier know?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, there is no inconsistency between the minister and myself. I know the member opposite is familiar with inconsistencies, we see them in their party on a regular basis. I can tell you, as I have said –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DAVIS: As I have said, Mr. Speaker, this is a very comprehensive plan. A very complex, comprehensive plan, involves every department in government, involves every minister in our government. We are working together. We are working through a process. We are targeting a date, and I can tell you I am very excited by the plan that we are going to roll out, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to the day that we can roll that out and we can announce that to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I will go back to the minister again because he has a date. I would like for him to invite the Premier and other people who are very interested in this.

I ask the minister: Do you have a date, yes or no?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have had numerous stakeholders involved. We have had numerous stakeholders involved in the development of this plan, numerous. We will be contacting them, notifying them of the date, Mr. Speaker.

Again, as the Premier said, this is quite an extensive plan across four sectors. I feel this will be a plan – other than anything we have heard from the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, this is a plan, people will be impressed with it because of the work that has gone into it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, less than 20 per cent of people with the lowest literacy skills are employed. It is not a coincidence that amongst provinces we have the lowest literacy rates, the lowest workforce participation rate, and the highest unemployment rate. Government promised an adult literacy plan eight years ago. Now the minister is saying they probably will not get to it this year either.

I ask the minister: Why is it you cannot set a deadline and stick to it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, unlike the party opposite, we do not feel that we are the worst in the country. We do not.

When she speaks to unemployment rates; 2013 and 2014 had the lowest unemployment rates in this Province since they started recording employment rates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: It speaks to where we are. We continue to invest in literacy skills and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, I am quoting Stats Canada, and eighteen months of year over year job losses, you cannot make it up.

The Province is getting roughly \$7.5 million annually from the federal government for the Canada Job Fund Agreements. That agreement allows the Province to spend 100 per cent of that \$7.5 million on employment services and supports until 2017. Literacy is listed in the agreement as one of these supports.

I ask the minister: What is your excuse for delaying a desperately needed literacy strategy when you have millions in federal funding to do so?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, we continue to invest in adult literacy. All you have to do is speak to the numbers that are enrolled in those programs. There is no doubt about it.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at our investment and our continued investment in literacy, we are doing justice to the program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MR. FLYNN: Mr. Speaker, consolidating administrative health care services is being portrayed as a way to find savings. The minister expects savings of between \$18 million and \$26 million over five years. I assume the minister has completed an analysis of this move.

I ask the minister: Will he table the analysis of the cost savings to this House?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, in arriving at the decision to pursue a shared services model for our regional health authorities in Newfoundland and Labrador, we did considerable analysis.

Over the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker – the work started in 2013 – we engaged a consultant, Deloitte, who did a very extensive study, which I would be happy to share with hon. members, that outlined projected savings. Within the regional health authorities and within our department we have done additional work to make sure that we do this in the right way. We are looking closely at what New Brunswick has done with FacilioCorpNB. We are looking closely at what jurisdictions like Saskatchewan and British Columbia have done, where it has saved money, and it has resulted in a more efficient system and better focus on patient safety and patient care.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MR. FLYNN: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister said he is prepared to table it, so I would really like to know when. As a follow up, government plans to consolidate shared administrative

services for four health boards and the Centre for Health Information. Stress levels of our dedicated workers are very high. Government has not been clear about where the shared service organizations will be located, or how they will function.

So I ask the minister: Why are you keeping these details from the health care workers who are going to be impacted?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you one thing. We are not going to wipe out services in rural Newfoundland and Labrador like they are prepared to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: We are also not going to gut the public service like the Member for Virginia Waters is prepared to do, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: I can assure you there will still be people carrying out these functions in the various regional health authorities. Purchasing, procurement, supply chain, human resources, information technology, finance, payroll. There will still be people on the ground in our health care facilities and in our regions to deliver those services. It will be centrally coordinated to save taxpayers money, and to find efficiencies, and make the health care system more sustainable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We do look forward to the minister tabling that report.

Experts say that flavoured tobacco appeals to young people, encourages experimentation, and leads to higher rates of addiction among our youth. The candy and fruit-flavoured cigarettes

are clearly aimed at them. This is alarming, since nearly 17 per cent of our Province's students are already smoking.

So I ask the minister: Why hasn't your government banned flavoured tobacco products in our Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I believe one day in the House here the Premier answered a question on this, that we are reviewing and we have been considering options for legislation. We agree with Health Canada as to the stand they are taking on it. There is not enough research being done into this product yet to know what the side effects are. We are continuing to look forward to drawing up legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, it is funny how fast this government can move on legislation to prolong election dates but they cannot move forward with legislation that might protect lives, especially of young people.

Again, I disagree with the minister. There is enough research done on this. Nova Scotia has already banned the sale of flavoured tobacco products, and Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Alberta are already following suite.

I ask the minister, or the Premier: Given that our Province has the highest rates of smoking in all of the provinces, why are you not leading the charge and protecting the health of our Province, especially our youth?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we are taking this entire issue quite

seriously. We are, again, into looking at drafting legislation around e-cigarettes and also around flavoured tobacco.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, in April we put forth a private member's motion calling for a seniors' advocate. Government voted against it. The minister responsible said seniors have access to enough.

I ask the minister: Are you aware that overall, seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador have the lowest median income among all provinces?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are quite aware. We are also aware of the many challenges that face seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are quite aware that we have the fastest aging population in the country, right here.

We understand there are seniors, especially in rural parts of our Province, who have some of the most challenging circumstances in their lives, Mr. Speaker. Because of that, I created a new department and I created a minister responsible for seniors. We are establishing programs and services. We are working with seniors, seniors groups, and organizations. We are funding seniors groups and organizations. We are providing better transportation for seniors, better social activities, and better supports for seniors all over Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to improve the services for the seniors of our Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, elderly couples, and single, elderly women in Newfoundland and Labrador are the poorest in Canada. Elderly

men living alone ranked second poorest. The median income for a senior living alone in this Province is \$20,000. This means that half the seniors live on less than \$20,000 per year.

I ask the Premier: Do you agree with your minister that seniors have access to enough?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, if we were more than satisfied with circumstances that seniors in our Province face, I would not have made the move to create a new department in our government. I created a new department for seniors for a key focus on seniors throughout our Province, all seniors throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the plans we are creating are working. We are executing our plans and we are seeing the benefits of them. We are seeing them broadly in government.

You will see as well that we are making improvements to seniors, the lives of seniors, and the quality of life of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. We are not going to rest until we do everything we can to benefit the seniors of our Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, this government's indifference to the ongoing math performance crisis was demonstrated by the Acting Minister of Education last week. In response to questions about the math review announced in this year's Budget, the minister talked about funding for a math strategy that was announced in 2008 – seven years ago.

I will ask the minister again: What is the plan for this year? Exactly how much new funding has

been set aside in Budget 2015 for your so-called math performance review?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, with respect to our math review, I have acknowledged in the House that there are lots of comments and concerns around the Province with math. Now I did comment that we will provide the funding through the department, through curriculum, through our Excellence in Math Strategy. I have also indicated if we need to find money, we will find it within the department because of the importance of the issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I did not say – I was a little bit misquoted in some of the media in that I am looking and acknowledging there are problems with the curriculum. What we need do, to be clear, is take a look at math as a whole. It is not just curriculum.

We need to look at how it is being delivered, how teachers are learning and how kids are learning, what is the role of parents, and what is the role of our post-secondary institutions. That is the conversation we want to have and I invite the member opposite to provide some suggestions.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, the fact is government has long failed students by dismissing educators' concerns, by blaming teachers, and by not taking declining math scores seriously enough. In the end, it is children who suffer along with their parents who often feel helpless and just plain frustrated.

I ask the minister: If he serious about correcting government's failed record on mathematics, when will the math performance review announced well over a month ago start its work?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, some of the latest results are indicating that we are seeing improvements in math performance, particularly at the academic and honours levels in the high schools. We know the importance of math in graduation.

We are seeing higher graduations rates, Mr. Speaker. We are seeing our dropout rates have improved dramatically. We are now seeing that more and more students are graduating from high school with an academic or honours completion, Mr. Speaker, an increase of over 10 per cent in the past ten years.

There are a lot of good things happening. Again, to acknowledge particularly in math, there is a brand new curriculum that has been implemented and a curriculum that is being used across the country in many provinces. We want to have a look at that, we want to invite people to have the conversation about math, and let's see if we cannot even improve the success that we have had so far.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week the minister of agrifoods had no answers about a review of how Crown lands are designated for agricultural use.

I ask the minister to clarify: Has government reviewed how Crown lands are released for agricultural use, separate from the Lands Act Review, as you have stated it was being done back in March?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency.

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, as we move the agricultural industry forward the Province, as I said in Estimates last week, we are looking at

every opportunity in the Province to open up more land that we have in the Province for future development for agriculture. We have an agricultural land development initiative, that this year we are providing \$750,000 to dairy farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador. We are opening up more land for cranberry development in the Province, and we want to take more land that we have in the Province and be able to turn it over to agricultural development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East.

MR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the availability of land is very important to the future of agriculture in this Province and this is what the minister said last week when I asked him about that – in March when I asked him about this. He said: I understand there is a separate review taking place with this particular issue. I will get the details and report back to the hon. member where we are with that review.

Can he tell us what is happening with this review? Is there a separate review related to the agricultural use of Crown lands?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, within the department, I have individuals tasked with looking at what availability of land that we have in the Province, whether we take it out of forestry land, whether we cut trees on that, whether we look at land that we would use for agricultural development.

As I said, we have \$750,000 this year, cranberry development – also, as the hon. member is really aware, I can list of many, many projects in the Growing Forward 2 program, a program between the federal and provincial government with land consolidation and land use and reusing land and taking new land for agricultural development in the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Budget 2015 allocated money to complete two projects on the Trans-Canada Highway this year. One from Gambo to Benton, the other from Salmonier Line to Whitbourne; however, these two tenders call for different specifications for asphalt.

I ask the minister: Why are you demanding different specifications for liquid asphalt on the Avalon Peninsula versus the project in Central Newfoundland?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The simple question is asked. The simple answer is, it is about safety. The different specs here are about polymer mixture being put in high traffic volume areas. One of the big issues we have here, one of the big fears is the rutting we have on our highways, particularly in high traffic volume areas.

This polymer mixture is a new technology being used and a new mixture that will ensure better quality of pavement in that area. High volume areas are where we have our rutting. We want to make sure that works. Traditional pavement has shown to work very diligently in areas where we have lesser volumes of traffic, Mr. Speaker.

While it is an investment for the people of the Province, it is an investment around safety. That is what my department is all about and this Administration is all about, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, the industry does not mind trying out new technologies if it

means a safer highway. The problem is there was no notification given to industry until this tender was put out. The suppliers of this new technology, this new liquid asphalt, are not able to supply it. There is only one contractor who can product their own liquid asphalt, can supply their own. Other contractors cannot bid on this tender, Mr. Speaker, because they cannot get access to the liquid asphalt, either in this Province or abroad.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the member to quickly get to his question.

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, why he is setting up a monopoly for one contractor in this Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to clarify. That is not accurate what the hon. member there is sharing, the information. Let me explain why, Mr. Speaker.

Polymer mixture, we have been using that for five years in a multitude of contracts. Only two years ago, we used 1,123 tons in a mixture in a contract there. This year, we are going up to 1,700 tons. Not a big stretch, but because we are doing a bigger part of the Trans-Canada Highway, because we are investing more in safety for the people of this Province, because there are higher volumes of traffic, we want to ensure the job that is being done is a job that is done right and will be safe for the people travelling.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: I might note also, Mr. Speaker. We used 9,000 tons on the Trans-Labrador Highway last year to ensure safety, and the quality of that road is second to none.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is an historical document with ninety-four interrelated recommendations, neither one more important than another.

I ask the Premier, if he will unequivocally support these recommendations and work with the federal and Aboriginal governments to ensure implementation of all of the recommendations as asked for by Aboriginal people?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a very important report recently released, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is right; there are actually ninety-four calls to action that have resulted from this.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to advise the member opposite, and all Members of the House of Assembly, that in July I will be hosting meetings of Canadian Premiers here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We will start first to have our meetings in Labrador. That will include national Aboriginal leaders.

I can tell you that the authors of the report have been invited to come and meet with Canadian Premiers and Canadian Aboriginal leaders so we can have a full discussion on the contents of the report, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you we very much look forward to it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It is too bad the Premier was not there today to hear the past Lieutenant Governor say: too much time has been wasted and he is continuing wasting time.

I ask the Premier, if he will do the right thing without any delay and call for a settlement of the class-action lawsuit of the men and women who were forced to attend the residential schools in this Province through mediation, not trial?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In just slightly over a month from now the Canadian Premiers and national Aboriginal leaders will be convening here in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DAVIS: Hardly a delay, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you, we look very much forward – and I had a conference call this week with provincial leaders from across the country, just earlier this week, and we had a discussion about this very matter. We are all in agreement that it is very important for us to have an engaged and full, frank discussion on this very, very important matter. There is certainly no delay here. In a matter of a few weeks we will be meeting to have a comprehensive discussion at that time as well, face to face.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, the Port au Port Fishery Committee approached the Department of Environment in early 2014 to investigate an alarming increase in oil in the Shoal Point and Port au Port Bay region. Again in April, the Committee wrote the Minister of Environment requesting that the spill sites be included in the

national inventory of contaminated sites. The department clearly knew about the spills back then.

I ask the minister: Why the inaction on the part of the department in this case?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is correct. We were contacted by individuals on the West Coast, the Committee that you are talking about. We did respond to that request to go out and have a look and see what is going on.

Our officials were onsite. We did examine what was happening there. There was no significant oil seepage at the time, or any leaks at the time, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I said yesterday in the House that oil has been seeping through the ground there for over 100 years at recorded history, and that is why they drilled for oil there 100 years ago as well.

We are looking into the situation today. We are hoping to get more information. We were there yesterday on site, we are on site again today, and we are going to find out exactly what is going on.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, despite what the minister said yesterday, these wellheads that are out there in the area are not a natural occurring phenomenon. They are done by man. They are leaking oil into the environment.

Fishermen in the area are concerned that they are losing a fishery – a very valid fishery out there in the area. How long do they have to wait before government acts to clean up these leaking wells?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, again, we need to find out exactly what is going on. Our analysis has shown in past studies out there that there is about two barrels of oil leaking a year naturally in the area. A little tiny bit of oil in the water will spread a sheen right across as big as this House of Assembly, and that is what we see sometimes when we are out there.

Mr. Speaker, there is naturally occurring oil out there; but, I will tell you what, if there are wells that are leaking, we will find them and we will fix them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. WISEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pension Act, Bill 15.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the community of Northern Bay is a significant tourist attraction in the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde; and

WHEREAS the site of a commercial building was destroyed by fire several years ago; and

WHEREAS the remains of this fire still exist along Route 70 in Northern Bay;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure the necessary cleanup occurs.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is my third time, I think, entering this petition on behalf of the residents of the North Shore of Conception Bay, and I am a little disappointed in the department and the reaction they have taken to this petition. The minister tells me that they have looked at the situation. I brought this issue to the House about two-and-a-half weeks ago and we have seen no concrete action. I wrote the minister about a week ago as well, with no response whatsoever, not even an acknowledgment of my letter.

This is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, and I call upon the minister and I call upon the Department of Environment to ensure the necessary cleanup happens in Northern Bay along Route 70. This is a very important tourism attraction in the Conception Bay North area, and it is time the government take responsibility for this situation and ensure the necessary cleanup.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. J. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS there is no cellphone service in the Town of Trout River, which is an enclave community in Gros Morne National Park; and

WHEREAS visitors to Gros Morne National Park, more than 100,000 annually, expect to communicate by cellphone when they visit the park; and

WHEREAS cellphone service has become a very important aspect of everyday living for residents; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is an essential safety tool for visitors and residents; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is essential for business development;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage throughout Gros Morne National Park, and the enclave community of Trout River.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by all residents of the Town of Trout River. Trout River is approximately 650 people on the southern end of the district that is currently St. Barbe district. I was absolutely shocked yesterday to hear the Premier criticize members for presenting petitions. This is a petition of the people who signed the petition, not a petition of the member. Mr. Speaker, it is a petition of the people who signed the petition.

The Premier went on to say in his response to the Budget how the Opposition is always asking for money and money and more money. Well,

Mr. Speaker, one of the oldest forms of a plea for help, one of the oldest forms of a request for a benefit, is in a petition. In the old days, it used to be a boon requested from the lord of the manor – not unlike the Premier will be after September 25 when he is no longer legitimately the Premier, unless he changes the law to make him hang on to power as the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, to say that you cannot present petitions in the House of Assembly because it might cost some money, when the people are pleading with this government – and this is a government that says it is open, it is accountable, and that it listens and they do not even want to hear a petition from people pleading for a partnering of government with the private sector to advance cellphone service that so many people consider a norm in everyday life today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS government has a responsibility to ensure that Internet access is broadly available so people have the right to be able to access the Internet in order to exercise and enjoy their rights to freedom of expression and opinion and other fundamental human rights; and

WHEREAS the Town of Goose Cove still remains without broadband services; and

WHEREAS residents rely on Internet service for education, business, communication, and social activity; and

WHEREAS wireless and wired technologies exist to provide broadband service to rural communities to replace slower dial-up service;

We the undersigned petition the House of Assembly to urge government to assist providers to ensure the Town of Goose Cove is in receipt of broadband Internet services in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by all residents of Goose Cove, Goose Cove East on the Northern Peninsula, and like my colleague, the Member for St. Barbe had highlighted a petition around cellphone coverage. Advancing telecommunications is one of the critical aspects that will help foster economic development and growth, along with advanced transportation networks. We have not seen that in the Budget document.

We have not even seen any reference to broadband Internet in terms of new investments and how the gaps will be filled for more than 100 communities that exist in Newfoundland and Labrador that do not have access to broadband internet, and many more areas and public highways that do not have access to cell coverage. A true strategy must be developed. There are other jurisdictions that are capitalizing and making sure that people are well-connected, because we do need to have a connected society in Newfoundland and Labrador so we can capitalize on business, education, and social opportunities that exist to build vibrant communities.

I think when you look at municipalities like Goose Cove and Bide Arm in my particular District of The Straits – White Bay North, they are quite upset. They are an organized entity, and they are not able to provide their services to the full potential because they do not have access to broadband Internet.

So I urge the House to support my petitioners.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS Route 510 from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay is in deplorable condition and requires immediate upgrading; and

WHEREAS the condition of the highway is causing undue damage to vehicles using the highway and is a safety hazard for the travelling public; and

WHEREAS both residential and commercial traffic has increased dramatically with the opening of the Trans-Labrador Highway and increased development in Labrador; and

WHEREAS cold patching is no longer adequate as a means of repair;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately allocate resources to Route 510 from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay that allows for permanent resurfacing of the highway.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, just a minute or so before I got up on that petition I had an email pop in. I get the advisories on the ferry in the Strait of Belle Isle. Luckily, now most days we are not getting them saying she is not going because of ice.

The advisory that came out today said: note there will be two additional crossings due to extra heavy commercial traffic – extra crossings. So that is good, they are accommodating the extra crossings.

Like I hear many, many times when I am in the district, this was just confirmation that with a heavy, mega industrial project, Muskrat Falls, we are seeing a big ramp-up of traffic, a convoy of commercial traffic. It is making a bad, dilapidated, almost forty-year-old stretch of road much, much worse, Mr. Speaker. If the life of pavement is about twenty, twenty-five years old, we have gone a decade; we have gone almost

two decades past the expiration date of that. It is very, very concerning around the whole safety.

I talked last night at length around the tourism piece, Mr. Speaker, and how we are coming into tourism season. Those of us who drive the road every day, we know how to manoeuvre. We know how to pull into the parking lots of businesses. The bus stops that the children are on know how to do that. The ambulances know how to do that.

Mr. Speaker, we have visitors who are coming down visiting the region and they do not know about that. It will be a sad, sad reality if someone is killed on that stretch of highway, Route 510, from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay. We have been putting cold patch, cold patch – seven-and-a-half tractor-trailer loads this year. I do not know what the cost of that was. We will find out how much again this year.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Where is the plan? Where is Route 510 from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay on this government's list of priorities? It absolutely has to be one of the worst stretches of road in this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS Tordon 101 contains the chemicals 2, 4-D and Picloram; and

WHEREAS the chemical Picloram is a known cancer-causing carcinogen; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has banned the cosmetic use of the pesticide 2, 4-D; and

WHEREAS safer alternatives are available to the provincial government for brush clearing such as manual labour, alternative competitive

seeding methods, and/or the mechanical removal of brush; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of its citizens;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to cease the use of chemicals covered under its own cosmetic pesticide ban and begin using safer methods of brush clearance that will not place its citizens in harm's way; and

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is June, the glorious month of June.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: I am pretty sure the government must be getting ready to consider some of its tenders out there for roadside brush clearing, and amongst the things they will be considering, of course, is the use of which chemical they are going to be using.

We do know, Mr. Speaker, we have had a partial victory on this. Just a very small victory in that government is going to be using Garlon now as one of the chief chemicals they will be using in roadside brush clearing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask members for their co-operation, please.

The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know some of the government members are quite excited whenever they hear me talk about these chemicals, so I appreciate their attention on this.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing I wanted to reiterate is while this is June month and while government is making the consideration for roadside brush clearing, we still have not had an answer from the Muskrat Falls Project as regards to the chemicals they are going to be using there.

Mr. Speaker, one of the chemicals they are going to be using is Sylgard; the other is going to be Agent White, which is also a mixture of Tordon 101. We have a grave concern, Mr. Speaker, when you are talking about 1,200 or 1,300 kilometres of right-of-way for a set of wires that are going to be coming in from Churchill Falls all the ways to the Avalon Peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, we have concerns as regards to the amount of chemicals that are going to be dumped into our own environment. We already know, of course, some of these chemicals are banned and some of these chemicals, like I said, are carcinogens. We know that if this is going to be a long-term project, of course there is going to be long-term use of this chemical as well, so it is going to be building up in the environment. It is going to be going downstream from where it is sprayed and it is going to be causing damage.

I ask the government to consider and to implement the facts behind its own banning of chemicals and make sure that this chemical is also not going to be part of the environment in the future here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Keep its health care costs low too, because we know some of these chemicals are cancer causing. There are a lot better alternatives out there, and we are asking government to consider those.

We also know the Province of Ontario has banned upwards of eighty-eight chemicals. This Province has only banned four. It should be looking at more chemicals to place on the list.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. HILLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a petition for brush clearing on Manuels Access Road.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS Route 2 on the Conception Bay South Bypass is the second busiest highway in the Province; and

WHEREAS we must ensure the safety of the residents who use the access road especially when driving at night; and

WHEREAS brush clearing can reduce the risks to drivers from the local moose population;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to allocate funding to include brush clearing for the Manuels Access Road.

Mr. Speaker, this is a group of times, I guess, that I have brought this particular petition forward, and really we are talking about moose management on the Manuels Bypass Road, particularly between Fowlers Road and Weir's Pit. This highway we are looking at 20,000 to 30,000 vehicles a day on peak days. It is the second busiest highway in the Province.

Yesterday the Premier talked about the cost of all of the petitions that we have brought forward. I see no extra cost in this petition. We know that the money has been budgeted for moose management in this Province. It is just a matter of priority. Last time I spoke to this, I talked about Pitts Memorial Drive having been cleared east of the Trans-Canada. We talked about clearance in front of the Galway development. We talked about clearance in front of Southlands. We talked about clearance at Admiralty Wood. We talked about clearance at Donovan's Industrial Park, and in the median at Ruth Avenue.

In the past, I have talked about the fact that the last tender for this brush cutting went to nine specific Tory districts. Mr. Speaker, it is not about new money; it is about setting the priorities for this work. I am asking that the next

priority be for this District of Conception Bay South.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the community of Bristol's Hope is expressing ongoing concern regarding the need to make repairs to the Beach Road which has been severely damaged by storm waves, and this has caused major concerns to the community of Bristol's Hope as it pertains to fire protection and safety; and

WHEREAS this lack of repair by government constitutes a fire and safety hazard to the community since the residents will be trapped in if a fire ever took place; and

WHEREAS this damaged roadway is also creating an environmental concern as the Atlantic Ocean has washed in over the roadway and out into the freshwater pond where the fish are in the pond; and

WHEREAS this area serves as a capelin run each year, which attracts a great many local residents and tourists to the site; and

WHEREAS the federal government refuses to assist with this repair, as they deem there is no associated fishing activity to justify investment;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to respond to pleas from the community residents to have this road repaired to previous condition and urge government to repair the road.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a petition that I have brought here, basically, since I came into the House. I have presented many of those on behalf of the Town of Bristol's Hope, and also the Town of Freshwater. Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you, we on this side – that road down there, it was always a roadway and for whatever reason the Department of Transportation gave up on keeping the road open. I do not know what went on there.

Mr. Speaker, this has been done a few years back and anyway government has just given up on it altogether. I have some grave concerns for the people in Bristol's Hope –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) Class 4 road?

MR. SLADE: It is a road. It was a road. I do not know what you mean by Class 4 road.

MR. WISEMAN: (Inaudible) your Administration gave those up actually.

MR. SLADE: No, actually it was your Administration, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I am just going to go on there because the Minister of Finance is over there and he may think it is funny but I can assure the minister to the people in Freshwater this is not funny.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: The minister might get over there and make fun of it, but this is not funny. I will you something, Mr. Speaker, if anything ever takes place in the community of Bristol's Hope where people get caught in there in a fire situation, I will keep this government responsible for what takes place there, because it is what I say here all the time –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: – when do it become about the people of this great Province of ours, Mr. Speaker. When do the people get their say?

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for St. George's –
Stephenville East.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition related to a dangerous
intersection in Black Duck Siding, Mr. Speaker.

The petition reads: To the hon. House of
Assembly in the Province of Newfoundland and
Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition
of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the entrance to the Community of
Black Duck Siding is on a dangerous turn along
White's Road; and

WHEREAS the school bus has to take this
dangerous intersection; and

WHEREAS despite the reduction in the speed
limit on the turn and the cutting down of the
brush in the area, this is still a dangerous
intersection, especially in winter; and

WHEREAS there is another entrance to this side
road which has been closed that could be
reopened to make it a safer intersection;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your
petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the
House of Assembly to urge the Government of
Newfoundland and Labrador to consult with the
residents of the community of Black Duck
Siding and take action to rectify this dangerous
situation.

Mr. Speaker, that is the petition. It has been
signed by most people in Black Duck Siding.
Black Duck Siding is a community on White's
highway which is the route from Stephenville to
the Trans-Canada Highway on your way to
Corner Brook. It is a very busy road and the
people of Black Duck Siding are saying that this
turn into Farm Road, especially coming out of
there in winter, is a very dangerous intersection.

They are asking government to look at what can
be done to rectify this dangerous situation.

As I said in the petition, the school bus has to
take this intersection to take the children to the
school, so it is a dangerous situation for them,
especially in the winter. I have been to Black
Duck Siding many times to visit constituents
and since people have brought this issue up with
me I have noticed as well – especially in winter,
especially this winter where we have had a lot of
snow, the banks of snow are piled up along this
road and – it is a very dangerous intersection to
get out of. I think there are ways that
government could rectify this if they were so
willing.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked to officials in the
department. They are aware of this situation.
They are aware that it is a dangerous
intersection. They want some guidance on
whether or not government sees this as a
priority.

The people who signed this petition are asking
government to see this as a priority, to do
something about it, and to make their
intersection to their community safer. I am
calling on government to have a look at this as
well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for
Burgeo – La Poile.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province
of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament
assembled, the petition of the undersigned
residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS private and community ambulance
operators provide ambulatory and paramedic
services to the residents of Newfoundland and
Labrador and are compensated for these services
by the Government of Newfoundland and
Labrador; and

WHEREAS the contract for ambulance
operators expired in March 2012; and

WHEREAS the government completed a review of ambulatory services in the Province, which the review was completed August 2013 and released to the public in October 2013; and

WHEREAS ambulance operators agreed to hold off from negotiations with government until the review is complete and showed good faith; and

WHEREAS government's current position in negotiations has been heavy handed and will see cuts in ambulance service across the Province;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the government to negotiate a fair deal with ambulance operators that ensures the safety of our ambulance professionals as well as patients in our Province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have presented petitions on this situation on a number of occasions. I have asked questions in the House. I have spoken during debate. I have spoken in the Budget. Because this is an issue that affects just about every single person in this Province, whether you are rural, whether you are urban, and that is a fact. The first line health and safety provider are paramedics. The fact is, when we have to make that first phone call when there is a situation that is the people we are calling.

Unfortunately, this is a group that has not been able to get anywhere. For the last, almost three years, they have been operating without a contract. Now, they did so at first in co-operation with government. They said you are doing a review. In good faith, we will hold off and see what that review shows. They have the review. There were announcements made in last year's Budget, and now this year there has been nothing.

I understand there have been negotiations ongoing. I look across at the Minister of Finance who holds the money, and I hope there is something going to happen soon with these people. I would like to see that happen just as much as anybody in this House.

Again, I am hoping it gets done. It needs to get done. Hopefully, sometime soon. Unfortunately, we do not want to wait like some other announcements, they say we will let you

know when the House closes. I hope this House is still open so that the minister can stand up and make a pronouncement about how they took care of this issue. I would love that more than anybody else because these are the people we rely on and they deserve to be treated fairly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

From Orders of the Day, we will go to Motion 11 and Motion 12. I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Motion 11, pursuant to Standing Order 11 that this House does not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Tuesday, June 9, 2015.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Motion 12, pursuant to Standing Order 11 that this House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. today, Tuesday, June 9, 2015.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The motion is that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, and further to that, that this House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. tonight.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again from the Order Paper, I go to Motion 4. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a

bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act, Bill 7, and I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act, Bill 7, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 7 be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act," carried. (Bill 7)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act. (Bill 7)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been a read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 7 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act, Bill 8, and I further move that the bill now be read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend

The Services Charges Act, Bill 8, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 8 and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act," carried. (Bill 8)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act. (Bill 8)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has not been read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 8 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act, Bill 9, and I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Justice shall have leave to introduce Bill 9, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 9 be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act," carried. (Bill 9)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act. (Bill 9)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 9 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Health And Community Services Act, Bill 11, and I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Health And Community Services Act, Bill 11, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 11 and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Health And Community Services Act," carried. (Bill 11)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Health And Community Services Act. (Bill 11)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 11 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act No. 2, Bill 12, and I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act No. 2, Bill 12, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 12 and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act No. 2," carried. (Bill 12)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend the Income Tax Act No. 2. (Bill 12)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 12 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the House of Assembly Act, Bill 13, and I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The House of Assembly Act, Bill 13, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce Bill 13 and that the bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Government House Leader to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The House of Assembly Act," carried. (Bill 13)

CLERK: A bill, An Act to Amend the House of Assembly Act. (Bill 13)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 13 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, from the Order Paper, Order 2, An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland And Labrador Act, Bill 2.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 2.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 2, and that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now considering An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland and Labrador Act, Bill 2.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland And Labrador Act." (Bill 2)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is my first opportunity to speak to Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland and Labrador Act. I listened intently to the debate that occurred, especially with the member, the colleague for Mount Pearl South. He highlighted quite extensively about this particular bill and what it is doing in terms of being a mirror form of legislation with the federal government and the provincial governments when it comes to increasing the no-fault spill liability for companies operating in the Atlantic offshore.

That is about increasing that liability, the no-fault, from \$30 million to \$1 billion. That is certainly something that is a very positive step forward, I believe. In 2013, in June actually, this is something that the Leader of the Official Opposition had been calling for the change since the release of the federal environment commissioner's report that happened in February 2012. It was brought to the floor of the House of Assembly three months after that. In March of 2013, of a news release that was issued, it stated that the existing liability of \$30 million is pathetically low and that it is a good thing that the federal and provincial governments have announced their intention.

It is certainly, in my view, a piece of legislation that the Official Opposition will be supporting. I will have some questions as we move forward in this particular piece of legislation.

I wanted to note, particularly, that the polluter pay is fundamental. This type of legislation that we see at-fault liability of offshore operators for damages will remain unlimited. So if it is at fault, it is unlimited. That is something that must be very clear.

We have seen in the past where the concept of polluter pay has been stated, and in other aspects

where the provincial government thought that they would have security, that it would be the polluter pay. I just think of the AbitibiBowater expropriation where it ended up that the taxpayers were on the hook. Seeing this form of framework in legislation and clearly identifying what polluter pay means is an important step.

The federal environment commissioner in that report highlighted that the Province was really unprepared for a major oil spill offshore. What we saw in the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico really led everybody, the industry and government, to look at improving the safety and making sure that the environment is being protected, and that we have very stringent legislation to make sure that those guidelines are in place, and that the financial impact is also there in case there is something that would happen. We must do what we can to prevent disaster and crisis from happening that impacts people's livelihoods and the provincial economy.

This is something that was noted. It requires the amendments to the Canada-Newfoundland Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland and Labrador Act. This is where we are today, basically two years after this press release that was put forward by the Official Opposition leader saying that this is an important piece of legislation, and looking forward to it being debated, and seeing the full impact and what it means to the people of the Province.

My colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl South, outlined extensively what the legislation would do in terms of a no-fault liability cap, highlighting as well that the minister – I believe it is further. It states that there is ministerial discretion though. This may be something that the minister could highlight or answer. The minister is able to reduce the liability from \$1 billion. There are questions about how and why this would be done.

Maybe the minister could provide an example or further clarity around where the minister would have that type of particular discretion as to why it would be scaled down in some cases or instance. It does state the direct access deposit required for drilling production from the \$30 million to \$100 million for a single operator or pooled to \$250 million if jointly there are

multiple operators, and in our offshore environment we see where the companies that are operating in that environment have taken shared risk and many of the operations do have multiple operators.

I would have some question around Nalcor and how the Nalcor Energy corporation – the financial impact that it will have because it is connected to equity stakes and taking an equity stake in like Hebron and other developments that have taken place or proposed to take place, what will this mean to their financial statements. If the minister could further explain that around the impact of Nalcor and being able to produce, whether it be about the particular bond through the insurer, or if they already have secured this in place, that is something that is of concern. The minister states multiple times in the House of Assembly how Nalcor is the people's company, and just clarity on that would be an important aspect for me.

There is another point that I wanted to raise around the spill-treating agents, the STAs that are there, because the board will be allowed to approve the use of STAs, the spill-treating agents, which are chemical dispersants in conditions where it is deemed that they will result in a net environmental benefit and approvals will be made on a case-by-case basis.

I would like the minister to further explain what would qualify, or in other jurisdictions where STAs have been used where a net environmental benefit would be gained. Because you are talking about placing chemicals in our ocean environment and there is a sensitive ecosystem that would be there in terms of marine and mammal life. We see where in many cases there are certain risk of spills and disaster where we have seen things happen all across the Province, when we look at making sure that we contain and we do things appropriately with our environment and protecting it, like the *Manolis L* situation, containing a leak or an environment and removing oils before chemical dispersions get placed. The same thing where we see on the West Coast in the Port au Port area with shale being dispersed and the oil that is there.

Maybe one of my colleagues has been making commentary on that. I think we do need some clarity around the net environmental benefit.

That is something I want to feel comfortable with. I want a more clear answer from the minister, and highlighting that it is a case-by-case basis. What type of proposal, or information, or documentation would have to be supplied by the company? Would there be an assessment given? If there is a spill and things are happening very quickly, is there a timeline or a protocol? Are all these scenarios pre-submitted?

This is something obviously that the minister would have to act on rather expeditiously. If we look at the cause and the reason why we are here debating this particular legislation, when we look at the Gulf blowout that happened, and the significant cost of upwards of \$20 billion, I believe, the environmental damage and what it meant to the commercial fishery in the Gulf of Mexico, how it impacted warm water shrimp species and all of these types of things. It is significant. We do need further answers, I think, when we are debating such an important bill that is being mirrored and already been debated, I believe, in Nova Scotia and at the federal level.

The bill allows as well for non-financial damages, environmental to be included, so that the provincial and federal governments can seek compensation for losses and damages, cost and expenses incurred by a board, Canada, or Newfoundland and Labrador, and loss of non-use value related to any public resources that are affected. So the C-NLOPB authority under CEAA 2012: the board will continue to be responsible for environmental assessments for offshore activities. As a result of an oversight, CEAA 2012 did not list the board as a responsible authority for environmental assessments. Maybe the minister would like to make some commentary on that.

I do have some other points I want to make, but since I did raise a few issues, Mr. Chair, around the bill and around this piece, I would like to give the minister an opportunity to maybe respond to those specific questions. I will take my seat.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the comment and the questions, I guess. I will endeavour to provide some answers, Mr. Chair, and certainly do the best I can.

One of the first issues the member raised was around the discretion of the minister to reduce the liability. As we know, this bill is about protecting the environment and increasing the absolute liability from \$100 million to \$1 billion. It is very positive legislation.

I remind people that this is mirror legislation. It has already been accepted by the federal government. It has already been accepted by the Offshore Petroleum Board and the Nova Scotia government, Mr. Chair, and we are endeavouring to do the same here. So collectively, the three groups have worked on this legislation. It has taken some time, but as a result of what we are seeing happening around the world, it is very positive legislation. I think it is a good piece of legislation.

Within that, Mr. Chair, there are a number of amendments and changes. With respect to the ministerial discretion to reduce liability, the minister alone does not have that discretion. The board can make a recommendation to reduce the liability or increase the liability. In order to do that, it has to have signoff by the provincial Minister of Natural Resources, as well as the federal minister. It is not just a board arbitrarily making a decision, the recommendation comes forward. So there is some protection there.

In the event, for example, in an onshore to offshore drilling situation where the risks would be deemed to be much minimal compared to significant development in the offshore, the discretion will rest with the board to make the recommendation to consider that. Given the risk is much lower, given the likelihood of an event of something happening is much lower and the cost is much lower, than they may consider making a recommendation to reduce the liability. With that, we would have to make those approvals.

Mr. Chair, that is the situation where the flexibility within the act, particularly around

giving maybe some of the smaller companies an opportunity that may be engaged in a smaller project in onshore to offshore where there is a lower risk. That is the provision provided there, and it is not at the discretion of the minister. It does involve the board making a recommendation on their due diligence, but, as well, it has to be signed off by the provincial and federal ministers.

With respect to Nalcor, Mr. Chair, I will say Nalcor is a partner in developing the offshore. They are not a partner in the exploration; however, once the development starts we have an equity share. With an equity share, we assume those responsibilities. Then we also have insurance in the event of some – and I say we, Nalcor would have that insurance in the event of a spill. As partners, when you sign up, Mr. Chair, then you accept some of the responsibilities that go with that. That is what your equity share does. Again, the insurance is there in the event that there would be a spill.

Mr. Chair, with respect to spill-treating agents, it is relatively new, obviously, for our offshore. Again, this came about as a result of what took place in the Gulf of Mexico. The use of spill-treating agents, first and foremost, the dispersants that can be used had to be identified on a list by the federal government. The federal government will determine what the spill-treating agents are. Then in the event of a spill, there is a process. There is a tier one, tier two, and tier three response protocols, whether you utilize local response equipment, or Atlantic or global. Within that process – obviously, if there is a spill, there is a responsibility here that we have to get it cleaned up.

Being able to use spill-treating agents, as it was in the Gulf of Mexico, is something that has been considered. The protections have to be put in place so that the federal government puts the spill-treating agent on the list. The board through their due diligence, Mr. Chair, in the event that an operator wants to use a spill-treating agent, they would have to approach the board and have to provide proof of what is needed. The board will make the selection as to what spill-treating agent could be used. Then, Mr. Chair, it will be required that the operator use the spill-treating agent on a small-scale test to determine its effectiveness. That evaluation is

done. Then following the test, approval can be given for the use of the spill-treating agent.

There is oversight. There are mechanisms here, Mr. Chair, that protects the use of the spill-treating agent. The federal government is directly involved. The C-NLOPB would be directly involved, as well as the provincial government, but there is a test that has to occur.

The determination of whether to use a spill-treating agent; in the act it is determined that it will be based on net environmental benefit, where through the due diligence, the process, and the identification of, not only of the spill and the magnitude of the spill, but the use of the spill-treating agent as a net environmental benefit. Essentially, Mr. Chair, what it means is that: Is the environment better served and better protected with the use of the agents, or to allow the oil to disperse itself or to continue? So finding that balance is what the process will determine.

Again, the C-NLOPB is the lead on that. The operating officer there will make that determination through a process; but, again, the net benefit, you have to weigh out if all other measures have been taken in Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 in terms of your response protocols, and you still have a situation that you need to deal with – as was the case, I understand, in the Gulf of Mexico. If you use some spill-treating agent, do you effectively then address the issue with the spill and minimize or reduce the environmental risk? So weighing the balance, the net benefit of using the spill-treating agent, that is an important inclusion in this act, Mr. Chair.

There are a number of things there that the members asked. Hopefully, I have answered those questions. I am sure there will be some more.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It is a pleasure to get up and address some of the concerns, I guess, in some cases when it comes to this piece of legislation, especially knowing that we have a situation on the go now over on the Port au Port Peninsula where we really do not know who is responsible. We have a situation where wells were drilled on land and now, because of erosion, they have gone into the water and they are pre-C-NLOPB. So it is kind of interesting to note that while we have this situation on the go and we do not know who has jurisdiction, it has been at least a year-and-a-quarter now that government has known about it and we still do not have it cleaned up.

So, Mr. Chair, I wanted to get into talking about section 134(5) just for second, along with section 156(1). They are both items of concern. I think the minister agrees there has been some consternation, as of late, especially since the advent of the Deepwater Horizon disaster. Besides the fact of losing people down there, we had an unmitigated environmental disaster that some people would argue that the Gulf of Mexico is going to be a long time recovering from.

In that particular spill, Mr. Chair, of note, we were first experienced, especially on live TV, with the simple fact of the use of dispersants in such a spill scenario. I think there is not a member in this House – there is probably not a member of the viewing public out there that would understand the roll of Corexit in this case. It is a particular brand name of a dispersant that is out there that was used in that particular spill. Some people still argue over the amount of damage that was particularly done in this particular case, and that the damage still exists and still persists in the Gulf of Mexico.

So the questions to the minister surround the use of Corexit, number one, as a fallback, if you will, to the cleanup of any spill. It concerns me because if we are talking about the dumping of chemicals in the environment, Mr. Chair, Corexit from the evidence that I have read and from the hearsay evidence that we hear coming particularly from the Gulf of Mexico is not an option. It is simply not an option here.

It concerns me when I read section 134.5(1) here and let me read the section into the record, "The board shall not permit the use of a spill-treating

agent in an authorization issued under paragraph 134(1)(b) unless the board determines, taking into account any prescribed factors and any factors the board considers appropriate, that the use of the spill-treating agent is likely to achieve a net environmental benefit.” Mr. Chair, that concerns me. Like I said, when you are talking about a net environmental benefit, who defines net environmental benefit? That is the first question to the minister as regards to that.

As far as I am concerned, there is no way to clean up a spill using a chemical dispersant. I do not think so anyway. That is what I would argue with the minister. The only way is to have a proper spill response. I would like to know from the minister at the same time how we can respond to a spill, for example, if a spill happens, or if we have an accident unlike the Deepwater Horizon, the 2,800 metres in depth. Some of the companies are going to fairly deepwater here off Newfoundland and Labrador so we have a case here where we have to ask questions on this.

We have to have a question answered around the proof of net environmental benefit, like I said which concerns me. Then I flip over to section 156.1(1) of the act, “The provisions referred to in Schedule 1 of the federal Act do not apply to the deposit of a spill-treating agent and those referred to in Schedule 2 of the federal Act do not apply in respect of any harm that is caused by the spill-treating agent or by the interaction between the spill-treating agent and the spilled oil ...” It goes on, of course, to various sections.

Again I will ask the minister – to me it looks like there is an interpretation here that there is a possibility that the spill-treating agent itself can cause environmental damage. I am asking the question and perhaps he can interpret that. It is obvious to me that according to the Gulf of Mexico example that we are dealing with here, it is obvious that we can see some form of ongoing environmental damage as a result. Who is going to be monitoring that? Who is going to be responsible for it?

Like I said, Mr. Chair, we have a case right now, prima facie example of what is happening over in the Port au Port Bay area, where nobody wants to take responsibility; but, as far as I am

concerned, Corexit should not be an option. We should have a proper clean-up strategy behind this.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Chair, let’s make a few points so that as the questions continue, I think it is important to understand here that, one, the C-NLOPB, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Nova Scotia Petroleum Board, the Nova Scotia government, and the federal government are all involved with this. This is not a piece of work that we are doing over here in isolation. They are all involved, and their experts are all involved.

The industry experts rest in our Province primarily with the C-NLOPB. We have the Department of Environment, the Department of Natural Resources, we all have input, but the industry experts are not on the floor of this House. The industry experts are with the C-NLOPB. They are the ones who, for a number of years, have been providing oversight, providing the regulatory environment that manages our offshore.

The C-NLOPB has the industry experts. We are all working through this together so that we can harmonize the act, the regulations, and the guidelines, Mr. Chair. That is the goal here. The act outlines things that we will talk about today, but beyond that through consultation process, the regulations have to be developed. From there, the C-NLOPB can develop the guidelines and interpretations so that there is a flow of information and everybody is involved and it is being driven by industry experts. So we clarify that point.

As for Corexit, the member opposite is referencing that. Well, to my knowledge, the list is not done. It is one of many but whether it gets on the list at the federal government level, it will be determined by the people at the federal government level. There is a science table where they will come together and they will do the due diligence. The experts will take a look at what STAs will go on the list. From there, when there is a situation and the response

protocols have been followed and there is still a concern with a spill and there is a proposal put forward to the C-NLOPB that an operator wants to go out and use an STA, well there is a process. For one, the STA has to be on the list that is provided by the federal government.

Secondly, Mr. Chair, the concern about net environmental benefit – fair question, because we do not want to be adding to any environmental negative impact that is out there. I am no expert, but there may be some chemicals used in isolation and put out into the environment and could have a negative impact, but that is where the issue of a net environmental benefit comes. Because after you have tried all other avenues, if there is a spill and there is a major negative impact on the environment, do you allow that to continue or do you use something that has less of an environmental impact than allowing the spill to continue and the impact of the oil?

So do you allow the C-NLOPB to make their decision, the experts to make the decision to do a test with the STA to see if the net benefit is more positive for the environment? Do we see that by using a spill-treating agent approved by the federal government – does that help and improve the impact? Does it dissolve? Maybe it does; maybe it does not. There are other issues around the regulations, the guidelines, and where that will take you; but that decision to use the agent is after protocols have been followed, and the experts will determine if by using it, it is much more positive for the environment than if we allowed the spill to continue, their event to continue to occur.

As we saw down in the Gulf of Mexico, many, many efforts came forward to try to resolve the issue and the spill, and then to try and clean it up. It was a disaster, without question. As we debate today and we talk about these things today, all the more reason that we bring in an act, that we strengthen our offshore environmental regulations, that we put a price tag on this that will give us some reassurance that these companies, when you come in here and you develop our offshore, we expect you to follow the act, the regulations. We expect you to respect our environment and protect our environment, and this is what the act has been able to do.

Again, to reiterate the fact that the industry experts will drive this, but it is the federal government, the provincial governments, and the C-NLOPB and the petroleum board in Nova Scotia that have adopted this act and from within that now collectively, with other consultations, will develop the regulations and eventually the guidelines.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity.

I thank the minister – and I could not agree with him more, that we certainly need a strong regulatory framework and the environment and protection certainly must be protected. It must be paramount

When we look at what was stated in some of my questions earlier, I asked about the minister's discretion. He had stated that provincial and federal ministers both need to sign off on the matter, and further stated that there is flexibility within the act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. MITCHELMORE: Basically what I had asked, Mr. Chair, was around the financial capacity of the \$1 billion up from the \$30 million. What the act states is that there has to be direct access deposit required for drilling or production to \$100 million for a single operator or \$250 million pooled and provided jointly by multiple operators. I would like to know are there any circumstances where that direct access deposit would be less than \$100 million for a single operator or less than \$250 million for pooled or provided jointly by multiple operators, so that it does not go lower than that amount when it comes to direct access, and what he actually means by small players in the industry.

Is there a risk profile assessment done in terms of looking at the financial statements of companies? Because obviously, a company that would have a weaker balance sheet would pose as a high risk to having the financial capacity and having the ability, and looking at what

implications would happen with other regulatory laws like filing for bankruptcy and what that could mean in terms of what the limitations would be in terms of how much return would come back.

The minister had talked about Nalcor in the offshore as a partner and when we take on equity, Nalcor has insurance. I guess with this legislation we are seeing some of the greater risk that Nalcor is taking on behalf of the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is where I would like to see the minister further explain Nalcor in terms of the equity investments and what is the financial price tag for Nalcor. Will it be \$100 million? Will it be a share of this \$250 million? Are there multiple dollar values that Nalcor will have to provide? Has Nalcor done a risk assessment? Are there information and documentation that can be provided to this House that Nalcor has done identifying that they have truly done their due diligence and that as partners in the offshore, as active equity players in energy and oil and gas and development, what type of risk assessments are in place?

The minister had talked about when I had asked about – and you know we are talking about chemical dispersions into the environment and talking about a small-scale test, an evaluation, and appropriate oversight. I think that if at all possible we certainly need to look at the more natural agents that can be used, the natural aspects, whether it be looking at heat, or looking at other aspects that absorb oil, and other aspects that are there.

I think that there may be certain circumstances where you would have no alternative but to look at using some sort of chemical to prevent something that would be much more catastrophic. We must make sure that the regulation, the regulatory environment, and the regime that is in place is strengthened to the point that – and that the restrictions, financially, are high. The risk is very high for the companies so that they are accountable. Even more so to ensure that safety and environmental protection is absolute paramount in operating when it comes to our natural resources, the public resource, the people's resource that is there and that is used to benefit the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I really would like further clarification on the minister if there are any circumstances where a company or multiple companies would be paying less than the \$100 million or \$250 million in terms of a deposit and that insurance that would have the direct access. How low could it go beyond \$1 billion for the no-fault liability? Is the minimum \$100 million? Is it \$200 million? Is there any type of calculation that the C-NLOPB – that the federal-provincial counterparts have talked about or assessed because it does make a difference.

When you are saying that it is a billion dollars in the legislation – and this is what it is being said, that it is increasing the caps to \$1 billion. Well is it only going to be a billion for certain players based on financial records, based on how big they are or what their profits are, or is it for everyone? I think the minister really needs to be more accountable to the House in that level. If you could answer those questions, Minister, I would appreciate it.

So I will take my chair and give you that opportunity, because the minister has provided answers to my questions that I have asked previously. I look forward to getting further clarification because not all of it is clearly stated in the bill.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Chair, I thank the member opposite for the questions.

The issue around liability is not the company, it is the environment. The issue that this bill is addressing here is protecting the environment, not protecting the company. This is about protecting our offshore, and any implications or any impact that could result as a result of a spill. That is what this act does. It strengthens our ability to protect the environmental impact of a spill in the offshore.

The billion dollars absolute liability, Mr. Chair, is not a number we just picked. There was work done in looking at global practices around absolute liability. Again, recognizing it is not just the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that is doing this. The federal

government have been fully engaged, the Nova Scotia government as well.

The absolute liability is a billion dollars. Originally, I guess in the original act the cap was \$100 million for absolute liability. It is moved to a billion, but in the original one you had to provide financial security for \$30 million and then some sort of credit, in various forms, but some sort of credit for the \$70 million. Now, Mr. Chair, you had to provide upfront access to \$100 million. That has not changed. For a billion dollar liability, it is \$100 million. There is no provision for the C-NLOPB or the ministers to change the \$100 million on a billion dollar absolute liability.

The pool fund is the other option. Again, this will get developed through the regulations and the guidelines because we do not see – as the member opposite referenced, all the details are not in the act. They have to be worked out between the governments, the C-NLOPB, and the petroleum board in Nova Scotia.

So those details will come through the regulations, but the \$250 million pool fund is another option for a company, or a group of companies, to pool their money in a fund because they could have two, three, or four developments on. That is \$100 million they are tying up all over, but they could come together – again, to be developed through the regulations – to pool their money so that there is a \$250 million pool in which the C-NLOPB could draw on immediately in the event of a spill and in absolute liability.

There is no provision to change that number on a billion dollar liability. What the provision is in there, it allows the C-NLOPB and their experts in determining the project – not the company, the project – whether the risk warrants the billion dollar liability. Now, we know in the offshore it does. In the extreme offshore, there is no question. In fact, there is a provision where the board could come and recommend more, but it would still need approval of the federal and provincial ministers.

In an event where there may be some – let's take the West Coast, there could be some activity on the West Coast onshore to offshore where containment, the process, everything that is

involved there is much less of a risk than what takes place in the offshore. The likelihood of the Exxons, or the Shells, or the Chevrans, or the ConocoPhillips, or the Huskys coming to the West Coast and investing and trying to do something for 30 million barrels, 20 million barrels of oil, 10 million, maybe 5 million, maybe not even close to that, is not likely because their focus is in the bigger developments in the offshore. Now they might, but it is not likely.

The other companies then, some of the smaller companies may have an interest but may not have the resources for a billion dollar liability; but, at the same time, the project may not warrant a billion dollar liability. There are provisions in the act – nothing guaranteed, but there is a provision for the C-NLOPB to consider that and bring it forward. So that is what the act does. In terms of the \$100 million, \$250 million that is there, that does not change on a billion dollar absolute liability, but it could. It could change based on the absolute liability that is determined if the board comes forward with a recommendation.

With respect to Nalcor, Mr. Chair, I think we all know Nalcor is a company that is created, owned by the people of the Province, but there is a risk reward, obviously, when you are in developing your resources, without question, and you make your investments. The determination – we do not have to take an equity share. That is done by the experts.

Nalcor will do the evaluation and see what is in the best interest of the Province and where we should enter into an equity share, whether it is 10 per cent, whether it is 4.9 per cent, whether it is 5 per cent like we have now. That has to be determined through the proper evaluation of the project, the potential, the reserves, what has been found, and how much is there. So all of that ties into the decision around whether we take an equity share. When we do take an equity share, that puts us at the table where we are involved, and be able to learn about the risks, and learn about the rewards, be able to ask the right questions so we are engaged as a partner.

One of the true benefits of having an equity share, outside of sharing in profits, is that we are at the table and we share in the information and

particularly, the evaluation around some of these significant developments, and whether it is worth our while to invest, as well as to what it could mean for the Province. The equity share is really important, but Nalcor, the people's company, as we develop our resources, then we have that responsibility as well.

Nalcor has an environmental responsibility. They are not excluded from environmental responsibility, whether they are developing wind, hydro, whether it is work in Churchill Falls, whether it is Bull Arm. We have that responsibility, Mr. Chair, Nalcor, as the people's company. It is risk, reward, and the evaluations are done. Where it does not make sense, where the risks are too high, when the experts do their work and make that determination, then we do not do it. Nalcor is not going to make the equity investment because that all has to come through government as well, as we know.

Hopefully, I have answered the question. I mean as reference to whether STAs should be used, whether there are some natural agents that could do the work of an STA, Mr. Chair, I would think that through this whole process and all the science and experts who are involved in this, and determining what could be used in the event of a spill, I am pretty well sure if there is a natural agent with no environmental impact at all, then they will use that before they make a decision to use an STA. We have to give them a fair bit of common sense that they would do that.

This adds another tool here, Mr. Chair, in the event that there is a spill, but in no way is it the first go-to option. There are different levels of responses that have to be done. In the end, there is a responsibility here that we have to protect our environment. The C-NLOPB now will have another tool or an opportunity to weigh that net benefit before the decision is made with respect to a spill-treating agent.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I just want to continue the discussion a bit along the lines that the minister was going. The concern I have is what discussions are going on around the fact that the explorations that are going on in our offshore are getting further and further away from shore, they are getting into much deeper water, and, in actual fact, getting to a point where mechanical methods of cleanup will be of no benefit and where, in actual fact, there would be no choice but using dispersants. This is a major issue from a global perspective about what we are doing out in the ocean, and I do not know where that type of discussion might be taking place. I am not aware of it taking place inside of industry. I am not aware that we are doing real risk assessment analysis when it comes to going into deeper and deeper water.

I remember one time we raised this here in the House and the Premier of the Day pooh-poohed the notion that there was any problem, that dispersants would – oh, they will just float away. Well, it does not happen like that. Nothing just floats away into thin air; something is being affected. So what is happening with regard to looking at the floor of the ocean, what is happening on the floor if there are spills, for example, it just does not go away.

My concern is – and our concern is actually as a caucus, we talk about it – who is having this discussion. It seems to us that approvals are being given for further exploration in deeper and deeper water without a real discussion around the issue of spills out there where there will be nothing else that can be used but dispersants. That is a real problem, and I really have not heard a discussion going on about that and that really bothers me.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Chair, the member raises a concern I guess, but I think it is a very generic concern that everybody would share the same feeling that as we develop in our offshore, is there oversight – who is doing the work? Are the companies just going out and doing whatever they want out there, whatever they please?

The answer to that is no, Mr. Chair. I think our government has demonstrated time and time again our concern for the environment in the

offshore, but more importantly the C-NLOPB are the regulator. For any company to go out and spend money in our offshore, exploration or development, they have to provide a detailed, thorough development plan to the C-NLOPB. The C-NLOPB will take that with their experts and do an evaluation of the plan. There is usually quite a bit of back and forth between the company and the C-NLOPB around their development plans.

Within that plan, Mr. Chair, there is also reference to the environment and emergency responses – all of the things that are of concern to the offshore then the operator or the company that is looking to do the exploration are obligated to provide that information. The C-NLOPB will do their due diligence and approve or not approve, or work with the company until they get satisfactory approvals. Then, Mr. Chair, the chief safety officer of the C-NLOPB, under his management, will ensure and provide the oversight around the execution of the development plans with respect to safety in the offshore and environmental protection in the offshore.

It is a fair question, but as we move further out in the deeper water, the companies are obligated in their development plans to show their evaluation, to be able to share that with the C-NLOPB as to what their responses would be, relative to a situation like in Mexico that happened forty kilometres from shore. Well, now we are going out 250 kilometres, 300 kilometres from shore, so within that, companies will do their own assessments in terms of risk and rewards, whether it is feasible.

Through that whole process, as a partner, Nalcor as a partner and an equity share, will have an opportunity as well on behalf of the people of the Province to be a part of that assessment and evaluation. That becomes important for us because we get the inside feedback. I say we on behalf of Nalcor, but we are not directly involved in that as a government. We are not involved from our department. The C-NLOPB does the work as regulator, and Nalcor will be a company share. They will be exchanged in conversations, but ultimately it will come back, Mr. Chair, for our approval and decisions with respect to Nalcor's participation in some of the developments offshore.

It is a fair question as we move out into deeper water, but you know there is oil out there. We have 5 per cent of our offshore under licence. We have over 1 million square kilometres out there, Mr. Chair. We have a new land tenure system, a scheduled system now where we will put up blocks for companies to come and bid. Companies will come and bid a certain amount of money that they want to spend on exploration, but they know, Mr. Chair, and they will know that once this act is done they are going to be required to put the \$1 billion for absolute liability.

A question one of the other members raised was around finances and how do we know. Well again, the C-NLOPB will have to do the assessment, but there is also a provision in here that they can go outside the C-NLOPB and hire experts to do some of the financial evaluation if it is needed. So there is added protection in here to allow the C-NLOPB to have the resources to do the necessary work, particularly around the financial evaluation.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is a pleasure to have an opportunity to raise a couple of points. I want to say from the get-go, as I did when I spoke to this for a full hour under the second reading, I do fully support the intent and spirit of it. I know every member in this House does, as we try to develop our natural resources in the offshore. There is nobody who does not want to see that happen. We all want to see that happen, but what I am hearing from my colleagues, what I am hearing from members of The Third Party, is that we do have some concerns as it relates to the environment. I think they are very justified.

I have heard the minister say on three or four occasions when he was speaking, referencing the fact that the federal government are in on this and Nova Scotia has already passed this. I just want to say for the record – and I am sure he does onto mean it in a bad way or a flippant way, but I do want to say for the record that I do not really care what the federal government has

done or what Nova Scotia has done. We have an obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in this House to ensure that we do our due diligence and ask these questions. I know the minister knows that, but it is important just to say that for the record.

We talk about the spill-treating agents and I think that is part of the concern. I heard the minister talk about the company – the companies have obligations. We all understand the companies have obligations, but we also understand that companies have obligations for occupational health and safety, yet we hear of companies being charged under the health and safety act. We have companies that have obligations under collective bargaining, but we hear about grievances and we hear about arbitrations and so on. So we know that even through companies have obligations in lots of areas, those obligations are not always carried out the way they are supposed to be carried out. That is why we have to ensure if we do these things, they are done properly.

What we are talking about here is potential – knock on wood, it never happens. We hope we do not have a disaster in our offshore as it relates to environmental disasters or anything that would relate to safety and so on, but it could happen and we have to be protected.

So I guess the question I would have for the minister, which kind of ties into a lot of what has been said, or maybe the point I want to make to the minister, and perhaps he will respond to it, is the fact that what we are really doing here – because we are talking the legislation and we are not talking regulations. The minister said a lot of this stuff will come from the regulations. I agree with the minister, a lot of this stuff will come from regulations. I guess that is the concern we have in this House.

When you stand up and you vote for something that is somewhat generic, the details are not there as they would be in the regulations. So you kind of have to just take it on faith. When we say that due diligence will be done, we have to take it on faith that due diligence will be done. When you say the federal government has their experts, the C-NLOPB has their experts, and the provincial government has their experts – I am sure they do, but we kind of have to take it on

faith that they are indeed experts, that they do indeed have expertise in all these areas, and that things will be looked at from a scientific point of view when it comes to use of chemicals in our offshore.

Minister, because there is nothing specific here, I guess just for clarification I would assume – and again we are making assumptions because it is not there specifically. I would assume that when we talk about the C-NLOPB doing its due diligence and companies doing their due diligence when it comes to the use of chemicals to deal with spills, and that determination as to whether it would be a net benefit – because we know that the chemicals that are being used are going to cause some harm to the environment.

I know the Member for St. John's East talked about will these chemicals themselves cause harm for the environment. I believe the answer is yes, they will. They will cause harm, we know that. What we are saying here is that to use them will cause less harm than if we simply did not use them and we just let the spill continue because we were not able to clean it up in a different way without the use of chemicals. Somebody is making that determination.

I am just wondering who would be the agency. Other than to say the experts, does the C-NLOPB have a complement of staff, or would they have consultants or somebody who would be deemed experts, whether they are chemical engineers, environmentalists, whatever they are, a combination of engineers, a combination of all those things that actually understand what all these chemicals are, actually understand how they would interact if they had to be used, would they actually understand whether it is the best way to go to do this as opposed to trying to clean it up some other way?

I heard the minister talk about we might test this chemical and test that one – and maybe it was just a slip of the tongue, he did not mean it that way; but when you say we are going to test it to see it if works, my hope would be that we are not going to test chemicals and see if it works, we are only going to use them because we know they are going to work. We know that we need to use them. We know what is going to happen, not let's try this one and try that one and see what happens.

I am sure he did not mean it that way, and I hope that is not the case but it does bring these concerns to your mind when you hear sometimes that kind of loose language about we are going to test it and see what happens. I would just like some assurance for the record as best you can, as the minister can – we do not know because it is not clearly outlined here because it is not regulations; it is just the act of the legislation – when we talk about experts that there is indeed a panel of environmental experts who report to the C-NLOPB and it is really those people who are giving the advice to the C-NLOPB that would then make a decision or recommendation to the minister, that it is not just simply the company comes in and says we have to use this agent here today because our people think it is the best thing to do and then the C-NLOPB who, in theory, are not chemists, are not environmental engineers, whatever the case might be says yes that sounds good to us – Minister, that sounds good to us, and it just gets signed up on.

I am sure that is not the case but because it is not outlined specifically for the record before we vote on it, I would just like some assurances that those experts in the field are indeed involved in all these decisions and it is not just bureaucrats or appointees or whatever that are just sort of making those decisions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR (Cross): The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Chair, a couple of points – the member raised a few points about concern for the environment. Well, that is exactly what this act is all about. It is about concern for the environment. We are dealing in offshore oil and gas. We are dealing with a risky business. There are no two ways to cut it. It is risky in every area of the world and it is risky in our offshore. All winds and weathers, icebergs, all kinds of risks, we cannot discount that.

If you are not prepared to accept some of the risk, you cannot have an offshore oil and gas industry. What we can do, collectively, in working with partners, C-NLOPB, federal government, what we can do is bring in some measures that forces companies who make a decision to go in our offshore to make sure you

have a plan and you are prepared; because if you do not, and you do not come with a financial security, you cannot go in our offshore. That is how we add protection for the environment in the offshore. That is how we improve the risks, but there are still risks.

The member talks about companies and their obligations and how we see sometimes they do not follow their obligations. Fair enough, Mr. Chair. That be the case, we see that from time to time. That is why it is important that we bring in the act and that we outline the measures and we provide the measures to the courts to deal with the companies who are not compliant – and this is about compliance; they have to comply.

There may be situations where they do not, intentionally or otherwise. Well, you have to have mechanisms. So built within the act, Mr. Chair, the mechanisms – there are fines that you can give. You can shut down a project. The C-NLOPB, as a regulator, has the authority to shut down a project, Mr. Chair. You apply the absolute liability.

There is also the chance – and it has been done – that if you do not bring forward the development plan, if you do not lay out what is required in your development plan to the satisfaction of the experts at C-NLOPB, then you will not get your plan approved.

Above all of that, Mr. Chair, we also have the courts where there could be criminal negligence or otherwise. The courts have provisions to deal with that. So even though there may be companies that may be negligent or they may not live up to their obligations, there are measures, very costly measures, built into the act in the authority of the C-NLOPB to ensure that they do.

To the other points the member raised, I will speak to them; but I want to reassure the people, and certainly the member opposite, that the C-NLOPB as a regulator, natural resources in this Province, the environment in this Province, the environment department in the federal government, Natural Resources Canada, nobody, and more importantly, the regulator and the experts at the regulator are going to flippantly say to a company you have this listed as an STA, go ahead. Go ahead, we do not care, that is all

right. That does not happen, Mr. Chair. It is never going to happen. I have to say to the member opposite, I am not even sure he should suggest that it would.

Anybody at the C-NLOPB who is going to make a decision, I can assure you they are going to understand the decision they are making. These people are in place; they are experts in place. I will say to the member opposite, if you do not trust anybody, if you do not trust the experts, the people hired, trained to do this work, if you do not trust the chief safety officer, if you do not trust the independent regulator, if you do not trust the C-NLOPB, well, I am not sure we can have an industry, because I can assure you they are not going to trust us.

When you talk about this, flippantly making decisions about whether they understand it or not – they do, Mr. Chair, the right people are in place. The federal government will sit at a science table where they will look at all of these kinds of things. So I want to reassure the member and the people of the Province, that the C-NLOPB will have the resources in-house, and if not, the ability to go outside to get what they need to make the right decisions, but understand there is still a risk.

As for the test, let me speak about the test for a second, just so the member is clear. That is exactly what it is, it is a test. Not all of the agents, it is my understanding – I am not an expert either – will do the exact same thing. Depending on the situation, one may be better than another. One may be effective, one may be not.

One may not give you that net environmental benefit that you are looking for. So for that reason, in the event of a major spill, in the event that all other aspects of trying to deal with the spill have been exhausted, then you have to use an agent. Rather than take an agent and spread it out and assume it is going to be effective, there is a provision in here to allow them to do a small-scale test that will be evaluated, scientific evaluation, and the determination will be made through a process. This will be further developed in the regulations, which is a fair point. The act is what it is.

Beyond that, you have to drill down to the act to guide the development of regulations and to guide the development of guidelines, but a small-scale test will help ensure that the right decision is being made. That will be determined by the experts, the scientists, Mr. Chair, so that if in fact you do use a larger quantity of the disbursement, it is going to have the desired impact of a net environmental benefit. That is the reason for the rest.

It is a fair question, but you cannot just go and use whatever you want and hope that it works. It is better to do a small-scale test. It is all about – and the provisions are there – net environmental benefit. That will be what will determine – and it will be further developed in the regulations – which STA could be used, if any could be used, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am not going to belabour the point; I just have a couple of points while the minister was speaking. The first question has to do with the small-scale test before we can actually use it on a large spill. There is a time component here. I think the minister needs to answer questions as regards to the timing of that.

The second point I would like to bring across, the simple fact about using the small-scale test before we can actually use it on a large-scale spill. So perhaps you can address that one.

Minister, the other points that would bother me here is that we are still dealing with net environmental benefit here, and I will come back to section 134.5 again. I think the minister himself, along with my friend from Mount Pearl South, have already mentioned the fact that we are going to be dealing with a chemical that is a spill-treating agent that is going to be used potentially in some spill scenarios.

We could be dealing with two issues. Number one, we know the chemical itself could cause environmental damage. I think everybody in this House agrees that there is no chemical in this world that can be the magical be-all and end-all to cleaning up these spills. The second

point is actually the spill itself. We have two issues here on hand.

That is why I want to come back to the simple fact of ensuring, number one, worker safety, blow out prevention, deepwater drilling technologies, and backups to various systems that are in there. There is also something here that the Newfoundland and Labrador government can do, as well as the C-NLOPB when it comes to strengthening of regulations, to prevent spills in the first place.

We know those technologies are there, but we do know that accidents are going to happen. I think everybody in this House agrees that accidents are going to happen. We already have Piper Alpha in history and Deepwater Horizon. We know these things are going to happen. So I would like to get the minister to address that to see if they are talking about increasing worker safety when it comes to that aspect too. The possibility of, if we are going to be going into deep water.

We also have to remember that we have a responsibility, not only to our own environment here in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Chair, but we have a responsibility to the world to ensure we have an environment that works for everybody, that it is going to be preserved for everybody for future generations.

The Labrador Current and the Gulf Stream can take these oils and these dispersants anywhere in the world. For example, we know that whatever happens in the Gulf of Mexico right now, when it comes to dispersants, affects our wildlife here offshore. One can only look at some of the stories from Bill Montevecchi and the stories about the gannets in St. Mary's. So we know there is an effect here in Newfoundland and Labrador on something that happens in the Gulf of Mexico.

We have to be concerned here, Mr. Chair. We have neighbours who share a common border of the salt water that is off our coast. Greenland is not that far away, nor is Iceland. We also have to keep that in consideration too. I would like to know, has any appropriation or any conversation been happening with these other countries too when it comes to deep water?

Mr. Chair, the final point for the minister as regards to the liabilities around these questions was this, about C-NLOPB responsibility when it comes to junior drilling companies. I will say the industry name, frackers – the small junior companies that are operating, potentially going to be operating on the West Coast of our Island and how they are going to be covered under such liability measures, for example, when we are dealing with long-term damage possibilities.

We do have an example, like I said, playing out in Newfoundland and Labrador today from pass conventional drillers over in Port au Port. We are dealing with spills that are happening right now, anywhere between sixty and 100 years ago. How are we going to account for that in the future under this particular scenario and under this particular piece of legislation?

Thanks.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The member's reference to chemicals going into the environment and potential damage, Mr. Chair, equated, I guess, the discussion here around the small-scale tests before you use a chemical that could have a greater negative impact on the environment than the spill itself as a reason why you would do the test.

As for the chemical, Mr. Chair, having a negative impact, and as for the spill itself being the primary reason why you would even consider using a spill agent, a fair comment; but the reality is what the act does is provide for the provisions, the process, the requirement under law that has to be followed with respect to a spill, with respect to the use of a spill-treating agent in our offshore, and with respect to the absolute liability of a company that wants to do work in our offshore. The improvements in the act outline a process, clarifies responsibility, clarifies polluters pay, and that is the purpose of the act, Mr. Chair.

The concerns about spill-treating agents are protected under the process that the federal government comes up with the list that there is a process that the experts at the C-NLOPB and the

chief safety officer are directly involved and has to provide approval. The fact that you have to do a small-scale test, do the scientific work and determine if it works, that is what the act does, it protects any company from arbitrarily deciding that they are going to use a spill-treating agent in the event of a spill.

For that reason the act is strong. Within that, as you develop the regulations and you drill down – and the regulations, by the way, are being developed by the federal government, with the input of the provinces as well as consultation. That will drill down as to how that will be implemented, but it cannot go against the act. It is law on the small-scale test. It is law on the role and responsibility of the C-NLOPB. That is what this act does; it protects that, Mr. Chair.

We do have a great responsibility for the development of our offshore. Mr. Chair, since we are moving further out in the deep water, as I said, companies will be required in their development plans to provide more and more information, provide more and more certainty and a comfort level for the C-NLOPB, the regulator, before they approve their development plans – and the expectation, understanding the risks and the further out and the more challenges, the greater the risk, understanding that the C-NLOPB as a regulator also has that responsibility to ensure higher standards.

They are paying a lot of attention to higher standards, and we have seen a number of things that have happened in offshore regulations, health and safety regulations. As I have said many times, and I think everybody in the House would agree, the oil out there is very valuable, but what are most valuable are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are in our offshore. Anything we can do to improve their safety and to be able to protect our environment and the potential impact that it could have on our entire Province that is the kind of things we need to be doing.

As for junior companies and potential for fracking, we are not accepting any applications for fracking. There is a process going on in the Province that we are all aware of, and eventually we will get down to making a decision. This particular act, Mr. Chair, is for offshore, or

onshore to offshore. This is not the act that guides conventional drilling on land.

The offshore regulations are here. I would agree with the member whether it is in the offshore and particularly in the onshore, given the discussions that are going on in the Province, the attention from environment, the attention around our regulations and the issue particularly you referenced from the onshore to offshore wells and concerns that are on the West Coast today, the more we can do the better. We have to ensure that we do all we can to protect our environment and to introduce the proper legislation, provide the means and the mechanisms for the experts and the guiding authorities to be able to make those decisions.

The C-NLOPB is the regulator. We have had tremendous success in our offshore. We have been out there now for twenty years or more, and we have had an incredible record with respect to environmental safety and protection. We hope that continues, but what we have done today is strengthen the obligations, strengthen the environmental protection, increase the obligations on behalf of the companies in the event that something should happen.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

MS C. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wanted to have an opportunity to speak specifically to a couple of questions that I have around Bill 2 and I certainly appreciate the minister's co-operation this afternoon in answering questions as members of this side of the House have presented them to him.

Just to remind those people who are listening at home this particular piece of legislation which is certainly driven from the federal government's changes in offshore oil regulations as it pertains to insurance for large companies that are drilling offshore reminds us of the tragedy that happened off the Gulf of Mexico with the Deepwater Horizon.

Earlier in the debate, the minister made reference to some of the large-scale global companies that are currently working in our offshore oil industry. I think it would be

irresponsible to say that those companies would not want to put the interest of the environment, more importantly, their employees, and their entire business at the forefront. As we did see in the Gulf of Mexico, mistakes can be made. A combination of a series of different incidents culminated in a catastrophic event that this legislation is meant to provide some comfort to the people of the Province when it comes to who pays.

Specifically, the area that I would like to ask the minister some questions about – and he has referenced it several times this afternoon – is the onshore to offshore piece that is referred to in the legislation. When we were briefed on this by staff they were very willing – both the staff from Natural Resources as well as staff from the C-NLOPB, made themselves very available and answered all of our questions.

I was puzzled as to why a piece of legislation that is meant to govern large-scale offshore oil activity had the regulation in there specifically allowing for discretion when it comes to – and I think the minister referred to the words, the onshore to offshore drilling activity. The reason I ask that specific question is that while there are major extractors that are valued partners in our offshore oil industry, certainly when it comes to onshore to offshore drilling, the scope of potential companies that may participate in that may change. The profile of those companies may change.

I think people in the Province may have some questions as to why the regulation is in this particular act. My understanding – and I am sure the minister can clarify for me. My understanding is that onshore to offshore is, in fact, as was previously mentioned, a form of fracking. I was surprised when I saw it in the legislation, but I am sure the minister can provide some clarity on that. There is no doubt that when you have different profiles of businesses that are operating in exploration or production activity that is in early stage in our regulation and environmental footprint in our Province, there is a requirement for us to act differently and monitor differently. Certainly from people that I spoke to around this bill, there is a clear understanding that what the federal government has done and what the provinces have followed suit with around the liability

regime and the proof of financial capacity, is very much needed.

As I said, my specific question focusses solely on the onshore to offshore discretionary piece that is referenced in this legislation. I ask the minister if he can help clarify that for us this afternoon.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the question. First off, I would concur with the comment that was made with respect to the companies, Mr. Chair. Some of the large global companies that are operating in our offshore – I think there are nine specific companies through various partners. I can tell you with the work that is being done, the seismic work that is being done, and the new schedule system, there is a lot more interest. There is a lot more interest of some big oil companies to come to Newfoundland and Labrador and create some employment opportunities here, and hopefully be successful in a bid for the offshore and develop more of our oil resources.

Mr. Chair, I would agree that these companies do pride themselves on their reputation. The protection of their workers and the protection of the environment are certainly very important to these operators. Certainly, as I said before, there are incidents from time to time. That is why we need the act. That is why we need the oversight. That is why we need the regulator. I can tell you these companies, in my experience with them over the past couple of years, are keenly concerned about the safety in the offshore and keenly concerned about their environmental responsibilities.

With respect to onshore to offshore, the member opposite said it is a form of fracking. I just want to correct that, Mr. Chair. It is not a form of fracking. Conventional drilling can occur onshore to offshore; however, if you do not get the flow of the hydrocarbons, then you can frack. That is what is happening. When you drill and you do not get the flow, that is when you frack, to try and improve the flow; but drilling onshore to offshore is not fracking, we

do not allow fracking. We are in a process of looking at fracking.

So I just wanted to make sure that people watching are clear on that. You can drill from onshore to offshore. The act itself, because it is onshore to offshore, anything related to offshore, then the regulator – the responsibility is with the C-NLOPB. Now that does not absolve our own environmental department from any role, Mr. Chair, but the regulator onshore to offshore is the C-NLOPB. It is not fracking conventional wells.

Mr. Chair, where we have strengthened the absolute liability to a billion dollars, there is also a provision in the act and a process where the C-NLOPB, when they receive a development plan from a company that wants to drill on the onshore to offshore – there is a provision that allows them to do an assessment of that development plan, assess the risk, and identify where. Do you know what? It is possible that it can be contained a lot differently than the offshore oil spill might. There might be ways of mitigating some of the risk.

There will be risk, but mitigating risk – and would be able to build a berm. It might be measures that could be taken that are far less costly, and minimize risk where they may determine that, through the development plans and the work with the junior companies we could do this and we may be able to lower the absolute liability. In the event something should happen, there is going to be enough money there provided for us to be able to deal with this anyway.

Mr. Chair, that is a provision in the act. It is not required that they do it, nor is it absolute. They have to do a due diligence. If there are opportunities to drill and discover oil, and create some economic activity on the West Coast – and I am not talking about fracking, I am talking about conventional drilling. If that is there then we have to provide an opportunity for companies to be of interest and to be able to manage that.

I go back to my point earlier, the decision around the absolute liability and what that amount is rests with the project and the development plan, not with the company. It will

not be based on the financial resources of the companies. It has to be based on the risk assessment and the evaluation of development plans of the project itself. The provision is there in the event that there may be lower risk and be able to stimulate and provide opportunity – stimulate the economy and provide opportunity for some of the smaller companies. That said, there is a process to protect. That cannot be done arbitrarily. It has to go through a process that is very rigorous and extensive.

Likewise, Mr. Chair, through that process, through the development plan evaluation, the C-NLOPB also has the mechanism through this act to increase the liability, but again they would need to follow the same process. That is the reason this exists in the act.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to make a few comments on this bill. I will not take my full time I do not think. Mr. Chair, it is interesting and other members on this side have said this is a very positive piece of legislation. It brings forward the idea that it reduces the risk in terms of – because the penalty is greater, it reduces the likely risk of undertaking offshore oil development. It is a very positive thing, especially in the case that we are in a very harsh environment in terms of where the resource is.

We have icebergs coming down. We have provisions to tow icebergs away from oil wells, drilling facilities, and things like that. I understand that is happening a lot this past year. There have been more icebergs than usual. It is a very harsh environment to say the least, Mr. Chair. In the light of incidents that we have had in the North Sea and in the Gulf of Mexico, there is obvious danger whenever you are that far offshore.

I want to talk a little bit about the Gulf of St. Lawrence which is closest to my district, Mr. Chair. I want to talk about some of the situations there. There is a lot of dispute about any drilling at all in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It

is a sensitive environmental situation there in the St. Lawrence Basin, but there are also huge resources there or the potential for huge resources at Old Harry. Some other oil companies have sort of identified possible finds further up near Bay of Islands. They are doing some exploratory drilling up there as well off land this year I believe. It is interesting that this resource and the dangers of exploring and developing that resource, and the impact that this legislation would have on that risk as well.

I was a little bit taken aback late last week to find out about that these wells in Shoal Point, Mr. Chair. These were old wells that had been left, some of them from as late as the late 1800s, I believe. So I was sort of shocked that the presence of these wells and the conditions of these wells had been brought to the attention of the Department of Environment maybe a couple of years ago.

If you look at the pictures that have been circulating on social media, these are old rusty pipes that are sticking out of the water in some cases. You wonder how it got to this situation where you have oil – and reportedly, I have not been there myself, but I have heard reports that significant amounts of oil, barrels of oil people are telling me, are leaking from these wells. So you have to wonder what is happening and what monitoring is happening at these wells.

This was brought to the attention of the Minister of Environment several years ago. It is my understanding that people at the point were concerned about the scallop fishery. They were concerned about the lobster fishery in the area.

So the issue, I think, is if this type of issue is not being monitored properly, can we have faith that the department, or anyone else, is going to monitor the situation properly? I think it is a serious matter when we have situations like this that call into question how serious the Department of Environment is about monitoring and ensuring the safety of places like this. I think it is a serious matter and I would like the minister to respond to that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would certainly encourage – as my colleague the Minister of Environment did today to answer the questions raised by the member opposite with respect to the environmental oversight that is provided by the department, Mr. Chair. With specific reference to the bill that we are doing today, Bill 2, the act, I am sure he is not suggesting; but obviously, there is a hint of it, the oversight and the responsibility is with the C-NLOPB and the regulator for offshore and onshore to offshore.

The discussion you are referencing now about a specific situation over there, whether it was onshore at time and now it is offshore, whether the Coast Guard is responsible, whether it is our Department of Environment, that is the kind of what that has to be done to determine that; but I know, for the purpose of the act, the responsibility for oversight and regulatory oversight is with the C-NLOPB with respect to offshore and onshore to offshore development. Other than that, Mr. Chair, I am sure my colleague, the Minister of Environment, through Question Period and other means, will ensure that the right information with respect to oversight and what is being done will be followed.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think that the member for Stephenville probably had a point, maybe he did not express it clear enough, I do not know, but I think I know what he was getting at.

We know that we have a jurisdictional issue right now that the Province is dealing with. Nobody wants to claim responsibility. Nobody wants to be tagged with the responsibility of cleaning up a well. We are upwards of thirteen wells right now that are leaking. Whether they would be under C-NLOPB jurisdiction or not, given the present day rules here now, would be a different story. I think that they would be because they are out there and exploring a resource that happens to be under the water.

I want to ask the minister this because we are dealing with the potential – I say the potential – for the fracking industry to happen where we are right now licensing people to do what will be known as a conventional drill. I think the minister himself knows that it does not have to be 15,000 pounds of pressure per square inch in order to be called fracking. If somebody uses 14,000 pounds per square inch to drive some pressure out of some shale, it is not really considered a frack in the industry. Some people would argue that it is 15,000 pounds of rigor.

So I will ask the minister the what-if scenario – because we are not that far away from the fracking review panel coming forward with some sort of decision. If the panel comes forward with a decision on fracking – and we know that some of the proposals, for example, for drilling under the bays out there in Port au Port, we know that some of the proposals involve going out using C-NLOPB jurisdiction, that is they are drilling on land, going out under the water, that is where the C-NLOPB jurisdiction would play in.

I think that everybody in the House is curious about this one. Now we are talking about different liability. We are talking about different dollar amounts, the potential for spills. We are not only talking about the potential spill for oil that could occur, Mr. Chair, we are also talking about the big concern that everybody has over fracking chemicals. That is a different matter altogether I think – I do not know, maybe the minister would like to comment on that, but I think that fracking chemicals, knowing some of their contents and some of the cancer-causing agents that are being used in there and some of the things that these chemicals can do to water supplies and everything, I think it is a great concern.

I think the minister, knowing the possibility of a what-if scenario – and I know that he says right now the government does not allow fracking. They are not taking any applications for fracking to occur in the Province. The chance here is that government could be making that decision in the near future, in spite of everybody else's concern.

CHAIR: I ask the hon. member to bring his comments to this bill.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you very much.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Chair, a few points. First off, I think they drilled in the 1960s. The issue we are talking about is the potential of some wells that were drilled in the 1960s. Mr. Chair, we have progressed so far as a society, as a government, in regulatory measures, science, technology, and understanding of all this stuff. That is why we bring in new legislation. Under legislation today, if a company wants to drill and abandon it, we are not going to allow – under the legislation, under the laws of the land, they will not be allowed to leave an abandoned well with oil leaking out into the environment.

As for what ifs, I will be quite frank, Mr. Chair. It has been a long day and I really do not have a lot of time to deal with what ifs. I say to the member opposite, what if fracking was allowed? What if there were a thousand jobs created? What if there was no impact on the environment? What if the West Coast of the Province got the economic boost that they needed? What if?

Now I say that, Mr. Chair, because there are a lot of what ifs. I am not going to stand here today and talk about what if fracking is allowed, or what if it is not allowed, because that is a great debate, no question. That is why we have an independent panel. I, as minister today, am not going to stand here and entertain a conversation about what if. What if has no limits, absolutely no limits. What if could go anywhere in the negative side, in the positive side.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. DALLEY: What if on the environment. What if on health. What if on the economy. What if on people on the West Coast. What if on the Province, Mr. Chair. It is an absolutely ridiculous question.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Chair, what if he answered just the question? It is a simple question. I asked this government about fracking for a reason. It is a scenario that could be happening and that government also has to consider –

CHAIR: Is the member on a point of order, or is he speaking to a question?

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Chair, I just ask him about the scenario. I am just wondering if he can give us an answer to the question.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Chair, I cannot give him an answer to a what if.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 25 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 to 25 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 25 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland And Labrador Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 2.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 2 without amendment.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

MR. CROSS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matter to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 2 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 2 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received.

MR. SPEAKER: When shall the said bill be read the third time?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, Order 2, third reading of Bill 2.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that Bill 2, An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland And Labrador Act, be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read the third time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland And Labrador Act. (Bill 2)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland And Labrador Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 2)

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, from the Order Paper, Order 3, second reading of Bill 4.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Works, Services And Transportation Act." (Bill 4)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is indeed an honour to stand in this hon. House and speak to Bill 4. I have spoken in this House probably to about twenty-five or thirty bills over the last four years, but this is part of history making because it is my first bill to speak to as the minister coming from my department, and it is an honour to do that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: I would like to be able to say this is one of those revolutionary bills that is going to change people's lives and it is going to set a new trend in our society and ensure that people's quality of life improves, Mr. Speaker, but I cannot say that. Like every piece of legislation we bring in this House, Mr. Speaker, and every amendment that we make, it has an impact. It has a purpose, and this bill also serves that same purpose.

The act is Bill 4. “This Bill would amend the Works, Services and Transportation Act by increasing the maximum amount of a fine for parking violations on land owned or occupied by the government of the province.”

I might note, it is particularly around government buildings. Confederation Building and some of the other line buildings that we are responsible for, particularly around those that have parking meters. Obviously, noted signs about violating in fire lanes and not parking with proper permits.

I might note, Mr. Speaker, this is perhaps more relevant to Confederation Building, because of the number of parking meters we have, the number of permits we give for particular areas and zones where people must park. The fact that we have multiple entrances here where there are fire lanes and people are prohibited from parking. In most cases, it is a drop off, pick up in a very quick manner.

Fire lanes are there for a reason, Mr. Speaker, so this sets out to ensure that people are given an adequate deterrent. That is what this is about. This is not a cash cow. This is in no way trying to impose any hardship on people. This is about a deterrent so that the purpose of the rules, the laws, the regulations, and the legislation we have are adhered to as part of that.

I do remember years ago when I worked in this building, before there were parking meters here, we used to have what was two-hour parking. So you came in for visitors’ parking, people came in for a meeting with a minister or had an issue that they needed to work out, if it was Crown lands or whatever it may be, if it was something with the Business department, people would park for two hours. Sometimes you could get in and get out in that period of time.

Unfortunately, because you could not feed a meter, they did not exist on the parking lot at that time, people might get caught. You might be waiting to meet with a minister or an official, you may be waiting to do some research on a piece of documentation that you needed. As a result, by the time you left to go out, you had a ticket. You could not feed a meter. You could not go out and move your car if there were no other places to park at that time.

So, government of the day took it upon themselves to say let us get in tune with what the city and other municipalities are doing. Let’s have parking meters because that gives people an ability to park, it gives them an ability to know if they are going to be delayed that they can still go out, have that spot, feed the meters to ensure that they are not ticketed.

We engaged in doing that process, and then we engaged in reassessing how we do parking on our parking lot. Keeping in mind one of the primary objectives of the parking around Confederation Building, and the multitude of other buildings that we have where we house our civil servants, is about proper parking and access to parking for them. There is also an added responsibility around making sure that the general public – because these are the people that we serve – have access to those buildings, and they also have access to parking in appropriate areas where they can walk, so that it is not in a snow storm or heavy rains, where they have to walk an ungodly distance and then get in and wait for service as part of that, or miss the opportunity to be able to take advantage of the appointments that they have.

We wanted to look at that and make it uniform, and over the years we have done that. Different engineers, different line departments are responsible for parking, particularly Transportation and Works over the years have tried to realign the best way to maximize your parking on buildings that are owned by the department, but also to maximize the ability for people, the general public, to be able to access that. So we have looked at that, we have put the parking meters in place, and it has been nearly twenty years since the fines for those parking meters have changed.

So what we wanted to look at, we have noticed in some cases there are people where it is equitable for them to park there, time is not an issue, because the small amount – when our staff get out, our security, when they are doing their other duties, give fines to people, it is not enough as a deterrent. So that the general public coming who need to access that service or only have a small time frame, people may be on their lunch hour and they have to come in to get a service, people are from out of St. John’s, they are from all over the Province, there could be

people coming in here from other provinces or other countries who need to avail of that, have rented cars, our own citizens coming, there could be other people doing business with government who need a place to be able to park to go in and do their business, normally, in timely fashion, but on a short period of time – if those parking meters are taken up by people on a long-term basis, and if it is an inconvenience for them to come out and feed the meter, and it is not a deterrent because of costing being a minimal amount, particularly if it is a violation of a parking meter of \$10, then it is probably equitable for them to stay in whatever they are doing and that deterrent does not exist.

We have ample parking in this area and a number of other buildings to sustain those who want to come for a long period of time. It may mean they walk a little bit further distance, but if they know they are coming in for a period of time they can work their schedules around that. Our staffing, it is the same way. Our staffing know exactly the time frames here, when you are going to be able to get a closer parking spot, when you need to go further away. We have tried to rearrange our parking around the building so people are not at a far distance, particularly in our harsh winter times.

Mr. Speaker, we wanted to ensure – as you notice how we outlined exactly where our parking meters are, as close as possible to the entrances here so that we minimize the time frames on people trying to come into this building. We also minimize the distance because people may be frail, there could be weather conditions, all kinds of other restrictions about people's mobility. We want to ensure that we have that in an equitable manner so that people can access that.

I think we have been extremely good at that. We try to work within the confines we have to ensure we have enough parking for the visiting public. We also want to make sure that we have enough here for the working people of our Province, those who work in this great building of ours, and those civil servants who we respect the work that they do.

We have carved that out, Mr. Speaker. We are back to a point now we need to address the fact that we are running into some challenges here.

We have assessed it. Our security has gone out and assessed that the same cars in some cases are parked in the same meter constantly. Obviously we are seeing there is a trend there by some individuals, and it could be for various reasons.

Rather than go back and try to figure what all those are and change that, there is a simple thing. The rules and regulations are around. Parking meters are for short-term parking, for people to come in, do their business and move on. So we want to make sure that they do it in a timely fashion, and we make sure that they minimize the time that could be used by other people.

As part of that deterrent, Mr. Speaker – and if they are in for three, four, five hours, if they are in for the whole day, the costing relevant to that would ensure that the revenues generated would be enough to offset any of the expenditures. Particularly, it would be more importantly a deterrent enough that they do not stay for the sake of staying, that it is a costly venture for them if they want to do that for that exercise so that it opens up for other people.

What we have done in this case is we have looked at what have our fines been in the past. What are other jurisdictions doing? What are other municipalities doing, Mr. Speaker? We want to be in line with the municipalities, particularly, where we have government buildings that have meters. So we have looked at what we do here in St. John's, what we do in Mount Pearl and surrounding areas and we have assessed that. Our fines at \$10 for a parking meter are the lowest, so we wanted to bring that in line with other jurisdictions. We looked at that and we said what would be an equitable increase, without being too much of a hardship, but would be a major deterrent for people. We have looked at that to increase that to \$25, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I want to reiterate, this is not about a revenue-generating process by no stretch of the imagination. Now, if it works out that we generate revenue, that if people still decide they want to violate those rules and they do not feed the meters and they are ticketed, our security tickets them, and we receive the \$25 after administrative fee; then if we do have a revenue

generating, well then it is part and parcel of our general revenue, which goes back into enhancing our parking lots and our building and making sure that there is accessibility on our sidewalks and into our buildings and our electronic doors and all these things that are part and parcel of ensuring that people have access and are in a proper manner, so it is accessible from a distance point of view also, Mr. Speaker. So we have looked at that.

We have also looked at some of the other violations. I will just go through a number of the ones that we have here that will now fall under the new changes in our legislation. Expired meters, which I just talked about, which is one of the big deterrents we are trying to do from a parking point of view, but there are ones equally important and perhaps more important when I talk about it.

Parking without a permit: We have a process here where people are entitled to apply for permits because they are in different zones. We expect people who are entitled to those to use them. That is what they are there for. There is a privilege that goes with that, but there is also a responsibility that you park in the area that you are designated for and that you show your permit, that it is visible, so our security can go around and not spend time having to look at the bottoms of seats of cars and that, but it is visible as they go by and they can go on and do their other duties that they have as part of the responsibilities as part of our security group here.

No parking anytime: Mr. Speaker, there is a reason for that. There is a safety reason when we say no parking at any time because as part of that process there may be equipment that is needed in that area. It may be designated only for particular groups. It may be a safety-oriented thing. So we want to ensure people understand that. We are going to increase the fines around those.

Parking in a crosswalk: Mr. Speaker, a no-no. Crosswalks are there for a reason. It is about safety. It is about pedestrians have a zone where they can go and feel safe because traffic is stopped and they do not have to weave around traffic and probably put themselves in harm's way by being out in the traffic lane.

Parked on a bus stop: Bus stops there are noted for a reason because we want to encourage mass transportation. We want to encourage more people to use that because from an environmental point of view, and perhaps in some cases from a financial point of view, it is more advantageous to the people who are travelling that. We encourage that, all modes of transportation, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that buses can get in and out because they are on schedules and that it does not hinder the people to be able to keep to that scheduling system, Mr. Speaker.

Improperly parked: We all do our licensing. We are all trained to be able to park parallel, diagonal parking, and they are all designed based on a principle of maximizing how many parking spots we got because we want to ensure people have access to them. So we want to make sure people follow the rules that they have been taught to get their licence.

Parked on a sidewalk; Mr. Speaker, it is a total taboo, a no-no. It is unacceptable. Sidewalks are for pedestrians to walk in a safe manner. If you need to park on a sidewalk then you should be finding somewhere else to be parking because you have a problem on how you drive your care.

Parked in a loading zone; we have equipment coming here on a constant basis. We are delivering stuff here – the thousands of employees we have and the great work that we do here. There are people here who we contract with who need to be able to get in and provide us with the supplies and services. Or vice-versa, take whatever supplies or services that we are giving to them out, load in their vehicles, and be able to move on so that the next group can move in. A failure to display permits, Mr. Speaker, as I talked about, is part and parcel of all these type of things.

These are things that we are going to look at where we are going to change our parking. One of the other key things here, Mr. Speaker, is about parking in fire lanes, again a no-no. Fire lanes are there for a reason. They are there for emergency necessities, that in the case of an emergency or fire, those first responders can get there in a proper and timely manner, and that they are not in any way hindered by having to move around vehicles, or get stretchers, or get

hoses, or get equipment that they need to go in and make sure that they assess whatever the situation they were called for.

We want to ensure all of that is done properly. The way to do that is to put a deterrent. There are some people who may decide they are not going to follow the rules. Well, do you know what? If you do not want to follow the rules in this Province, you are going to have to pay for it. We do not put rules that are overly stringent. We put them so that they are proper rules. We think they can be easily followed and they are the same rules for every other citizen in this Province. We expect people to follow those because they are in around safety, they are around convenience, and they are around a proper process here to ensure that we can do our job and do it in a timely fashion.

We have changed some of our other fines. We found out some of our parking violations were at \$20; fire lanes, somebody not displaying permits, crosswalks, bus stops and all of that. It is not acceptable; \$20 did not seem to be a big enough deterrent. So, Mr. Speaker, we have upped that to \$50 now. We feel that would be a deterrent. It is in line with some of the other municipalities. It is in line with some of the other jurisdictions. We feel that would be enough to ensure that people – they may do it once, but when they get that \$50 fine I guarantee you when they are going back to get their licence renewed, they will think about it the second time. We are going to post all of these fines. We are going to let it be known. That is where we are as we move towards that.

In the case of hospitals and our post-secondary institutions, Mr. Speaker, we are leaving that to the authorities there. They have a process in place where they assess exactly the fines for parking, be it meters, be it fire lanes and those types of things. We are asking them to assess that. We do encourage them to make sure that they are in the manner – that they are a deterrent for people because at the end of the day, this is about safety and it is about access. We want to ensure that we do that.

I want to talk a little bit about where we are when it comes to this whole process here about the amendments around that. Because of the fact it has been twenty years since we have done

a major amendment to this we want to ensure that it is at a level now where it sends the message. If, inadvertently, somebody makes a mistake for whatever reason – they are late doing that – it is not too much of a financial hardship on them, but it is enough to be that deterrent. The second time they are going to double check how much they put in that meter, where they park, where the lines are when they moving in that, and what sign is above their vehicle.

We want to ensure all those things are happening, Mr. Speaker. We also wanted to look at, at the end of the day, how we ensure that the people who do business with government and who come into government facilities actually have quick access. Quick access means we can get more people in and out, serviced better, and give them the timely fashion that they need to access the services and still be able to keep people moving as part of that process.

This is about service quality. How do you do that? You ensure that people have access to the services that you provide. We have found ways to do that. This is one of the ways we think that will improve that as we look at all the other things that we have looked at over the last number of times.

Mr. Speaker, I want to note some of the questions that probably people will ask. Maybe some of the members may ask these questions. I want to answer them upfront so they are clear exactly where we are. Is this going to have any effect on government employees? No, it does not. Parking is free for government employees at government buildings. We have arranged that. It is a right they have. It is a right they deserve and we want to ensure that. So this has no impact on government employees. They still have the rights. Those who have zone parking with permits, all we ask is display those permits properly.

Those who come first-come, first-served, the closer you will get to your entrances based on the timely fashion when you get in and the availability. There are enough parking spots for everybody in our government buildings, Mr. Speaker, and we ensure that.

When will these increases come into place? Mr. Speaker, September 1. Once this is passed in the House we need a bit of time to get the notice out there, change our ticketing, and ensure that our security staff are aware of the new changes. Then we will start that process in place and let people know there is a deterrent in place and that we want people to follow the rules and regulations.

As I said, why is this necessary and is it dramatic? No, it is not dramatic, but it is important. It is important around safety, particularly around fire lanes, particularly around crosswalks, and particularly around people who have mobility issues, and ensuring that they have a clear path to the entrances, Mr. Speaker. The meters itself are about people having access and it being fair to people who come to do business with us. That is what that part is all about.

Will this increase at the provincial government buildings? Yes, only to the meters in provincial government buildings, Mr. Speaker. They are the ones. As I said earlier, the health authorities and the post-secondary institutions, we will work with them. They have the authority to make decisions around what they feel is an appropriate process around penalties and fines for parking violations.

How do you enforce blue zone parking and fire lane parking restrictions on provincial government parking lots, Mr. Speaker? It is very important. We have a lot of great discussions around blue zones. It is a very important issue. It is very important about the mobility challenges that people have, and ensuring people who do have mobility challenges have access to proper parking in the closest manner possible and in the safest manner possible.

The same regulation would work around our buildings as it does in other buildings; be it malls, be it other institutions. The police forces, the RNC and the RCMP, would be the ones who would enforce those blue zone parking regulations there on buildings outside of where we have security.

In areas where we have security, our officers, our security, would also enforce those

regulations. The fines for blue zone violations are much heftier. We have had discussions here about where they should be. The issue around that is making sure there is a deterrent there. We have done that.

I had the privilege of servicing in Service NL and had a great working relationship with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities. One of the issues was around ensuring that people know the violation will not be accepted. To do that is hit them where it hurts, in their pocketbooks, and also proper education. Making sure the blue zones are noted, making sure the signs are accessible. Making sure snow is cleared around these areas.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken great strides to do that. I know the present minister continues to work with that organization and continues to enforce that. There is still some work to do, but the message is getting out there. You can see the fruits of their labour.

You can see when you go to malls, you can see when you go to schools, you can see when you go to other buildings that the blue zones are marked. They are in the proper manner, they are done to proper sizing. The signage is there for people, and people are adhering to those regulations and rules. So it is a great way to get the message out that parking is very important. It is about safety. It is about accessibility, and it is about people's rights. It is also about being able to provide a proper service for the people here, Mr. Speaker.

How do you estimate that government will make \$100,000 in revenue? Well, Mr. Speaker, do you know what? Other than the direct parking meters – I hope we do not make anything on our fines. I would prefer if we did not make any. It means everybody is following the rules. It means everybody has access to a parking meter or a parking area, or people are parking in the right areas they are supposed to and they are following the rules. So, \$100,000 in additional revenue, I would prefer not to have it because then I know things are being done properly. That money comes in, as I mentioned earlier, and goes into our general revenue. That gets used to enhance all the other types of services we have.

Did you consult with employees on the changes? Well, Mr. Speaker, we have made it clear that the rules and regulations apply to everybody, be it government employees, be it visitors, be it dignitaries, be it elected officials. They all apply to everybody. So what we have said to employees is nothing has changed for you guys. You still have your parking. You are still entitled to it. It is your privilege. We will enhance it wherever we can. We will do repairs to the parking lot, extra lighting, whatever it may be, lines, painting, and these types of things.

We have done stuff around the sidewalks to make it more notable when you are walking, to make it safer for when you are walking as part of that. Mr. Speaker, this is about the people who deal with government. It is about the people who deal with government being able to access a simple service, being able to have proper parking. We expect those who come in here to follow the same rules as we expect all of our employees, wherever they may be, to follow the same rules.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I want to note, I do look forward to comments from the Opposition across, from my colleagues across there, and my own fellow colleagues in the next coming hours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I will congratulate the minister on his first piece of legislation. It is not a barnburner, there is no doubt about it, but it is a significant piece of legislation in one degree. Not only because it is his first piece of legislation, but I think it is going to be a memorable piece of legislation for that minister, Mr. Speaker. Again, not simply because it is his first piece of legislation, but it is one of 1,000 cuts. It is part of this year's Budget process where government has reached into the pockets of the people of the Province.

Maybe the fines are outdated, there is no doubt about it, but they are hoping to raise, or estimating they may raise \$100,000 for these fines. It is just another example of how government are reaching into the pockets of people in this Province and how they have laid out measures in this year's Budget to do that.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a significant piece of legislation. Many people would say that something like this is housekeeping and a very quick debate. The minister will get up for four or five minutes to speak on it, the Opposition will get up for four or five minutes to speak on it, but it is significant in the fact that it is one of 1,000 cuts. It is reaching into the pockets of the people of this Province. There is no doubt, many times when something has passed away, RIP, rest in peace. Well, reaching into the pockets of the people of this Province – and that is what this bill is doing.

This government, Mr. Speaker, is on its last days. There is absolutely no doubt about it.

MR. SPEAKER: I ask the member to be relevant to the –

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will be relevant to this piece of legislation. I will be relevant to this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

There is not a lot to this piece of legislation, there is no doubt about it. The bill will amend the Works, Services and Transportation Act by increasing the maximum amount of a fine for parking violations on land owned or occupied by the Government of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So, Mr. Speaker, they are looking at increasing the fines to a range from \$5, which I think is the current. I believe it used to be –

AN HON. MEMBER: It is \$10.

MR. OSBORNE: No, it used to go to a maximum of \$10, but it goes to a maximum of \$100.

In some cases, maybe it is in tune with other places, other penalties by municipalities and

other parking fines and so on. Again, it is just one example of how government studied every aspect of every department, I believe in this particular year's Budget, to find ways they could increase how they can reach further into the pockets of the people of this Province.

There is not much more that I can say on this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the vote.

MR. SPEAKER (Cross): The hon. the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is an honour and a privilege every time to rise on my feet and speak to anything in this House; bills, budgets, whatever the case may be.

Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Works, Services and Transportation Act. It is very important. It has to be done. Of course, it could be simplified to the point of just talking about the simple fact that when fines arise we are going to raise those rates.

We are talking about parking meters all around the building here. Of course, to me the most important thing when I talk about this is not only the fact that we are going to be enforcing fines where we double them from \$10 to \$20 and from \$25 to \$50, but snow clearing is something I want to talk about. It is very important to Labradorians, as you can imagine. We get one heck of an amount of snow up in Labrador but here on the Island, I will say it is a little different.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the minister to speak to the relevance of this.

MR. RUSSELL: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

In talking about Bill 4, I guess I got ahead of myself. What I will say is that this is not meant to be solely for the purpose of revenue generation, but as a deterrent. When you do have people parking in places they should not

be, simply because the fines are not enough to deter them. If that is the case, we are always going with the snowfall and the parking was simply that if people are parking in the wrong place, over crosswalks and in fire lanes, et cetera, Mr. Speaker, where they should not be, then it limits the ability for effective snow clearing and it is very important for safety.

As the minister alluded to, this is all about safety right here. It is about simply letting people know that when you come to work – we have already noted also in here in the changes, or the lack of changes in that respect, we are not going to be talking about charging any one of our valued public service for parking, but we are talking about making sure that they have a safe environment with which to park so they can go and do their job. Everybody knows on this side of the House how much we respect our civil servants and how much they are valued.

We want to make sure that they can get to work and that their vehicle is going to be safe and that hopefully no snow is going to be piled up so that their vehicle is inaccessible or anything like that because of people parking where they should not be.

Like I said, Mr. Speaker, it is not meant to be making a heck of a load of a money here on this, but it is about letting our public servants know that they are respected and that we want to make sure we have a safe environment for them and it is about letting those people who are taking that risk – right now they are saying yes, do you know what? I am going to roll the dice. I am going to park there because even if I get caught, it is really not even comparable to anywhere else within the City of St. John's.

If you are anywhere else – and again, we are talking mostly around our government building, specifically the House of Assembly here, Confederation Building. If you are talking about the health authorities, they have to do their own analysis of this, but what we are doing is making an attempt to come in line with the City of St. John's to deter those people from making that choice and that willingness, if you will, to roll the dice and take the risk of getting a small fine, that little tiny slap on the wrist for the violation.

Very similar to, for example, if you are talking about deterrents, you see cabin owners, they will put out a sheet of nails around the windows. It is not about hurting a bear or getting bear meat; it is about deterring the bear from beating in the windows and getting in the cabin.

MR. SPEAKER: Relevance, Minister?

MR. RUSSELL: It is about letting people know that if you are going to be engaging in that violation, Mr. Speaker, it is a substantial fine. People might have that crisis of conscience before they make that bad decision and they are going to say no, I am not going to park there this time. I know those fines are up. I am not going to do it.

Again, that trickles all the way back down to respect for our employees, respect for those people wishing to visit and come and work with our government, see those ministers, as the Minister of Transportation and Works alluded to. It is about all those things together and it is about helping people who want to come and see us, helping them to make that right choice. It is just by following the rules.

With that I will say thank you to the minister for the opportunity to speak to this wonderful piece of legislation. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me draw in that comparison and talk about Labradorians' take on snow and what it could mean in the parking lot, and thank you for allowing me to say that safety is of the utmost concern to us on this side of the House. I would like to thank the minister personally for bringing in this legislation, much needed, good to see it, Mr. Chair. Always progressive from this side of the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure to stand in this House and speak to Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Works, Services and Transportation Act. As has been said here, I guess, numerous times really what this bill is

doing is going to raise parking fees at government facilities, primarily the Confederation Building; but I would assume that there would be other places that this would apply to, maybe the RNC parking lot perhaps, I do not know, maybe the courts, maybe Motor Registration, all of these places. Maybe the minister will be able to comment on that when he gets up or we can ask the question in Committee. I am going to make the assumption that places like Motor Registration and these places, that it would apply there as well, and all government-owned facilities even outside the Province.

The minister indicates that the health authorities are on their own, at their own discretion. I do not understand why that would be. It is a decision government has made, but it would certainly make sense to me that if you wanted to bring parking fines and you wanted to bring deterrents in line with the region, in line with the City of St. John's and the City of Mount Pearl and so on in this area, and in line in other communities, then seeing as how Eastern Health, the Health Sciences, St. Clare's and so on, the Miller Centre, seeing as how all of them are in St. John's the government owns and the government runs them and so on, I do not know why we would not just simply do it across the board and include those places as well. Anyway, that is the decision that has been made here. I do not necessarily agree with that logic, but it is what it is.

It is interesting –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. LANE: Yes, my colleague has talked about blue zones and it is interesting because that is exactly what I wanted to talk to.

I was listening to the minister when he was up and he was talking about all of the various parking violations. He must have had a copy of a parking ticket. I have a copy of a parking ticket here. I never got a ticket, it is a blank ticket, but I did take it upon myself to get a copy of the ticket. It was interesting because when the minister was talking I was waiting for him – I was actually going through it with him when he was talking about all of the various types of fines. He concentrated heavily on meters and I

think he said meters are going to go to \$25. Currently, meters are \$10, but then he started talking about all of these other ones.

It is interesting, as he was talking about it I was just going down through the actual ticket here: parking without a permit. Then he said no parking anytime, and then parking in a crosswalk, parking in a bus stop, improperly parked, parked on the sidewalk, parked in a loading zone, failed to display permit. He went through that list. Now, it is interesting because on the ticket, it has this list and then it says or under the Highway Traffic Act as indicated below there are two other fines. The first one is blue zone parking. Now, he skipped that one. He went to everything on the list when he started talking, then he skipped the blue zone and then he went to parking in a fire lane.

Now parking in a fire lane is \$20 and I think the minister said that it going to go up to \$50. He did come back to blue zones, but it was interesting that at the time he was going through the list and we skipped blue zones. I said gee-whiz, what is that all about? It is interesting because when he talked about increasing fines – and I am not going to go down this road of the cash cow thing. You can say maybe the timing is pretty convenient, given the Budget, that now it is a great time to increase the fines. You can make that point. That is what it is and people can take from it what they will, but at the end of the day whether it was done this year, next year, or it was two years ago I certainly would agree with the fact that you do need to have deterrents for people who park illegally and I think they should be consistent. I think it should be consistent across the board.

That is why I was glad when I heard the minister talk about and I think he said – I wrote it down. He said we want to be in line with municipalities. We want to be in line with municipalities. He said we want it to be at a level that sends a message, and he also talked about ensuring people have access to services. It was interesting in those three statements when we talk about wanting to be in line with municipalities, ensuring we have access to services and at a level that sends a message.

Now, it is interesting because under this bill of course, if you look at the explanatory note – well

not the explanatory note. In the explanatory note we are going to increase the violations but basically if you look at the bill itself, it talks about if someone is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine of not less than \$5 and not more than \$100 and in default of payment of the fine to imprisonment for a period not exceeding ten days.

Basically it is saying that we can take the tickets, the fines that are on this ticket which are currently at \$10 for most of them, \$20 for parking in a fire lane and \$100 right now for blue zones and we can raise them to a maximum of \$100. So what he is doing, of course, is they are going to take the meters and up them from \$10 to \$25, all the other violations are going to go from \$20 to \$50, which is fine, I have no issue especially seeing how he wants to be consistent with the City of St. John's and Mount Pearl and so on. Here is the but: When it comes to blue zones, the maximum that he put there is \$100, which is what it is currently at.

Now it is interesting, because at the time when this government passed blue zone legislation – and we have talked about it many times in this House. I have raised it. When we talked about blue zone legislation, the government at the time put in a range of \$100 to \$400. The people with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities and other disability advocates said at that time, and they are continuing to say it right now, that \$100 is not enough of a deterrent. They wanted the \$400 maximum right across the board.

What the government said at the time was, no, we are not going to do that. We are not going to impose the maximum. We are going to put in the range and we are going to allow the municipalities to decide what they want the blue zones to be. We are going to put it on them. We are going to shirk our responsibility to persons with disabilities. We are going to put it on the municipalities.

Now, thankfully, the first one onboard was the City of St. John's. The City of St. John's took leadership and they said, do you know what? We need to send a strong message to people who park in blue zones who do not have permits, who are not supposed to be there. This is about providing access for persons with disabilities.

So what the City of St. John's did, they took leadership. Under their legislation, they amended their parking legislation and taking that range, they went the maximum, \$400. Now shortly thereafter, the City of Mount Pearl did the very same thing. The City of Mount Pearl upped their blue zone violations to \$400. Now I think the City of Corner Brook has done the same, although I stand to be corrected. I did write a letter to Mayor Pender a while back about it. My understanding was they had followed suit as well. I cannot swear to it. I am going to check it out, but I think they have.

The point is that the minister talks about being consistent. Here we are as the provincial government, this government is saying, no, \$100 is good enough. The minister says we want to be consistent. We checked with the parking fines in Mount Pearl. We checked with the parking fines in St. John's. We wanted to send a message. We wanted to be consistent with the municipality in which we are in. They did that, except when it came to blue zones.

Here we have the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities, representing people who require access, screaming and bawling saying you never should have done this to begin with. You never should have gone with a range. You should have gone with \$400. They are very pleased with what St. John's, Mount Pearl, and, I think, Corner Brook has done.

We have an opportunity to fix it. We have an opportunity here under this piece of legislation to change the parking at government-owned facilities, at the Confederation Building and Motor Registration, for people who abuse blue zones to put in a \$400 fine and to follow suit with those other two municipalities. Are we doing it? No, we are not doing it.

What we are doing is we are choosing here – this government is choosing through this piece of legislation, they are choosing not to put in the appropriate protections to provide access for persons with disabilities. I have to say that is absolutely shameful, and I certainly do not support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will only take a couple of minutes to talk to Bill 4 because I think it is pretty basic in its own right. The simple fact is what the government is dealing with here is pretty simple. That the cost of fines, for various violations, moving or otherwise, has become so little when it comes to somebody's wallet that they are almost meaningless.

Mr. Speaker, in our view, ignorance of the law is certainly no defence. I would have to agree with the minister on that particular point. To simply pull up to the lights of an expired meter, or any one of the violations that are listed here: parking without a permit; no parking anytime; parking on a crosswalk; parking on a bus stop. Any one of these violations, Mr. Speaker, to take your vehicle and knowingly do it without having to pay a proper offence for that, I think is abhorrent in itself.

Some drivers really have to ask themselves a question of what they are doing out there, whenever they are doing any kind of these violations that are out there. So I can see where the minister has to come out and has to do something in respect to a change in the fines in order to get this stuff to stop. Because it can get nonsensical to the point where people can actually go ahead and take advantage of a driver's licence and take advantage of a posted fine in order to actually save money, because that is basically what I saw in this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I have to note and I have to talk about here is while they are doing enforcement and increasing fines here – the Member for Mount Pearl South has already touched on it, is blue zone parking. We are not seeing enough enforcement of the blue zone parking rules. I would certainly like to see government doing a little bit more of that.

It is abhorrent in itself whenever you see violations of blue zone parking happen, that obviously we have drivers out there, number one, who are not meeting the rules of the road, and they are rules of the road. We see businesses sometimes that are not making these

spots big enough. We need to see more enforcement when it comes to that. These people are human beings like us. Just because you have a disability, it does not give anybody else the right to park in that particular spot or violate somebody else's rights when it comes to the rules of the road.

Mr. Speaker, while we have to question each other's driving ethics out there, we can certainly see where government needs to update the fines to try to put a stop to it, because that is, in essence, the reason why we have fines out there. That is the reason why we have enforcement out there. That is the reason why, if you are going down the road at seventy-five miles an hour, you should be getting a ticket for imprudent driving, and some people out there do that.

Mr. Speaker, the whole question is around enforcement here. You can go ahead and you can write all the tickets you want. Some people use it as a collection. Some people, I would imagine, even try to find a way to write this off at the end of the month when it comes to parking fees, that sort of thing.

Mr. Speaker, it is only right to see that government is updating these fine amounts, just as a simple deterrent to try to keep the rules of the road in order, and some of these things are actually dangerous. Parked on a sidewalk – you said parked on a crosswalk. That, to me, is also demerit points. If you are going to be stunned enough to take your car and park it on a crosswalk and impair the vision on a sidewalk, that in itself has to be questioned. I would say the \$25 is not enough for parking on a crosswalk.

I would encourage, in some cases here, government to actually look at this and probably consider at the same time – if you are going to park on a crosswalk, there should be demerit points there, too. Because, like I said, you are impairing people's vision, you are impairing people's access to a sidewalk, the proper crossing of a street. So, in some cases here I think government is not going far enough. I would say to government to reconsider this in some cases.

While we support this particular measure, Mr. Speaker, like I said, parked on a crosswalk, \$25.

Really? Again, to me that is demerit points that have to be asked of that driver. There should be a severe punishment like that. That is a dangerous situation.

Mr. Speaker, just to reiterate, government needs to probably reconsider this in some particular aspects and probably ask the members of the RNC or the RCMP in this particular case about parking in a crosswalk. Like I said, that is aberrant in itself.

Mr. Speaker, new regulations also state – coming back to blue zones again just to reiterate, they should be looking at it a little bit more in addition to change and strengthen the requirement of signs, for example, signage on the spot – we know that during the winter conditions, I say to the minister, that obviously not everybody uses salt and everything to clear a lot. We know that the blue zone itself can be covered over; the signs can be knocked down because of snow clearing or something. We have to have stronger enforcement of these measures at the same time and better inspections in some of the blue zones around town.

We have seen some of them, of course, on Twitter and everything, and in consultation with COD-NL, but we know that you have your fines in place for a blue zone; for example, law enforcement officials are given a much stronger tool to use when targeting these offenders.

I know that the minister, I think, last year came out with a statement talking about something in the order of 600 convictions at one particular point when they were out there actually doing enforcements on the roads. Mr. Speaker, again, ignorance of the law is no defence. Government should be doing this all the time; 600 times is probably not enough times that this could have been done. We are still seeing violations happening and it does not matter what part of the Province we are seeing it, but we need government action all over the Province to address this issue.

Mr. Speaker, again, that is our view when it comes to this. We can see where government needs to do proper enforcement of some of these enforcement rules here, but I encourage government again just to review that some things here on this list, like I said, parking on a

crosswalk should involve demerit points because parking on a crosswalk is an accident in itself waiting to happen, not to mention other possibilities that are here.

Expired meters – sure, \$25. Parking without a permit probably needs to be looked. Again, if you are talking blue zones – we just talked blue zones – blue zones certainly needs a lot more enforcement, but parking in a crosswalk – improperly parked; parking on a sidewalk, that is a dangerous scenario; failure to display permits; again the other ones. Like I said, parking on a crosswalk that can certainly be demerit points when it comes to that, so I encourage them to look at it.

Get out there and enforce those blue zone rules. They are there for people, for accessibility sake, and we would certainly like to see stronger enforcement on that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time to talk to this bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works, if he speaks now he will close debate in second reading.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to note and thank my colleagues opposite and my colleagues on this side for speaking so passionately about this bill. While I said at the beginning it was not a revolutionary one, it was still a very important one because it is about people's safety. It is about ensuring that we make people – give them the opportunity to have accessibility to our buildings, to make sure that people who work in these buildings know that they can walk around the parking lot in a safe manner. Those who do business with government know that they must also adhere to safe environments, but they also can be safe when they come on this property, Mr. Speaker. That is what this is all about.

I do acknowledge members opposite having some suggestions. Some of those obviously are

relevant to other line departments. As we do with everything here, it is about dialogue and it is about engaging people. So we are going to take that discussion we have had, the discussion we have had on this place, and the things that we have been doing with our civil service and our input from our own security as they look at how we better enforce these rules and how we better access safety around our buildings, Mr. Speaker.

On that note, I will close debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works, correct me if I am wrong, but I do believe that when you stood initially you neglected to actually make the motion that the bill be read a second time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

You can just make the motion that the bill – mover and a seconder, that the bill be now read a second time.

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, I make the motion that the bill, seconded by the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, be read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

It is moved and seconded that the bill be now read a second time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Works, Services And Transportation Act. (Bill 4)

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

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Works, Services And Transportation Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 4)

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 4.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 4.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 4, An Act To Amend The Works, Services And Transportation Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Works, Services and Transportation Act." (Bill 4)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: Yes, Mr. Chair.

I am just wondering if the minister can first of all confirm what buildings would be involved here. My understanding is that it is not just Confederation Building, but would be places like Motor Registration, the workers' comp building, anything that is not under Eastern Health or MUN, if that is the case.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. BRAZIL: Yes, Mr. Chair.

My hon. colleague, he is correct. Any government building that we own or that we occupy, that we offer services to the people of this Province, are the ones that would fall under this amendment to the legislation.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: Yes, Mr. Chair.

I am just wondering, when this bill was being crafted, if the minister can give some explanation as to why they chose to stick with \$100 for blue zones, as opposed to doing the same as the City of St. John's, City of Mount Pearl. The minister said himself that they were trying to make the fines consistent with those municipalities, and seeing as how the Confederation Building, Motor Registration, and so on, are all in the City of St. John's, I am wondering why he chose to go with a \$100 fine – particularly given the fact that the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities clearly have been advocating for \$400 and they applauded St. John's and Mount Pearl for taking leadership – why they did not.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Speaker, as we have noted, that the range from \$100 to \$400 is a range around the dialogue we have had with the community out there, and that we work with our proponents here to ensure that the deterrent is enough there to keep people away. We have noticed a major increase in people not parking in blue zones, mainly because of the markings and the awareness – but the \$100 to the \$400 that will be imposed is indeed enough that we feel right now is a deterrent. If we feel it is not, we will change that piece of the administration and the amendment will be made accordingly so that the fines are increased.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Well, again, obviously the City of Mount Pearl and the City of St. John's has taken it upon themselves to raise the fines to \$400. They have listened to the Coalition for Persons with Disabilities. So I am just going to ask for one final time, for the record, will the minister consider raising the fines, making an amendment, raising the \$400 to be in line with the City of St. John's and the City of Mount Pearl, or will they continue to leave it at \$100 fines, against the advice of the Coalition with Persons with Disabilities?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Chair, we continuously dialogue with our stakeholders and our partners out there to ensure that whatever process or whatever program that we put in place is indeed the best interest of those people. Including here, we always take into account exactly what needs to be done to better service people. In this case, we will take into account if it is felt that there needs to be an increase in the blue zone fines, we will indeed amend down the road to ensure that that is there.

Mr. Chair, we continue to dialogue with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities to ensure that the deterrents are there but particularly the education is there so that people do not need to be fined, that they do not park in blue zone

areas, that they are only there for designated individuals who have to use them.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Well, I would say to the minister that the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities is not interested in doing it down the road; they are interested in doing it right now.

Mr. Chair, I just have another point or question. I am just wondering when it comes to – obviously it applies to government parking lots, but how about facilities where government is actually leasing office space and so on. I think of, for example, down at the Regatta Plaza where the AES is to. That is being leased. How does this apply to leased facilities where government have offices there?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. BRAZIL: Well, Mr. Chair, as I outlined, this is just not about the Northeast Avalon; it is about any building that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador occupies with our employees. The same rules would apply there as they do anywhere else. Where we do not have security, RNC or RCMP would be called if there is a violation, and they have the rights and the ability and the legislative legal rights to ticket, and that same process would be happening as it does now.

The difference in places like here or Sir Richard Squires where we have on-site security, they also have that privilege and that right, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

So I guess, just for clarification, is the minister clarifying the point then that if somebody decides that they are going to park illegally in a blue zone down at the Regatta Plaza accessing the Department of Advanced Education and

Skills, the RNC are going to issue them a \$400 fine; but if that same person decides to come to the Confederation Building and illegally park in a blue zone, they are only going to get a \$100 fine. Would that be correct?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. BRAZIL: Yes, Mr. Chair, it would be correct because that land is not owned by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is in a municipality that has in a different bylaw and a different fining process, as I just outlined it, Mr. Chair.

We are looking at what we feel are deterrents. Right now, the information that we have and the fines that we put in place, we feel are deterrents for anybody parking in any of our areas right now. We have increased them in the matters that have just outlined. In blue zone parking, we have noted that \$100 at this point seems to be a deterrent. If we determine it is not, Mr. Chair, we will go back and make changes to ensure that it is consistent with the other parts of the municipalities or other legal laws there to ensure that the deterrent stands.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: I just thank the minister for his clarification. Obviously, we are going to set a double standard. We are going to have \$100 fines if you park illegally in blue zones at government facilities; \$400 fines if you park at government-leased facilities; \$400 fines if you illegally park at private facilities. This government is choosing to impose a lesser fine for persons who illegally park in blue zone spaces, thus denying access to persons with disabilities.

I thank the minister for clarifying that point. I am sure the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities is also going to be very glad to hear that has been clarified.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clause 2.

CHAIR: Shall clause 2 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Works, Services And Transportation Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 4 without amendment.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 4 without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 4 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to the referred and have directed him to report Bill 4 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MR. HUTCHINGS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

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

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the House now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

The House stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow, Private Members' Day.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.